Beyond the Screen: How Women's Use of Social Media is Changing the Ideological American Wilderness Landscape

Theodora Weatherby
thweathe@syr.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.esf.edu/etds

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.esf.edu/etds/39
BEYOND THE SCREEN: HOW WOMEN’S USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS CHANGING THE
IDEOLOGICAL AMERICAN WILDERNESS LANDSCAPE

By

Theodora Greene Weatherby

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
Master of Science Degree
State University of New York
College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Syracuse, New York
May 2018

Department of Environmental Science

Approved by:
Dr. Elizabeth Vidon, Major Professor
Dr. Theresa Sefia, Co-Major Professor
Dr. Wendong Tao, Defense Exam Chair
Dr. Russell D. Briggs, Director of the Division of Environmental Science
S. Scott Shannon, Dean of the Graduate School
Acknowledgements

I’d like to thank those who supported me throughout my Master’s experience. First, I have to acknowledge my amazing committee members: Dr. Andrea Feldpausch-Parker and Dr. Christina Limpert as well as my co-major professors Dr. Elizabeth Vidon and Dr. Theresa Selfa. I am grateful for their continual expertise, guidance, and enthusiasm. I’d like to give additional thanks to Dr. Vidon for pushing me academically, mentoring me during my first conference presentation, and for being a co-author for the publication of my first thesis chapter.

Next, I’d like to thank my family, especially my parents and grampa, for supporting my continued academic career and for instilling values of hard work, perseverance, and stubbornness as well as my love for learning – without which I would not be the woman I am today. In addition to my friends, colleagues, and office mates down in Marshall B7, I’d like to give personal acknowledgements to: Dawnelle Jager, who supported me academically, professionally, and personally throughout my time at ESF; Johnna Gray, one of my best and longest friends, for always being a text message away; and Zachary Forrester, whose love and support were invaluable.
# Table of Contents

List of Figures .......................................................................................................................... vi

Abstract ................................................................................................................................... vii

Keywords: ................................................................................................................................. vii

**Introduction** .......................................................................................................................... 1

References ................................................................................................................................. 7

**Delegitimizing wilderness as the man cave: The role of social media in female wilderness empowerment** ......................................................................................................................... 9

Abstract: ................................................................................................................................... 9

Key Words: ............................................................................................................................... 10

Introduction ............................................................................................................................... 11

The American wilderness .......................................................................................................... 13

**History of the masculine wilderness** ................................................................................ 14

Landscape of fear ...................................................................................................................... 15

The sublime ................................................................................................................................. 16

The frontier ................................................................................................................................ 17

**Protecting the American man cave** ................................................................................ 19

Tourism’s influence over the masculine wilderness ............................................................... 21

Nature tourism and risk ........................................................................................................... 21

Nature tourism and the social ............................................................................................... 23

**Women, wilderness, and social capital** .......................................................................... 25

Tourism as a foothold ............................................................................................................... 25

Increased visibility of women in wilderness ......................................................................... 27

**Women, wilderness, & social media** ............................................................................... 28

The power and prevalence of social media ........................................................................... 30

Instagram ................................................................................................................................. 31

Facebook ................................................................................................................................. 32

Blogs ..................................................................................................................................... 33

Advertising ............................................................................................................................... 34

**Concluding remarks and directions for future study** .................................................. 36

References ................................................................................................................................. 39

**No Man’s Land: The vital role of women-only online communities in increasing women’s wilderness participation** ........................................................................................................ 48

Abstract: ................................................................................................................................... 48
List of Figures

Figure 1: Age of Survey Respondents ................................................................. 59
Figure 2: Social Media Sites Used by Respondents ................................................. 60
Figure 3: Reported Privacy Settings for Facebook and Instagram .............................. 61
Figure 4: Geographic Wilderness Participation by Interview Participants (n=40) ............. 61
Figure 5: United States Geographic Regions ............................................................ 61
Abstract

T.G. Weatherby. Beyond the Screen: How Women’s Use of Social Media is Changing the Ideological American Wilderness Landscape. 120 pages, 5 figures, 2018. APA style guide used.

American wilderness is a unique and socially constructed landscape. I argue that current wilderness perceptions are perpetuated by tourism, which profits off wilderness as ripe with risk and uncertainty. This in turn creates wilderness as a gendered, masculine space commonly perceived as “authentic wilderness”, but where women are often invisible or seen as ill-suited within. Through surveys and interviews with women active in wilderness recreation and on social media, it was found that women’s use of Facebook, Instagram, and Blogs, increases empowerment and promotes participation in activities through constraints negotiation and contributes to the deconstruction of conventional gender expectations. Women’s only Facebook groups, more specifically, offered safe spaces of support and community for active participants and also those who have not yet participated in wilderness spaces. Social media use actively increases women’s physical and visual presence in wilderness spaces, challenging the assumption that their place is outside of wilderness.

Keywords:
Wilderness, social media, gender, tourism, risk, identity, power, women, female, empowerment, perception.

T.G. Weatherby
Candidate for the degree of Master of Science, May 2018
Elizabeth Vidon, Ph.D
Theresa Selfa, Ph.D
Department of Environmental Science
State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestr, Syracuse, NY
Introduction

Wilderness can be simply defined “a tract or region uncultivated and uninhabited by human beings” (Wilderness, 2018). However, for many Americans, wilderness is pictured as a much more vivid scene. Since the early nineteenth century, Americans have identified the importance of wilderness spaces for American identity, due to its unique character unlike the mere “nature” associated with the Old World (Nash, 2014:68-69). Through the end of the nineteenth century, as westward expansion and development continued and the Western frontier came to a close, National Parks and wilderness groups like the Sierra Club became established. In 1964, the United States passed the Wilderness Act to establish protections for American wilderness, which has become an integral part of American nationalism and identity (Cronon, 1995; Jarvis, 2007; Nash, 2014). This act defined wilderness, stating, “a wilderness, in contrast to those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does no remain” (Wilderness Act, 1964). The act further describes wilderness as “land retaining its primeval character and influence” and land which “has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive or unconfined type of recreation” (Wilderness Act, 1964). This definition, in contrast to the more universal “uncultivated and uninhabited” version, worked more to establish the character of American wilderness and the feelings of freedom that could be found within.

Modern American wilderness, most often pictured as national parks and wilderness areas, upholds, even reifies these traditional ideas of wilderness for visitors and are actively maintained to do so by park managers (Cloke and Perkins, 2002; Colten and Dilsaver, 2005; MacCannell 1976; Vidon 2016, 2017). Nature tourism, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism all occur in these
perceived wilderness spaces. Nature tourism is “travel for the purpose of enjoying undeveloped natural areas or wildlife” (Goodwin 1996:287). Within nature tourism are adventure tourism and eco-tourism. Hall (1992:143) defined adventure tourism as a subset of tourism “involving an interaction with the natural environment away from the participant’s home range and containing elements of risk”. Eco-tourism is the most specific of the three, defined as “responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people” and includes a set of guiding principles for tourist and tourism industries (International Ecotourism Society, 2007:1-2). For the purposes of this paper, nature tourism includes adventure tourism and eco-tourism, although more often adventure tourism specifically due to its associations with risk, which is instrumental in maintaining the wilderness character of protected lands.

Nature tourism and management change the physical landscape for tourists to ensure spaces look and feel wild to the tourist, including the perception of danger and risk within recreation, while minimizing environmental degradation (Colten and Dilsaver, 2005; Cloke and Perkins, 2002; Perkins and Thorns, 2001; Rickard 2014; Vidon 2016, 2017). Tourism acts to create desirable landscapes in the eye of the consumer so that “the collective determination of ‘true sights’ is clear cut. The tourist has no difficulty deciding the sights he ought to see” (MacCannell, 1976:42). However, this relationship is cyclical, not linear; tourism shapes consumer perspectives as much as consumers shape tourism, which are both discursive and shaped by outside forces such as media, hospitality, academics, planners, etc. to create the tourism site (Urry, 2005:145).
With the introduction of, or increase in, globalization and social media, the tourist or recreator has greater power to change the social and cultural value of a sight. MacCannell (1976: 147) notes that “amateur photography permits the tourist to create his own touristic imagery with himself and his family at the center, or just off to the side of a great sight or moment”. Once the photograph is taken, social media allows for amateur touristic imagery to be shared with a global audience, allowing consumers to see user generated photographs in addition to marketing images of place, recreation, culture, and experience. These images, and other forms of social media like reports, blogs, and reviews, can shape the collective tourist gaze to determine what constitutes a “true sight”, or rather the social rank or cultural capital of the site or object. Urry (2005:79) argues that,

> cultural capital is not just a matter of abstract theoretical knowledge, but symbolic competence necessary to appreciate works of ‘art’ or ‘anti-art’ or of ‘place. Differential access to the means of arts consumption is thus crucial to the reproduction of class and hence to the process of class and broader social conflict. This differential cultural consumption both results from the class system and is a mechanism by which such classes, and other social forces, seek to establish dominance within a society.

Economic, social, and cultural capital were originally developed and connected by Bourdieu (1977; 1986) Social capital was defined as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu, 1986: 249) In other words, social capital relates a value to the cumulative relationships one holds. Cultural capital on the other hand is defined as “all the goods material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as
rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation” (Bourdieu, 1977: 178). In this case, cultural capital is the value of what you know, or what you perceive to know. More specifically for this research, sights act as symbolic goods which hold cultural capital for those who are able to conquer or consume them. Globalization and tourism increase access to sights with various degrees of cultural capital, including those involved in nature and adventure tourism. Social media, then, projects the consumer’s possession or acquirement of this capital mainly through the use of photo sharing since “a photograph seems to be a means of transcribing reality… [and] to furnish evidence that something did indeed happen—that someone really was there or that the mountain actually was that large. It is thought that the camera does not lie” (Urry 2005:127). In short, seeing is believing.

Sharing of accumulation of cultural capital via social media can increase one’s social capital through consumption of a user’s posts by a virtual community. Social media creates connections between users, especially through public posts that the user may be unaware of, but nevertheless, increasing her/his (digital) social capital. (Digital) social capital extends Bourdieu’s notions of social capital by including virtual, digital connections one may gain through social media regardless of the strength or actual interaction between users (i.e. number of social media followers, “likes”, or views). This in turn can affect one’s social status in both her/his physical and virtual communities.

Throughout history, American wilderness has been seen as a masculine and socially exclusionary space through risk association; one that is unsuitable for women or female associations (Cloke and Perkins, 2002; McNiel et al., 2012; Rickard, 2014). National parks and wilderness areas,
through the works of tourism and social constructions of wilderness ideology, have been created as places where high cultural capital, and thus a possibility for increased (digital) social capital, can be gained. This is especially true for those sights boasting about the high risk and adventure that have acted as barriers to women’s visibly and participation. However, although social media continues to elevate these social recognized and culturally important spaces in American society, it also allows for women to change how they are perceived in such places. User-generated content allows for individuals to change how they are visually represented in wilderness as well as their accumulated cultural and social capital which otherwise may have been dismissed or ignored. In addition, consumption of these accomplishments by a virtual audience pushes for new wilderness associations to be formed and provides empowerment for those also looking to change preconceived notions of what wilderness is and who belongs in it.

This thesis is comprised of two manuscripts that address how contemporary women, through the use of social media, are beginning to reframe and reshape what constitutes today’s authentic wilderness. The first manuscript, “Delegitimizing wilderness as the man cave: The role of social media in female wilderness empowerment” explores how American wilderness has been shaped throughout history to fit social perceptions of what “wilderness” should look and feel like. Current trends have created socially accepted perceptions of authentic American wilderness, one ripe with risk, suitable for rugged masculinity to flourish, and one that finds its genesis in colonization (Nash, 2014). The development of the modern American wilderness is outlined in the manuscript through eras of colonialism, transcendentalism, the frontier push, and into modern ideals of American wilderness protection. In addition, the roles played by tourism and risk on current American wilderness ideology, are outlined in the first chapter. Implications for
women’s wilderness participation and for women’s use of social media are also discussed in this chapter.

The following chapter, “No Man’s Land: The vital role of women-only online communities in increasing women’s wilderness participation” looks to unravel the relationship between barriers to women’s wilderness participation and the role of social media in navigating these constraints. This research expands the current literature on constraints theory (Crawford & Godbey, 1987) by investigating constraints to women’s participation in wilderness recreation and fills the gap in the literature regarding how social media affects motivations and negotiation processes for wilderness recreation. Surveys and interviews with women active on social media and participants in American wilderness recreation highlight the role of social media in motivations and constraints negotiation. Women’s use of social media platforms, such as Facebook, blogs, and Instagram, provides a platform for empowerment and promotes increased participation in activities, including those that involve risk taking, which contributes to the deconstruction of conventional gender expectations. This empowerment affects both the current active user and those who have not yet participated in wilderness recreation.

Finally, the concluding chapter discusses the implications of these findings on women’s participation rates in wilderness recreation and how the results can be utilized by various interest groups. In addition, limitations of both constraints theory for explaining women’s participation in wilderness spaces and of this study are discussed along with areas of future research.
References


Delegitimizing wilderness as the man cave: The role of social media in female wilderness empowerment

Abstract:

Historically, American wilderness has been conceived as a profoundly masculine landscape and a threat to femininity. Early wilderness discourse stressed landscapes of risk and danger, certainly no place for a woman. Prior to the Romantic era and Transcendentalism, but even in recent history, it was not uncommon for women to avoid venturing into wilderness alone for reasons including personal safety and possible corruption of body and spirit. The introduction of tourism in wilderness allowed people to experience the thrill of the wild while enjoying an element of safety through mitigated risk, an experience that appealed to the masculine and created socially significant places. While wilderness has historically been tied to these masculine narratives, these and the wilderness identity are increasingly challenged by contemporary feminine discourse working within various social media platforms. As tourism continues to domesticate wilderness, women are simultaneously pushing against social boundaries that dictate their place within, thus, changing both the identity of place and of women’s roles therein. This process, shifting both definitions of wilderness and woman, occurs through deconstruction of powerful feminine stereotypes through active engagement with these increasingly accessible landscapes. Social media acts as platform through which this changing discourse is garnering support and social power. Thus, this article argues that women’s assertions and performances of power in wilderness directly combat stereotypes of their place in these landscapes. Furthermore, without tourism’s promotion of these spaces as extraordinary and powerful in themselves, women’s performances therein would lack the social significance and challenge to wilderness as gendered.
Key Words:
Wilderness, social media, gender, tourism, risk, identity, power

Published as:
10.1177/1468797618771691
Introduction

Wilderness has played, and continues to play, an increasingly important role in the collective American identity (Vidon, 2016, 2017; Callicott and Nelson, 1998; Cosgrove, 1984; Lewis, 2007; Nash, 2014; Nelson and Callicott, 2008; Sears, 1989). For the purposes of this article, we approach wilderness not as some well-defined physicality that is somehow ontologically authentic in its wildness, but rather as an ideology, one with deep roots in the American psyche that allow it to enjoy an unquestioned and privileged position as an ultimate good (Vidon, 2016). This American wilderness, what Lewis (2007: 5) calls both a “real thing and a human construction,” finds its genesis in the works of cultural forces such as the Transcendentalists and the Hudson River School of landscape painting. Through the poetry, prose, and painting of these masters, wilderness was romanticized, popularized, and reified in the American cultural and material landscape (Vidon, 2016; Callicott and Nelson, 1998; Cronon, 1995; Lewis, 2007; Nash, 2014; Nelson and Callicott, 2008). This wilderness, made and lovingly maintained through the works of the American psyche, culture, and society, is symbolized in the parks and protected areas of today’s America (Vidon, 2016). What was once a dark and formidable home of the devil is now an important source of national pride for the United States and helped the country re-identify with masculine qualities of strength and domination in the global arena (Jarvis, 2007). This American wilderness, as constructed through Transcendentalism and the American frontier, provides a unique landscape and ideology unlike that of international notions of wilderness (Vidon, 2016; Lewis, 2007; Nash, 2014).

Nature tourism has been a powerful force behind this change, instrumental in creating accessible and domesticated spaces while, at the same time, upholding the masculine qualities and identity of wilderness (Cloke and Perkins, 2002; McNiel et al., 2012; Rickard, 2014; Shields, 1991).
While scholarship has explored the role of tourism (broadly defined) in creating and maintaining wilderness spaces (Vidon, 2016; Cronon, 1995; Nash, 2014; Sears, 1989; Shields, 1991) as well as leisure and tourism’s gendered nature (Enloe, 1989; Hall et al., 2003; Henderson and Gibson, 2013; Kinnaird and Hall, 1994, 1996; McNiel et al., 2012; Pritchard and Morgan, 2000a, 2000b; Pruitt and LaFont, 2010; Rao, 1995; Swain, 1995; Wilson and Little, 2008; Yang et al., 2017), the specifics of nature tourism and its relationship with the gendered essence of wilderness landscapes have been relatively neglected by comparison (Bialeschki and Henderson, 1993; Jarvis, 2007; Lewis, 2007; Nash, 2014; Swain, 1995).

In this article, we contend that of late, feminine discourse has increasingly acted upon the American wilderness idea, challenging the established masculine wilderness identity by redefining women’s power and their unique roles within this profoundly ideological and gendered space. It is not to say that women were never present within this landscape, but rather, women are re-creating the traditional and strongly upheld idea of the American wilderness landscape by increasingly creating spaces where the feminine stands on equal ground through active discussion, participation, and presence within this highly masculine arena. This new challenge to the masculinity of wilderness has been facilitated in large part by contemporary nature tourism, an increasingly significant sector in American tourism, and the growing popularity of social media. Our aim in this article is twofold: to interrogate the American wilderness’ identity as profoundly masculine and to illustrate the ways contemporary women in the United States are staking their claim to this masculine wilderness through active engagements with it, both as material place and as ideology. Central to our efforts is the role of social media in women’s changing engagements with wilderness, as we argue that these outlets
have become a crucial part of women’s shared power and experiences in the wilderness landscape. This article thus addresses the increasingly important role of social media in creating and changing the identity of place and person, while illustrating the power of discourse in the maintenance of place identity.

The American wilderness

Before we proceed, we must attend to the culturally, spatially, historically specific ways American wilderness has been defined and to differentiate it from the more feminine “nature.” In this article, we do not conflate “wilderness” and “nature,” but rather approach them as different ideological and material landscapes. While a thorough comparison of the two is beyond the scope of this study, “nature,” contrary to “wilderness,” has been discursively constructed as feminine in ways similar to wilderness’ more masculine creation (see Callicott and Nelson, 1998; Pritchard and Morgan, 2000a; Williams, 1976). The phrase “nature tourism,” however, is used as a broad term to indicate tourism in any natural or non-human made setting, including but not limited to wilderness. The wilderness we approach here is a particular one, as discussed below, and is not to be confused with the more feminine “nature.”

The following American wilderness definitions, while not following a chronological timeline, do attend to earlier conceptions of wilderness then turn to more critical treatments, which include elements such as gender identity and risk perception. We contend that it is these definitions that nature tourism seeks to uphold by influencing discourse and public perception of these wilderness spaces through the creation of perceived risk. Women partaking in such activities are entering into a perceived masculine space (Bialeschki and Henderson, 1993; McNiel et al., 2012;
However, alongside this, we argue that women have been actively using nature tourism to break down long-standing ideas of wilderness and women’s place therein (Yang et al., 2017). Social media outlets, such as websites, blogs, and photo-sharing platforms are being used by women to further their discourse against the exclusionary social perception of wilderness as masculine. Preliminary analysis shows the important role that social media is playing in this change, and offers a point of departure for further research.

We begin by briefly charting the development of the masculine wilderness in America and illustrating its position as a highly gendered ideology. Next, we attend to the powerful role of nature tourism in the construction of these wilderness landscapes and in the challenge to such gendered character of the landscape. Women’s engagements with nature tourism activities and the ways in which they are redefining wilderness along with refining their own senses of self and femininity will be followed by a discussion of select social media platforms through which these changes are occurring. While we recognize the danger in “the construction of an essentialist universal female experience … without taking into account race, ethnicity, age, education and other characteristics,” the focus of this article is on the broader challenge to social perceptions of this highly and historically gendered space (Swain, 1995: 253; see also Henderson and Gibson, 2013: 128–29).

**History of the masculine wilderness**

Lewis (2007) captures the fluidity of wilderness definitions by stating, “Wilderness is a concept devised by humans to define a particular type of wild environment … Wild nature can be found everywhere; wilderness cannot” (p. 6). The wilderness we imagine and think, that discursively
created wilderness painted so inspirationally by members of the Hudson River School and written so dramatically by the Transcendentalists, that panacea and source of salvation, is what has no basis in our material reality (Vidon, 2016). Because wilderness is an intangible idea, its definition continues to rely on individuals’ general understandings of the American wilderness ideology, one that has served to privilege the powerful and the elite at the expense of the rest (see Vidon, 2016; Cosgrove, 1984; Cronon, 1995). From the early days of colonization, American wilderness ideas have constantly been in flux through various time periods, defined by the social, cultural, and political conditions in place during each period.

Landscape of fear

The earliest of these phases can be described as a period of fear accompanied by a desire to conquer or domesticate (Dean, 2007). This fear stemmed from the unknown landscape which was uncontrolled by man and something altogether different. As Nash (2014) maintained,

\[
\text{It was instinctively understood as something alien to man—an insecure and uncomfortable environment against which civilization had waged an unceasing struggle} \\
\text{… Its dark, mysterious qualities made it a setting in which the pre-scientific imagination could place a swarm of demons and spirits. (p. 8)}
\]

Early settlers often compared the American wilderness to the landscape into which Adam and Eve were cast after their fall from Eden. Wilderness, in short, was a place to which one came only against one’s will, and always in fear and trembling. Whatever value it might have arose solely from the possibility that it might be “reclaimed” and turned toward human ends—planted as a garden, say, or a city upon a hill. (Cronon, 1995: 71) Periodically, this ideology of old reappears in modern media culture in instances to incite fear or warning. Horror, presented in
various media, has often used dark and formidable forests to hide lurking demons and evils, as is exemplified by the Forbidden (or Dark) Forest of the *Harry Potter* books.

The sublime

As control over landscape developed, so did mastery over other subjects like biology and astronomy. Development of science exposed the complexity of the natural world, and instead of fear, appreciation grew due to its seemingly divine origin (Nash, 2014: 45). Equally influential, Transcendentalist thought transformed the previous landscape of fear into one where divine inspiration and spiritual awaking could take place. For the Romantics and Transcendentalists, “sublime landscapes were those rare places on earth where one had more chance than elsewhere to glimpse the face of God … in those vast, powerful landscapes where one could not help feeling insignificant and being reminded of one’s own mortality” (Cronon, 1995: 73).

Cosgrove (1984) notes,

… by the 1820s and 1830s the idea of romantic landscape had invested scenes of wild grandeur with a special significance. They were held by many to be places which declared the great forces of nature, the hand of the creator … the idea of sublime wilderness offered a powerful opportunity for transcendence, a way of appropriating America as a distinctive experience unavailable in Europe. (p. 185)

These “natural cathedrals” were compared to European religious monuments and enjoyed similar reverence (Sears, 1989: 140). However, it was only these sublime landscapes as perceived and defined by Transcendentalists that received recognition, prestige, and protection. Importantly, Nash (2014) points out that, “It was not that wilderness was any less solitary, mysterious, and chaotic, but rather in the new intellectual context these qualities were coveted” (p. 44).
Therefore, it was not that the landscape changed in any particular, physical, or visual way; rather, changes in ideology and discourse ushered in a new appreciation and way of perceiving these landscapes (see Cosgrove and Daniels (Eds), 1988).

These notions persist into today’s perceptions of American landscapes designated as momentous by romantics of the past. Hiking and other non-consumptive recreation tourism often promote jaunts into the wilderness to relax, find one’s self, and re-connect with Mother Nature. In contemporary America, social media now joins the canvas and text of old as a powerful mechanism for the diffusion and support for the sentiments of sublime wilderness.

The frontier

While the American frontier and the sublime wilderness arose in tandem chronologically and culturally, we approach them here as different “moments” from a functional perspective. While they may have temporal overlap, they serve different purposes as relate to the masculine wilderness; the sublime creates awe-inspiring places that demand protection, while the frontier’s work focuses on the creation of these landscapes as hyper-masculine. Thus, for the purposes of this article, we address them as separate ideological and functional moments in the making of the masculine, American wilderness.

American settlements continued to push against wilderness’ boundaries, creating the unique space of the American Frontier. The frontier era ideology saw land as the space for man to experience freedom unlike that found in socially constricting cities. While risk remained,
Americans approached the frontier as something to be overcome in the name of progress and American identity. Frederick Jackson Turner (1921) wrote of the frontier,

That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom-these are traits of the frontier … (n.p.)

It is here that these desirable, masculine traits would be cultivated, soon representing frontiersmen as well as the nation as a whole. Similar illusions of the threat to American identity occurred in other literature and paintings of the time, most notably the writings of the Transcendentalists and the paintings of the Hudson River School of landscape painters.

Although this era ended with the frontier, the frontier identity coupled with the potent imagery and influence of the sublime created a persisting ideology around American wilderness, “freighting it with moral values and cultural symbols that it carries to this day” (Cronon, 1995: 72). As will be discussed shortly, imagery from social media sites that focus on nature tourism and its associated landscapes often elicits similar emotions of awe and wonder in those who come across it. Furthermore, these images frequently share compositional similarities to many American landscape paintings, such as those of the famous Hudson River School. These images often showcase a unique geological topography, rugged and raw, while minimizing evidence of human influences within these spaces.
One lasting influence of this time may be found in the very identity of wilderness, which was rapidly transformed from a genderless place of fear to a hyper-masculine space. As Cronon (1995) states, “The mythic frontier individualist was almost always masculine in gender: here, in wilderness, a man could be a real man, the rugged individual he was meant to be before civilization sapped his energy and threatened his masculinity” (p. 78). Not only does this pull from Turner’s frontier description, but it is often reflected in modern social constructions around American wilderness. While the Romantics initially set their sights on the landscapes of the east, Cosgrove (1984: 186) reminds us that the sublime matured in the west through American frontier ideology. He notes, “… Washington Irving and James Fennimore Cooper were able to project the image... of the pioneer, an unsophisticated, homespun American whose finest characteristics came precisely from his contact with the wilderness”. Thus, Americans needed ways to maintain this wilderness connection.

Protecting the American man cave

“Contact with wilderness in the form of the American frontier has ensured strength and development of the masculine American character. Saving wilderness, then, was also saving American manhood and, by extension, the nation” (Jarvis, 2007: 150). As the frontier came to a close in the late nineteenth century, more and more people realized its importance for American national identity and fought to keep its associations. To protect this valuable asset, national parks and wilderness preserves were established federally to protect areas increasingly appreciated in the American collective consciousness as “wilderness” from the threats of private property. “One by one, various corners of the American map came to be designated as sites whose wild beauty was so spectacular that a growing number of citizens had to visit and see it for themselves,” soon
developing into protected wilderness spaces and national parks so central to modern American identity (Cronon, 1995: 72).

However, although these protected spaces were meant to represent the wild character of the frontier, they needed to be managed, not only to allow for public access but also to retain the illusion that they were indeed “wild.” Miller (2007) reminds us in writing of such protected land, “… it [wilderness] continued to rest on the fiction that the American land in these hallowed sanctuaries was static, unchanging, outside and above the complex interplay of human and non-human nature—in short, the wilderness ideal” (p. 108). These spaces were meant to be used to reconnect modern civilized Americans, trapped in cities, with their more primal, biological side to further develop traditional masculine American ideals.

More specifically, the modern civilized Americans who most needed these spaces were often assumed to be affluent males; “the very men who most benefited from urban-industrial capitalism were among those who believed they must escape its debilitating effects” (Cronon, 1995: 78; see also Cosgrove, 1984; Nash, 2014; Sears, 1989). At this point, civilization, and the convenience and comfort within, “were especially insidious for men, who all too easily became emasculated by the feminizing tendencies of civilization” (Cronon, 1995: 78). In this way, wilderness continued its masculine associations by being advertised as a space where men could reconnect with the masculine qualities prone to atrophy in areas of civilization. Since

Since these spaces were actively created and managed, what resulted was a domesticated wilderness rather than the sublime, dangerous wilderness made through the words and works of
the Romantics and Transcendentalists. While risk was one of the defining characteristics of the sublime wilderness, this domesticated version, created for tired civilized men, by necessity included only a managed risk. Thus, risk in these heavily constructed spaces became an illusion through which visitors could experience the feelings of danger and the rush of adrenaline while simultaneously remaining confident of their relative safety. In this way, the experience of the hyper-masculine frontier could still be had through protected, managed American wilderness spaces (Cronon, 1995: 78). Here, proto-nature tourism was born.

Tourism’s influence over the masculine wilderness
Nature tourism, a powerful agent in the formation and maintenance of these landscapes, thus grew, insuring the continuation of the American identity and the relationship between man and wilderness.

Nature tourism and risk
Nature and adventure tourism provide designated natural landscapes in which people can organize and participate in group activities while also feeling that they are “in” nature and acting as a part of it rather than apart from it. This is the masculine wilderness of old, and nature tourists, whether male or female, engage with these spaces as such. Indeed, research conducted by Vidon (2016, 2017) found that nature tourists often view protected wilderness spaces as just that, authentic and wild (and by extension, masculine), while ignoring back stage management practices so crucial in molding these landscapes to nature tourists’ expectations (see MacCannell, 1976). Backstage practices within the frontstage–backstage dichotomy as described first by Goffman (1959) then applied to tourism by MacCannell (1976) recognize that tourist spaces are
actively designed to meet the outsider’s idea of what the space should authentically be, thus creating a staged authenticity of space. Within the context of American wilderness ideology, wilderness is actively created by managers of these landscapes to incorporate elements people believe should be present (Cloke and Perkins, 2002; Colten and Dilsaver, 2005). In addition, the role of the tourist herself or himself in shaping the American wilderness is not to be forgotten. Tourists’ engagement with social media and the profound use of imagery sharing promotes and perpetuates these wilderness expectations. Tourists want that iconic photograph at the mountain’s summit with nothing but clear skies and a breathtaking vista in the background, not the mass of other hikers that flocked to that site for the same reason.

Furthermore, back stage practices are important not only in maintaining the masculine identity of place, but ironically, in domesticating these landscapes and minimizing risk to visitors. In regard to these backstage management practices, a study by Rickard (2014) showed that because visitors make a deliberate choice to find wilderness, employees seemed to reason, risk and risk-taking should be expected and even sought-after. Thus, from a management perspective, risk is desired only to the extent that it can be chosen by certain visitors, rather than thrust upon all of them (p. 9)

Risk in these spaces needs to be present, but also optional and calculated.

While assuming an identity of being “wilderness,” these spaces are heavily managed for both the tourist’s protection and for the protection of nature from human harm (Perkins and Thorns, 2001: 192). One of tourism’s most important jobs in these landscapes is to manage actual risk while allowing visitors to be exposed to perceived risk, creating the illusion that they are experiencing
what they consider “real” or “authentic” wilderness and all its attendant dangers. Rickard (2014: 9) also found that “exposure to risk is valued in its ability to confer the authenticity (‘naturalness’) that generates a superior experience” for visitors to parks. Therefore, what tourism produces through management of wild landscape is a domesticated wilderness; one with acceptable risks but with a patina of authenticity and danger; “the transition from fear to adrenaline- filled exhilaration—from ‘AARH’ to ‘YEEHAA’—is the essence of commodified adventure” (Cloke and Perkins, 2002: 538). This relationship acts to create a socially exclusionary space where women, through feminine associations, were often an invisible element within landscapes chosen for nature tourism where risk is often perceived as being much higher for women than men (Yang et al., 2017: 3; see also Laurendeau, 2008; Olstead, 2011).

**Nature tourism and the social**

Nature tourism not only acts on the physical landscape, but asserts perhaps an even more profound ideological and social influence, informing the ways people value and perceive protected landscapes. MacCannell (1976) states, “the designation of an object as a sight … is most often accomplished without any esthetic assistance from the object. Its elevation to sight status is the work of society” (p. 119). Therefore, it is not the actual, physical site that is important, but rather the value society has placed on it via interaction through socially and culturally specific lenses. It is the actions of humans that create a hierarchy of importance between locations.

Urry (2005) and MacCannell (1976) both acknowledge tourists as “collectors of gazes” who accumulate social capital by visiting different sites (Urry, 2005: 44). Although the role of the
tourist gaze has been widely accepted, Perkins and Thorns (2001) point out that “the gaze metaphor is too passive to encapsulate the full range of the tourist experience … a better metaphorical approach to tourism is to talk about the tourist performance, which incorporates ideas of active bodily involvement; physical, intellectual and cognitive activity and gazing” (p. 186). By expanding the term gaze to include all actions by tourists, social capital can be accumulated through nature and adventure tourism not only by looking at a site, but also, more importantly, through performance of conquering it. The portrait taken at the top of a summit, smiling and sweaty, often has more social and personal value than one of just the site or of the tourist at the bottom.

The higher the prestige of the place in the collective tourist gaze, the greater the social capital, and since society determines the importance of the site, value and importance are fluid, evolving alongside tourists’ perceptual changes. Landscapes replete with risk are often those perceived as more authentically wild, consequently offering greater social capital to those who dare attempt to conquer them. In this way “the branding of such sites offers the guarantee of known satisfaction” which increases its recognition, attraction, and social visibility (Cloke and Perkins, 2002: 535). Visiting the Grand Canyon, for example, does not have the same value as hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, or hiking the Adirondack Peaks. Even within the same landscape, such as the Adirondacks, each peak has a unique social capital value based on its difficulty (see Vidon, 2017).

Tourism is an important engine that works to impart status and importance to these “wild” and seemingly “dangerous” landscapes, elevating them to a privileged place in American society.
While these spaces are still symbols of wilderness, nature tourism informs and influences the way society interacts with and categorizes these spaces.

Women, wilderness, and social capital

The data presented in this article result from preliminary media and discourse analysis of websites and blogs, including public Facebook groups, formal organizations including Women Who Hike and Outdoor Women’s Alliance, personal public blogs, and associated Instagram pages. While these are preliminary data and do not encapsulate all possible sources, they provide compelling evidence of women’s increasing agency and place in a wilderness that has historically been discursively constructed as masculine and offer a point of departure for further study. Social media plays an integral role in women’s assertions and performances of power in wilderness which directly combat stereotypes of their place in these landscapes. Furthermore, without tourism’s promotion of these spaces as extraordinary and powerful in themselves, women’s performances therein would lack the social significance and challenge to wilderness as masculine.

Tourism as a foothold

Simultaneous forces of tourism and female engagement are changing familiar, colloquial ideas of what wilderness is and who should be a part of it. It is in prestigious and iconic places, as created by the tourist gaze (see Cosgrove, 1984; Cosgrove and Daniels, 1988; Urry, 2005), that women are now creating their own place and status in wilderness. Tourism tends to promote wilderness spaces and activities as masculine (McNiel et al., 2012; Pritchard and Morgan, 2000a, 2000b; Wilson and Little, 2008; Yang et al., 2017). In this way, advertised adventure and leisure travel perpetuating wilderness as hyper-masculine act as a structural constraint since they perpetuate
stereotypes, and gender can affect women’s participation in this class of activities (McNiel et al., 2012; Pritchard and Morgan, 2000a; Wearing, 1991; Wilson and Little, 2008; Yang et al., 2017). Perpetuation of wilderness as masculine is often linked to the “Geography of Women’s Fear” by Valentine (1989), which addresses spaces as being socially constructed and, in this case, gendered to the point where exclusion and vulnerability are present (see also Berdychevsky et al., 2013; Berryman, 2015; Wearing, 1991; Yang et al., 2017). Importantly, scholars have suggested that gender greatly influences barriers to and experiences of leisure and nature tourism (Berryman 2015; Cosgriff et al., 2009; Swain, 1995; Wearing, 1991; Wilson and Little, 2005).

However, the very essence of nature tourism and the domesticated wilderness it maintains increase the popularity of and access to these spaces, allowing for power performances by women entering them. Yang et al. (2017: 3) attest that “risk taking thus provides an avenue for women to (re)construct and negotiate gender identities and to resist and challenge social expectations” (see also Bialeschki and Henderson, 1993; Laurendeau, 2008; Munar and Jacobsen, 2013; Olstead, 2011). Here, women were not only visually consuming spaces, but also actively performing conquering acts alongside their male counterparts despite the perception that these risks were historically faced only by virtue of masculine ruggedness and ingenuity. Women’s increased activity began to allow for a cycle of access, support, and female visibility and acceptance in these spaces. Jarvis (2007) attends to this shift when she asserts, “although the ideal of feminine fragility had no place at the top of the mountain, many women were members of outdoor clubs, went mountain climbing and camping, and participated in other wilderness activities … by recognizing that wilderness belonged to them too” (pp. 150–51). Female bodies
are becoming increasingly accepted, even in a strongly masculine environment through their own active engagement, not through changes in the social perceptions of wilderness as masculine.

**Increased visibility of women in wilderness**

Women have been increasingly positioning themselves in wilderness spaces, taking advantage of opportunities to engage in wilderness and participate in traditionally male activities in a traditionally masculine landscape. Recent studies have shown that the number of women participating in travel and nature tourism opportunities is on the rise (Berryman, 2015; Bialeschki and Henderson, 1993; Cave and Ryan, 2005; Pemberton, 2014; Yang et al., 2017). Specifically, Bialeschki and Henderson (1993) noted that “in the 1990s in all aspects of outdoor recreation, the participation of women [was] increasing faster than that of men” (p. 36). In a more recent study, results from Pemberton (2014) showed that on various travel sites, women were the predominant clients and often traveled solo, a trend not seen in previous generations. For young women travelers, typically of Generation Y or the Millennial Generation (Rabin, 2014; Taylor et al., 2012), feminism and gender studies have exploded and the clear cut lines between masculine and feminine of previous generations is now blurred. Traditional roles of women as wife and mother have become less stringent, allowing for deviations and creating a space where solo travel and wilderness adventure is more accepted and gender-based ideology is less of a constraint (Berryman, 2015). Through these activities and their increasing presence in wilderness, women are beginning to challenge the normative perception of wilderness’ masculine identity, inserting the feminine and becoming a more visible element of the wilderness landscape.
Women, wilderness, & social media

Recent literature suggests, “...research on social media in tourism is still in its infancy” (Zeng and Gerritsen, 2014: 27). However, the role of social media in tourists’ experiences continues to gain traction among scholars, with a 2013 review of 44 studies by Leung et al. charting the important role social media plays in the pre-, during, and post-trip phases for a traveler, as well as social media applications from the supply perspective. Furthermore, Zeng and Gerritsen’s 2014 review of 279 publications stressed the importance of social media in informing and influencing tourists’ decision making and planning. They note,

> the engagement of social media has fundamentally changed the way individuals plan and consume travel (Gretzel and Yoo, 2008; Hudson and Thal, 2013). Potential tourists can rely on others’ experiences for their decision-making, due to the experiential nature of tourism products (Litvin et al., 2008)” (Zeng and Gerritsen, 2014: 39–40; see also Mariani et al., 2016; Munar and Jacobsen 2013, 2014)

While many studies have looked at the role of social media in tourism advertising (Gretzel et al., 2006; McNiel et al., 2012; Mariani et al., 2016; Stepchenkova and Zhan, 2012; Wang et al., 2002), our efforts here are not directed at the supply side or even at decision-making on the part of the tourists. Rather, we aim to illustrate the ways women are using social media as discursive devices to change the identity of the American wilderness and as communities for empowerment of themselves and each other.

Women increasingly exhibit their visibility in wilderness, not only through their “in the moment” presence, but also via social media, where they display their place in wilderness through Facebook, Instagram posts, and other media outlets. They regularly make use of photographs and
portray themselves in wilderness in power poses to embrace women’s place in the outdoors. The wilderness in the background of these photos often reflects the same powerful, iconic scenes as depicted by earlier Transcendentalist writings and Hudson River School visual renditions, yet with the notable addition of the female form. Photographs act as important tools in increasing social capital and in power recognition, especially over landscapes used for nature tourism (Munar and Jacobsen, 2013, 2014). As Urry (2005) asserts, “Landscapes and townscape typically involve the notion of ‘mastery.’ The photographer, and then the viewer, is seen above, and dominating, a static and subordinate landscape” (p. 129). Photographs can act to perpetuate preexisting notions of the visual landscape as created by tourism, or work to redefine social understanding of these spaces which we examine here (Stepchenkova and Zhan, 2012). By showing domination or mastery of socially recognized, and typically masculine, sights with high social capital, women are not only providing evidence of female accomplishments but are also pushing for societal recognition to re-identify the masculine wilderness landscape. In addition, photographs allow the photographer the agency to frame herself in a certain way and the process acts as a performance of identity creation (Haldrup and Larsen, 2003; Larsen, 2006; Losh, 2015; Munar and Jacobsen, 2013). Many photos involve power poses, which depict women flexing their muscles and promoting dominant body language over the landscapes they are in. This also includes photos depicting active engagement, rather than women posing passively in wilderness. These poses of women “conquering” and “mastering” the landscape depict masculine ways of interacting with the landscape, associated with those same characteristics of ruggedness, individualism, and strength that helped create the wilderness idea (Cosgrove, 1984; Cronon, 1995). As Wearing (1992) notes, “women who engage in physical sporting activities do find the space between the contradictory discourses on athleticism and femininity to integrate the positive
aspects of male and female identity” creating a balance where one is not overcome by the other within identity association (p. 327). By actively putting themselves in these powerful and dynamic poses, women are framing the way they see themselves in wilderness and are changing the way others see them as well.

The power and prevalence of social media

Social and digital media manifests in a multiplicity of ways. Preliminary data for this article focused on Instagram pages, public Facebook groups, personal blogs, and advertising campaigns. Instagram is exclusively a photo-sharing media site where photos are often overlaid with quotes or accompanied by captions. The main source for Instagram analysis was the Instagram page for Women’s Wilderness—a non-profit group focusing on providing outdoor education to women of all ages. Facebook groups are a more collaborative form of social media where any member can post text, video, or images for the whole group to see, comment, and share. Since Facebook groups can be created and joined by anyone with an account, a search was done using combinations of key words such as “women,” “wilderness,” “outdoors,” and so on. From the search results, descriptions of the groups as well as member counts were taken. A similar search was done for personal blogs, using key word combinations on various blogging sites such as Blogger, Wordpress, and Weebly. Through these various searches, advertisements for products related to the search terms became associated with the webpages. Most notable was Recreational Equipment, Inc.’s (REI) new campaign focused on women outdoor enthusiasts. Their new advertising campaign, and strong use of social media, was also included in this article. In the following sections, each of these platforms is discussed with common activity and their possible effects on women’s wilderness empowerment.
As of 26 April 2017, Instagram reached 700 million users since its launch on 6 October 2010 (Instagram, 2017a). From those 700 million users, more than 600 million are active monthly and more than 400 million are active daily (Instagram, 2017b). In addition, Instagram has over 8 million business profiles which include organizations such as Outdoor Women’s Alliance, Women Who Hike, and Women’s Wilderness. As of May 2017, Outdoor Women’s Alliance (n.d.) has over 198,000 followers, Women Who Hike (n.d.) has over 160,000, and Women’s Wilderness (n.d.) has over 2400. These three pages post photos of women active in outdoor recreation activities in wilderness spaces. Many are either of professional female athletes or are shared photos provided by members or followers on their pages. All photos include a caption attached with the photo, on the photo itself, or both. The photos and captions provide space for women to share their experiences and empower others like them. For example, one woman stated: “Don’t call us crazy for going into the wilderness alone. Don’t try to stop us doing something that empowers us” (Women’s Wilderness, 2017, Instagram Photo Caption). Another photograph caption challenged gendered qualities of wilderness by stating, “[the trip] taught me that being confident and brave were not bad qualities, that being myself was something worth celebrating” (Women’s Wilderness, 2016). Liz Tomas, in one of her photo captions stated, “no one questions female pilots, police officers or professional athletes these days, why should hikers be any different?” (Thomas, 2016). These captions show women actively engaging with and challenging wilderness’ masculine associations through Instagram posts, which allow their statements to reach an ever-increasing audience. Since this is a visually focused platform, women’s use of Instagram promotes women’s empowerment in wilderness spaces by increasing
their visibility in these spaces and further shaping the “gaze” of modern society on wilderness areas.

Facebook

Social media sites also provide a space for online communities where women offer support to others grappling with constraints of normative gender roles within wilderness through shared experience (see Gretzel et al., 2006; Munar and Jacobsen, 2013; Wang et al., 2002). Descriptions of these groups emphasize these platforms as being “safe spaces for members to plan adventures, make new friends, share stories, seek advice, and thoughtfully discuss issues related to the outdoors and femininity” (PNW Outdoor Women Group, n.d.). Another group states that their “sole purpose is to encourage, educate and empower women to get outdoors” acting as a “community of sisterhood that fosters individual personal growth” (Women Hikers & Outdoor Adventurers, n.d.). Diversity of groups and membership counts shows that these communities are reaching a wide audience and are receiving wider attention by the public. Facebook, in contrast to Instagram, uses these virtual community spaces to facilitate discussion and digital dialogue between group members, allowing for more detailed and personal exchanges of information and experiences. These connections help break down social, emotional, and physical barriers that may have previously barred some women from participating in wilderness spaces. In this way, women have a variety of media platforms on which they post about their wilderness experiences. By sharing photos or participating in groups, wilderness recreational accomplishments are validated by those at home and others who have also been to these places (O’Regan, 2010). For women, “an image of participating in adventurous activities … could enhance their status or identity as one of being “adventurous,” “brave” or “daring.” Perhaps developing a more powerful image or the stronger image of the individual in their own eyes and in the eyes of
others” which counteracts feminine roles and contributes to self-image and empowerment (Myers, 2010: 198, see also Cockburn, 2016; Jordan and Gibson, 2005; Wilson and Harris, 2006).

Blogs

Other forms of opposition against a masculine wilderness include the widely received narratives of solo women travelers which, through various media forms, reach a global audience. Many women have turned their personal travel or wilderness recreation experiences into blogs, memoirs, travel narratives, and short stories. These auto ethnographic works can be accessed by millions of women around the world and are in direct conflict with most media advertisements which portray women as only playing passive roles in wilderness (Berryman, 2015; McNiel et al., 2012). Blogger, Wordpress, and Weebly are some examples of free blogging websites that women use as a platform to talk about their travel and recreation in wilderness areas. There are countless members on each site that focus on topics encompassing women in wilderness. Blogs are not only used as extensions for larger organizations such as Women Who Hike or Outdoor Women’s Alliance, but they also can be personal accounts such as Just A Colorado Gal (Rochfort, n.d.), Her Side of the Mountain (Palin, n.d.), and For the Love of Climbing (Kathy, n.d.), or collaborative such as She Explores (n.d.) Hiking Lady (n.d.), and Dirtbag Darling (Gall, n.d.). These blog examples offer spaces for women to share their experiences and offer advice to other women in their situation, much like Facebook groups. For example, Lisa Palin, author of Her Side of the Mountain, writes,

I started solo hiking and camping, I have encountered a lot of reactions, from the awed (“I could never do that, it must be amazing”) to the critical (“that is unnecessarily
dangerous and stupid, and so are you”) to the curious and interested (“aren’t you bored/lonely/scared?”). I have often wished there was some resource or guide I could have looked to for advice and encouragement, and so…Her Side of the Mountain was born. May you learn from my mistakes, failures, joys and successes.

In addition, Heather Rochfort, author of Just A Colorado Gal, posts about her experiences being a woman entering the outdoor recreation field, reminiscing, “When I tried to purchase my mountaineering boots in 2002, no one sold women’s specific boots in the entire city of Boulder. I ended up buying a demo pair in a men’s size 4 because that was the best option available” (Rochfort, 2014, The Rise of Women in the Outdoors). Sharing these women specific experiences increases the visibility of women as active engagers in wilderness recreation and can act as empowerment for other women entering these domains (Cockburn, 2016; Jordan and Gibson, 2005; Wilson and Harris, 2006). They also act to show the changing trends in women’s wilderness participation. As exemplified in the discussion above, the difference in participation and activity on blogs and Facebook is that blogs create a separation between the presenter and the audience while Facebook offers a more balanced interaction between users. Blog authors have full autonomy over their sites, and the context of posts is often focused on the experiences of one person. Blogs act as points of inspiration for others and personal shows of social, physical, and emotional growth of women conquering wilderness spaces.

Advertising

In addition to social media posts and blogs, some outdoor and recreational clothing and equipment brands are catching wind of this trend as well. REI Co-Op recently launched its new
advertising campaign as of 1 April 2017 called “Force of Nature,” which calls for the outdoors to be “the world’s largest level playing field” (Stritzke, 2017: n.p.). Stritzke, CEO and President of REI, argues that media representation of the outdoors, and recreation therein, is portrayed as being White and masculine. In their study, they found that although more than two-thirds of women viewed outdoor recreation positively “63% of women said they could not think of an outdoor female role model” and “6 in 10 women say that men’s interests in outdoor activities are taken more seriously than women’s” (Stritzke, 2017: n.p.). To combat these constraints to women’s participation in outdoor recreation, he states, “to create real change right now we are putting women—of all ages, races, sizes, gender expressions—front and center in all we do” through focusing on gender equality in marketing, donating US$1 million to nonprofits that promote women in the outdoors, developing technical gear for women, and offering new events to pro- mote women in the outdoors (Stritzke, 2017: n.p.). A majority of their campaign is focused on visual representation and empowerment of women in the outdoors.

This empowerment is important because it allows these women to reassess them- selves and their place in the perceived masculine wilderness. Empowerment helps women confront ideals of feminine beauty and subordination and realize that there is no one definition of femininity (Balka, 1995; Berdychevsky et al., 2013; Losh, 2015). This empowerment also promotes increased participation in activities, including those that involve risk-taking, which contribute to the deconstruction of conventional gender expectations, including how women comport themselves in the heretofore masculine wilderness (McNamara and Prideaux, 2010; McNiel et al., 2012; Yang et al., 2017).
Concluding remarks and directions for future study

The American wilderness ideal has been constantly changing. Two of the most notable changes to the American perception of wilderness have occurred via the creation of protected wilderness areas and through tourism, which helped to established wilderness as masculine and full of risk. However, this article argues that more recently, feminine discourse has acted upon this idea, specifically addressing the exclusionary nature of this gendered environment and illustrating the ways women are staking their claim to this masculine wilderness through active engagement and the use of social media platforms. Just as the Transcendentalists and painters of the Hudson River School discursively shaped perceptions of a sacred, sublime, and masculine wilderness, contemporary women, through blogs, social media posts, and photographs, are in their own ways beginning to reframe and reshape what constitutes today’s wilderness. Not only are these women shaping perceptions of today’s wilderness landscapes, but women’s increasing engagement with socially recognized wilderness spaces, as defined by nature and adventure tourism, also increases their social capital and thus changes the assumption that their place is outside of wilderness.

Tourism creates iconic places and women’s presence in them and attempted mastery over them in turn makes them feel powerful and socially significant. Social media, through various forms, works to perpetuate their stance against the masculine wilderness ideal. Sharing accomplishments not only empowers other women in their situation, but also increases their visibility beyond what had previously been achieved. Thus, social media provides a key role in changing perceptions of American wilderness to one where social empowerment can take place.
While this article examines the role of social media in positively influencing women’s participation in wilderness spaces and their increased empowerment in them, not all uses of social media promote these ideals. With the increased use of social media by younger generations, concerns over mental health, cyberbullying, and hyper-sexualization have also increased. While for some, social media offers a web of support structures and personal gratification, for others it is a place of judgment and harassment. It is not that women’s engagement with nature tourism and social media pertaining to wilderness participation eliminates this opposing discourse, but rather “It is in the intersection of such contradictory discourses that there is room for women to challenge, if not overturn, male hegemonic control and to create individual identities” (Wearing, 1991: 582).

This preliminary study on the increasing role of social media in women’s participation in wilderness opens the door for future research pertaining to participation outcomes between various platforms as well as overall perceived influence of such sites on women active in nature tourism and wilderness recreation. Understanding how these sites individually affect empowerment will better enable scholars and practitioners to appreciate the complexity of the she is operating, and the heterogeneity of the social media world and those who frequent it. Through an examination of different platforms and varied social media sites, scholars will be better equipped to attend to the nuances of sub-cultures associated with each site, the power each of those sites holds to create and inform contemporary discourse, and the ways they are impacting behaviors, norms, and expectations among nature tourists and managers alike. Applications of this information may lead to better understanding of how social media is
changing issues of access for other demographics beyond the scope of gendered space and wilderness.
References


Berryman, G. (2015) “Solo Female Travel: Barriers and Benefits.” Available at: http://www.travelconference.co.uk/commentries.php?paper=323#.WFGwQ3fMxmA


Outdoor Women’s Alliance (n.d.) “Outdoor Women’s Alliance Instagram.” Available at: https://www.instagram.com/outdoorwomen/ (accessed 30 May 2017).


Pemberton, J. (2014) “She’s Looking for Adventure, She’s Going Alone and She’ll Tell You All About It: Introducing the Solo Female Traveler.” Adventure Travel News, 13 May. Available


Rabin, H. L. (2014) “Revisiting Gender Constraints and Benefits in Leisure Tourism: Man-Up, It’s Time to Travel Like a Woman,” Theses and Dissertations, University of Montevallo, Montevallo, AL, pp. 1–84.


Available at: [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22994/22994-h/22994-h.htm](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22994/22994-h/22994-h.htm)


Women’s Wilderness (2016) “Instagram Post,” 6 December. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/BNrpLeRhP8h/

Women’s Wilderness (2017) “Instagram Photo Caption,” March. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/BRel67QDw9s/


No Man’s Land: The vital role of women-only online communities in increasing women’s wilderness participation

Abstract:
Wilderness and wilderness recreation in America has been shaped and conceived as a socially excluding space for women. In addition to the perpetuation of wilderness landscapes as masculine dominant, women face stronger intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural constraints for wilderness recreation than men. However, women, traditionally excluded from these landscapes, are actively challenging barriers and changing these long held associations. This change is being fostered and advanced by the use of social media, where contemporary women, through sharing text and photographs, are in their own ways beginning to reframe and reshape what constitutes today’s authentic wilderness. A survey and subsequent participant interviews were conducted with women active on social media and with wilderness recreation within the US to address questions of women’s motivations, constraints and negotiation in wilderness spaces. Women’s use of Facebook, Instagram, and other social media sites, although each unique in its user experiences, provides a platform for empowerment for women. The survey and interviews showed that specifically, women’s only Facebook groups were most useful to participants in overcoming barriers to participation. Social media was perceived to play an active role in motivations and constraint negotiation for almost all discussed barriers, thus promoting increased participation by women in wilderness activities. This study is the first to investigate the role of social media in negotiating constraints to women’s wilderness participation. Future studies may compare different social media sites, or types of interactions on constraints negotiation.

Key words: Women, wilderness, social media, empowerment, perception, risk.
Introduction

The 2017 Annual Outdoor Participation Report shows that since 2007, about 50% of the American population participates in outdoor recreation each year. In 2016 alone, there was an increase of 2 million people over the age of six who were active in outdoor recreation activities (Outdoor Foundation, 2017: 3). However, women have had lower participation rates than men, coming in at 46% of all surveyed participants for both 2016 (Outdoor Foundation, 2016: 9) and 2017 (Outdoor Foundation, 2017: 6). While this might not seem like a statistically significant difference, when participation rates are distributed by age, women’s participation in wilderness drops significantly more than men after age 30. In 2017, outdoor participation for women declined from about 55% for women in their 20s to about 20% for women aged 66 and over. In comparison, for the same age ranges, men’s participation dropped only from about 60% to 40% (Outdoor Foundation, 2017: 11).

Historically, women have been underrepresented in wilderness landscapes through the social creation and manipulation of what is commonly perceived to be “authentic” American wilderness. Wilderness activities are marketed as risky, full of danger, and as having other masculine qualities which can deter women’s participation in these spaces (McNiel, Harris, & Fondren, 2012; Pritchard and Morgan 2000a, 2000b; Wearing, 1991; Wilson and Little 2008; Yang et al., 2017). In some cases, wilderness is seen as exclusively masculine, perpetuated by patriarchal society, and is presented as dangerous to women (Valentine, 1989; Berdychevsky et al., 2013; Berryman, 2015; Wearing, 1991; Yang et al., 2017).
Other barriers to women’s participation in wilderness recreation also exist. Constraints theory, developed by Crawford & Godbey (1987) has been used by many scholars to help determine specific motivations, barriers, and negotiation strategies to participation in various types of leisure activities, including women’s wilderness recreations (for a review see Shaw & Henderson, 2005). This theory allows for an established set of guidelines to direct the study questions and for comparison to be made between a set of constraints and individual negotiation strategies around them with effects on participation. Motivations, constraints, and negotiations can be broken down into interpersonal, intrapersonal and structural components (Crawford & Godbey, 1987).

Scholars have focused on defining and testing the links between motivation, constraints, and negotiation to participation outcomes and between their subcategories (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey 1991; Kay & Jackson 1991; Jackson & Rucks 1995; Son, Mowen & Kerstetter 2008; White 2008; Yang & Tung 2017). Due to the current advancements and popularity of social media, various forms have started to emerge in scholarly publications related to women and wilderness recreation. Studies to date have examined the role of images or advertising as an interpersonal deterrent to participation (Chhabra, Andereck, Yamanoi, & Plunkett, 2011; McNiel et al., 2012), the role of social media on pre-travel decision making (Francesc, Gascón, & Mir-Bernal, 2016), or the use of photos in experience evaluation (Hansen, 2016; Loeffler, 2004). However, the role of social media in negotiating existing constraints to wilderness recreation for women has yet to be analyzed. Social media allows users to post self-created content to a wide global audience, changing how quickly and how far ideas can travel. With ever advancing...
technology and the continued increase in wilderness recreation in the US, it is imperative that we understand the complexities of connections between social media and wilderness recreation.

This study looks to understand the relationship between social media and women’s wilderness recreation. More specifically, it addresses questions that aim to illuminate how social media may be influencing women’s interest in and motivations to participate in wilderness activities, and the level of influence social media sites have in addressing constraints to women’s wilderness recreation.

Constraints Theory

Since the focus of this research was on how women are perceiving and overcoming barriers to participation in wilderness recreation, motivations, constraints and negotiation played a central role in guiding and grounding this research and methodology. Constraints theory was used as a framework due to its application in leisure and recreation scholarship and its applicability to various population samples, recreation activities, recreation motivations and negotiations.

In “Reconceptualizing Barriers to Family Leisure” (1987), Crawford and Godbey argue that one category of constraint is insufficient. Instead, they suggest a combination of three categories of constraints - intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural - which they apply to participation in leisure. These constraints interact with participant behaviors to affect not only one’s participation in a type of leisure activity, but also one’s preference for various activities. As outlined by Crawford and Godbey (1987) and later rearticulated (Godbey, Crawford, & Shen, 2010) interpersonal constraints are a result of interpersonal interaction that affect preference and
participation. These constraints can include social commitments, lack of someone to recreate with, or even a lack of role models. Intrapersonal constraints involve individual psychological states and attributes that affect preference such as a lack of perceived skill to participate, health issues that may affect participation, or even feeling excluded or not accepted within a space. Last, structural constraints only affect participation and include lacking time or money to participate in an activity and the location or distance to the preferred activity (p. 122-124).

It is important to note that the structural barriers identified within the framework of constraints theory, and even within studies that have expanded on this theory, do not include the nuances of structural barriers discussed in structural and post-structural literature. Crawford & Godbey (1987) portray structural barriers as simplistic and physically measurable units, whereas structural constraints as developed by structural and post structural theorists enter into ideological spaces of power and performance that have been built into society, knowledge, and reality (Wang, 1999; Gramsci, 1971; Vidon, 2016; Foucault 1978; Althusser, 2008). Acknowledgement of this limitation was expressed in the methodology by allowing for the addition emergent themes to be coded from the data and the implications of this limitation are part of the discussion.

In addition to constraints, negotiations and motivations were added to this framework, each with interpersonal, interpersonal, and structural components (Crawford et al., 1991; Kay & Jackson, 1991; Scott, 1991; Jackson et al., 1993; Jackson & Rucks, 1995; Yang & Tung, 2017). Various scholars have developed and tested statistical models to determine the relationship between motivations, constraints, and negotiation strategies for diverse groups of people participating an a
wide array of leisure and recreation activities, although that approach was not used here (Raymore et al, 1993; Hubbard and Mannell, 2001; Son, Mowen, & Kerstetter, 2008; Gilbert & Hudson, 2000; Hawkins et al., 1999; Walker et al., 2007)

Since its initial application to understand family leisure, constraints theory has been applied to various forms of leisure and tourism (e.g.; McQuarrie & Jackson, 1996; Gilbert & Hudson, 2000), including wilderness recreation (e.g., Coble, Selin, & Erickson, 2003; Shores et al., 2007; White, 2008; for a broad review see Godbey, Crawford & Shen, 2010). Godbey et al (2010:120) note that constraints will manifest differently for individuals based on a variety of factors including socio-economic standing and socio-demographic characteristics, including gender, stating “females are typically more constrained than males in their leisure lives” (see also: Henderson & Ainsworth, 2000; Henderson et al., 1995; Little 2002; Rabin, 2014; Shaw, 1994; Wearing, 1992; Wilson & Little, 2005; for a review see Shaw & Henderson, 2005). It is important to note that in addition to studies focusing on constraints theory, numerous papers have been written addressing pieces that contribute to various constraints for women in wilderness recreation.

McNiel, Harris, & Fondren (2012) analyzed gender stereotypes within wilderness recreation advertising. They found that,

women are shown in limited roles and men are represented as necessary companions or teachers to help educate or protect women while in the wild. Taken together, there is the overall theme that women are outsiders in this environment. Even in ads attempting to
encourage women’s participation in wilderness tourism, stereotypes about women and their interest in outdoor recreation are present (McNiel, Harris, & Fondren, 2012: 51). As discussed above, lack of female visibility or female role models directly relates to interpersonal constraints that affect an individual’s participation. In addition, advertising and visual media can act as a point of reference for women looking to start a new activity and may influence their perception of their place or role within such, reflecting an intrapersonal constraint (McNiel, Harris, & Fondren, 2012: 40).

Another intrapersonal constraint is fear and risk perception which has been highly documented in women’s travel, leisure, and adventure recreation. A survey study done by Reisinger & Crotts (2010) revealed differences in risk perception and negotiation by men and women. They found that “female respondents perceived traveling internationally as involved higher risk, were more anxious, felt less safe, and intended to travel less internationally than male respondents regardless of their cultural orientation”(Reisinger & Crotts, 2010: 793). Where increased sense of fear or anxiety negatively affected female motivations to travel, for male respondents, "the risk is appreciated and there is a determination not to let fear deter their travel” (Reisinger & Crotts, 2010: 805). Similar results were found by Willson & Little (2005) who found intrapersonal constraints relating to fear and risk emerge for women both before the travel event and during travel. In addition, through interviewing solo women travelers, they found evidence of all three categories of constraints in both pre-travel and during travel (Willson & Little, 2005: 162).

While many studies have examined motivations, constraints, and negotiations, social media use has yet to be analyzed as a negotiation tool used by women actively participating in wilderness
recreation. This study fills that gap by interviewing women about their social media use in relation to their wilderness recreation.

Methods

To better understand the motivation for, relationship between, and outcomes of women’s use of social media and their wilderness recreation, semi-structured interviews were conducted with women active with social media in relation to wilderness recreation. Survey and interview data were collected between November 2017 and February 2018, as outlined below.

Screening Survey

To better understand the connection, motivation, and outcomes of women’s use of social media and their wilderness recreation, semi-structured interviews were conducted. A recruitment statement was posted on various public social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and blogging sites as a public post so all users could view and share the information (Appendix A).

For Facebook, recruitment was posted to public groups and pages. A key word search was done on the platform searching for public groups and pages in which the wider Facebook community can post. Groups can be made public, any Facebook user can join and post, or private, members have to be approved by an administrator before being allowed into the group. For recruitment and posting purposes, groups had to be public so members of the wider community could view and share the recruitment. When looking for wilderness and outdoor recreation groups, almost all of the groups found were private and of those publicly accessible, membership counts and sample sizes were low. Therefore, Facebook Pages were places initially used for recruitment.
These Facebook Pages included National Park pages (i.e. Yosemite National Park, Acadia National Park, Volcanoes National Park) local and state parks and wilderness area pages (i.e. Appalachian Trail, Adirondack Mountains, Colorado Trail Foundation) and outdoor recreation and brand pages (i.e. Adirondack 46ers, Catskill 3500, REI, Hike It Baby). Outdoor and wilderness recreation pages that specifically targeted women were used for recruitment as well, including but not limited to Outdoor Women’s Alliance, All Women All Trails, Native Women’s Wilderness, Women Who Hike, etc. Once posted, the recruitment post could be, and was encouraged to be, shared to other women through sharing on personal profiles or within private pages or groups.

On Instagram, the recruitment post was put in the researcher’s personal page and tagged with various hashtags to allow for it to be searchable. Hashtags consist of a word or phrase preceded with # that acts to categorize content. These hashtags become clickable links which connect the individual post to a searchable term. Users can also search for hashtags, and any public posts containing that specific hashtag will be shown on a hashtag page (Instagram, 2018). In addition, it was sent to profiles similar to or an extension of those posted to Facebook for those profiles to share (i.e. Women Who Hike, Hike It Baby, Unlikely Hikers).

For blogs, snowball sampling was done from an initial public blog search. Many blog authors provide a section within their own blog to highlight other bloggers they follow who have similar content. These connections were used to find a variety of blogs by women on wilderness recreation activities. Blog authors were contacted with the recruitment post either through email if provided or through commenting on the blog site itself. Contacts were also encouraged to share the recruitment with their blog followers or anyone they felt would like to participate.
Due to the possibility of a high volume of respondents, participants were asked to complete a short, structured screening survey through Survey Monkey (surveymonkey.com), to establish that they indeed met the requirements of the study and to establish a sample of participants. The survey link was posted within the posted recruitment statement. The survey recruitment process was conducted over the course of three months between November 2017 and February 2018, with new postings of the recruitment information each month to ensure high outreach on the social media platforms.

Upon opening the survey link, participants were provided with consent forms for participation in the study. The rest of the survey consisted of six optional open-ended and multiple choice questions aimed at establishing the participant’s demographics, social media use, and wilderness recreation habits (Appendix B). The survey was not timed and the participants could fill it out on their own time. All surveys were anonymous; however, there was a final optional question for which respondents could leave an email address or form of identification if they wished to be contacted for a phone interview. The survey took an average of two minutes to complete.

**Interviews**

Participants who indicated in the screening survey that they were above the age of 18, identified as female, were active on at least one form of social media, had participated in wilderness recreation in the United States and indicated interest in participating in an interview were then contacted via email to schedule a phone interview. Information regarding the study and the consent form for the interview were attached to the email when contacting all potential
interviewees. Semi-structured interviews were conducted over the phone and consisted of verbal consent based on the information outlined in the email attachments and thirteen questions regarding the participant’s gender identification, personal changes in participation in wilderness recreation, and use and consumption of social media in regards to wilderness recreation (Appendix C). These questions were used in part to confirm and further develop participants’ survey responses, but also were used to readdress questions surrounding the research goal that were not fully addressed in the survey. The base questions of the interview were the same across all interviews amongst participants; however, answers were open-ended, allowing for a range of responses that led to organic questions and dialogue.

Interviews lasted anywhere between 25 minutes and 55 minutes depending on how the participants responded to the outlined questions. Phone interviews were recorded upon consent, as were the researcher’s post interview notes. Each file was later transcribed to ensure an accurate transcription of each conversation. In addition, two participants asked for accommodations or an alternative to a phone interview. In both cases, the participants were sent an electronic document containing the interview questions and were re-contacted by the researcher for clarification and follow up questions when needed.

Phone interviews in this study offer both benefits and drawbacks (Burke & Miller, 2001; Miller 1995; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). During phone interviews, silence as a probing tool may be more effective, and in this study, it proved to be so. Also, intimidation and representation were minimized due to lack of physically meeting. In addition, phone interviews were critical due to the geographical spread of participants across the United States, which made participation more
accessible because interviews could be done anytime and anywhere. Drawbacks include lack of information involving facial cues or body language. It may also have diminished the relationship between researcher and participant since there was no personal recognition or face to face meeting, but a connection was established through the shared identity of women active in wilderness between the researcher and participants.

Results

Screening Survey

The screening survey and recruitment took place over 5 months. A total of 658 responses were collected with a 72% completion rate. All data were downloaded from Survey Monkey into an Excel file. All incomplete responses, responses from participants who did not agree to the IRB terms, and participants who submitted multiple responses were not included, resulting in a final sample of n=627.

Participant ages ranged from 18 years of age to 76 years of age, with an average age of 39.

Women in their 30s constituted the highest represented group, and the least represented age group was women in their 70s (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Age of Survey Respondents
When asked about wilderness recreation, 97% of participants had done some sort wilderness recreation in the US, while 3% (n=16) of respondents had not. Participants were also asked about their social media use. All respondents reported being active on at least one social media platform, with a range of being active on one platform or site to being active on nine different sites. The average number of platforms reported was two. The three most commonly used social media platforms by participants were Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, respectively. Other social media platforms included professional sites such as LinkedIn, as well as various forms of blogging platforms (See Figure 2).

Privacy was also examined in the survey to understand the visibility of the content each participant is posting. When asked about general privacy of the platforms reported, nearly half of respondents, 47% (n=293), answered that all of their social media platforms are publicly accessible. In addition, 34% (n=215) had different privacy settings on the various platforms that they use. The most commonly described combination was that their Facebook profile and groups of which they were members were private, so only approved friends could view the content,
while their Instagram account was public, meaning anyone could view the content posted (See Figure 3).

**Interviews**

Of the total number of survey respondents, 344 (54.8%) indicated that they were interested in being contacted for an additional interview, and 40 (11.6%) participants were able to participate in an interview during the data collection period, creating a self-selecting sample. Age and participation rates in both wilderness and social media varied between interviewees. In addition, interviewees participated in wilderness recreation in 4 of 5 geographic regions within the United States (Figures 4 and 5).
All interview transcripts were imported into NVivo and coded within the program. Both deductive and inductive coding were used, creating a hybrid coding process (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). A code book was developed before the coding process (a priori) based on Crawford and Godbey’s (1987) constraints theory following deductive coding outlined by Crabtree & Miller (1999). Constraints acted as a main coding category, and themes within constraints were created as interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural. In addition to constraints, code books for motivations and negotiations were also created based off of prior research and included the same themes of interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural. Within each categorical theme, subthemes were also created based off of subthemes found by other scholars (See Appendices D, E, & F). Yang and Tung (2017:3) compiled results from various studies examining subthemes within interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural constraints and these findings were expanded to address negotiations for this study.

Additional emergent themes, both as subthemes and top coding themes, were added as the data were coded, acting as inductive coding (Boyatzis, 1998). For emergent themes, open coding was done after deductive coding was finished and each code was added in italics as a subtheme or within its own category, with definitions and example quotes from the interviews (Appendix G).

Wilderness Definitions and Social Media Use

All participants were asked to define wilderness in their own terms and if they believed wilderness and nature to be the same concept or separate. Most participants described wilderness as having an absence of built infrastructure or development; untouched and/or uninfluenced by human behavior. Participants described areas such as, “Any place in the wild away from
civilization” (Woman 29; Age 29; Midwest), “Untouched outdoors that has seen little of civilization of, I guess, mankind impacting it greatly so it looks like it always has” (Woman 33; Age 30; Midwest), and “I guess being somewhere remote” (Woman 12; Age 23; Pacific Northwest). These sentiments directly relate to the gendered and ideological wording provided in the Wilderness Act of 1964, which states that wilderness is an area “untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor” (Wilderness Act, 1964; emphasis added). When addressing wilderness ideology, and the power it holds in American culture, participants’ definitions work to perpetuate and uphold these long standing ideals. These results support the claim made by Vidon (2016:105), “wilderness, as ideology, hails nature tourists in the Althusserian sense, and they respond ritualistically, through the ways they represent wilderness, how they comport themselves in wilderness areas, and the language they use to communicate its value”. Characteristics of wilderness seemed engrained in the collective view of the nature recreator, regardless of the actual wilderness in which they individually participate.

When asked about wilderness in comparison to nature, most indicated that “Nature is not always wilderness, but wilderness is always nature” (Woman 25; Age 39; Pacific Northwest). One participant elaborated, saying “Nature exist everywhere, even in a city… whereas wilderness implies, the base of that word is wild, so it implies a lack of human constraint on the way that nature conducts its business” (Woman 32; Age 40; Northeast). In a sense, nature can be a part of everyday life, but wilderness is removed and remote, which reflects Lewis’ (2007:6) argument that “wild nature can be found everywhere, wilderness cannot”. Most women described wilderness spaces as being distinct from nature. Nature is more controlled and human domination and influence is often apparent, while wilderness on the other hand is free from
human influence, primitive, and distant or removed from society. While not stated explicitly, the differences between these two spaces are rooted in the gendering of space, with domesticated and subdued nature as the feminine, and remote and risky wilderness as the masculine through patriarchal wilderness associations which have been echoed in scholarship (Callicott and Nelson, 1998; Pritchard and Morgan, 2000a, 2000b; Williams, 1976).

The top forms of wilderness recreation were hiking, camping, and backpacking. Unsurprisingly, the least referenced outdoor activities included consumption sports like hunting and fishing, and motorized recreation like snowmobiling and 4-wheeling. Other studies not focused on constraints have noted, “although socially acceptable activities for women have expanded to include the more physically demanding and risk-taking activities, some are still male-dominated and deemed inappropriate for women. Hunting is one of these activities; hunting is contrary to women’s perceived role in society” (McFarlane, Watson, & Boxall, 2003). As far as motorized recreation, in many places, motorized vehicles are not permitted in legally defined wilderness spaces and participants often mentioned having a lack of motorized vehicles as a characteristic of their ideal picture of what wilderness should look and sound like.

In regard to social media, Facebook and Instagram, respectively, were the most commonly used social media platforms. When posting on social media, all participants included at least one photo, regardless of the social media platform, with some sort of caption. Photographs were most commonly reported to be landscapes: “Almost all the time I incorporated some form of landscape image. Occasionally there would be pictures of me if I felt like I was an important part of the conversation” (Woman 2; Age 25; Northeast). Some participants indicated that if people
were in the photograph, it would be of family (partner, husband, kids) or a group photo from the trip. Rarely did women indicate that selfies were their most common, and of those who did, the photo acted as part of a series. For example, one participant stated, “every time I go somewhere new I do a bridge pose or a wheel pose… And I’ve done it pretty much every place that I’ve been around the world” (Woman 26; Age 29; Northeast). In addition to the photographs, most participants included a short descriptive caption about the location/area and the activity.

*Motivations for Participating in Wilderness Activities*

Motivations were assessed through wilderness exposure. Participants were asked about their decisions to participate in wilderness activities. Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and structural motivations were each present, and in many cases, multiple motivation factors influenced wilderness participation for individuals.

**Interpersonal**

Interpersonal motivations for wilderness recreation were identified by most participants as being an influential motivator. A priori subthemes within interpersonal motivations were socializing with family and friends, and emergent subthemes were motivations through organization involvement and from social media audiences. Family was the most common motivator, with multiple participants stating “I just grew up doing it” or indicating a parent was highly involved in the outdoors, most commonly a father figure. Involvement with friends was the next most common interpersonal motivation. One woman stated, “I became friends with a pretty good-sized group of people who liked to camp and backpack and hike and travel etc. and so I was introduced and became involved that way” (Woman 36; Age 65; Southeast). The last two
motivators were organizational influence in which participants mentioned Girl Scouts as their initial motivator, or Social Media audiences which “almost hold me accountable” (Woman 11 Age 32; Southeast), or “it's kind of an accountability group” (Woman 20; Age 48; West). While not explicitly emergent themes as they fall under socializing with people who have shared values, they were unique and explicit enough to be coded as their own categories.

Intrapersonal

Four themes were coded for intrapersonal motivations: disconnect/personal time; physical health; achievement or success; and self-confidence and acceptance. Participants mentioned they wanted to disconnect from society and have personal time as the highest intrapersonal motivation. Disconnecting was from society, responsibilities, and technology. Personal time included finding a feeling of calm and centeredness, as well as self-discovery. As one participant stated, “I had felt those healing effects being outside, and when you remove yourself from all of this craziness and the business and what is demanded of you and it's just healing to be with yourself and to get to know yourself” (Woman 13; Age 24; Northeast).

In addition, participants mentioned that wilderness spaces were areas in which they gained confidence or felt accepted, stating, “I've always grown up loving the outdoors so those were the areas that I felt most myself, most accepted, and the least judged. Kind of more able to focus on just being in the moment and appreciating yourself and your body for its abilities rather than feeling like you are being watched or judged or for how you look” (Woman 10; Age 26; Pacific Northwest).
These two subcategories within intrapersonal motivations speak to ideas of “existential authenticity” in tourist’s motivations, specifically in nature tourism (Wang, 1999: 351). Modernity has decreased individual control over the “body”, both physically and spiritually/emotionally, through work, labor, and social constructions, which in turn, gives power to those who control these systems (Foucault 1977; Wang 1999; Lefebvre 1991). Specifically for nature tourists and recreators, “wild landscapes and opportunities for solitude and self-reflection provide the tourism site they believe offers them the opportunity to (re)connect with their authentic, unalienated selves, free from the gaze, and judgment of others around them” (Vidon, 2017:11). Intra-personal authenticity can be re-found by individuals when the controlling social structures have been suspended or limited, and these such (liminal) spaces and environments can be found on vacation trips or in nature due to the individual’s escape from the normal (Wang, 1999: 361-363; Vidon 2017:11). In both examples above, the women mention the need to escape from society/social expectations to rediscover themselves in wilderness spaces.

Physical health was also a motivator for some; “for hiking I just wanted to get fit, so it started out as a fitness thing for my health” (Woman 19; Age 27; West), but was often limited to initial motivations. Feelings of achievement or success also served as initial motivation for some respondents even before they physically participated in any type of recreation. “I see people join in with things that I want to do, it makes it seem more possible to me. Oh well, if she can do it I can do it” (Woman 16; Age 68; Northeast). Then, after trying something for the first time, these positive feelings continue to motivate, as suggested by this 41 year-old participant from the Midwest, “And then once I started experiencing it, just the, it was so peaceful and it kept
bringing me back and then I wanted to see more different things and I experienced that” (Woman 17).

**Structural**

Structural motivations pertained both to the location or physical place of the activity and to having increased time or money availability to participate in wilderness recreation. Location motivation occurred through moving to a location with more recreation opportunities available, “And I lived in Pasadena at the time which is like close to the mountains and there are a lot of trails around there and it was just easier” (Woman 13; Age 24; Northeast), but also motivation through location inspiration, “I've been living in the city for some time so I'm not aware of, I'd have to go out of my way to search for trails or to search for places to go, and just being able to scroll through my feed and seeing like 10 pictures of places that are incredible and not that far for me, I mean definitely motivates me” (Woman 12; Age 23; Pacific Northwest).

The other structural motivation was having time and money available to spend on wilderness recreation activities. While for many this was due to retirement, others indicated that job changes allowed for this to occur as well, “It's just the logistics of my job and where I am financially and I can leave everyday responsibilities for three to four weeks at a time” (Woman 31; Age 41; Northeast).

*Constraints to Women’s Wilderness Participation*

Constraints are barriers individuals face when deciding to participate in a leisure activity. Interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural constraints were coded in the data. As Crawford and
Godbey (1987) state, "It is important to remember, however, that barriers are influences upon, not determinants of, leisure behavior, and it is the relative strength of barriers vis-à-vis preference which most likely predicts leisure behavior" (pg.124). Therefore, the constraints are not insurmountable, but act to dissuade participation.

**Interpersonal**

Low female visibility in wilderness recreation, lack of female participants or companions, and family or social commitments were the most reported interpersonal constraints. Low female visibility included a lack of female role models and a low inclusion of women in media and advertising. Low visibility also applied to women of color, minority groups, ages, and body sizes. One participant noted, “If you look at say mountain biking or hiking and backpacking or things like that, and trail running, those types of things, I think they are still predominantly male faced in those types of things” (Woman 21; Age 45; Northeast). Another participant mentioned that she’d like to see more “women that are a little bit more mature, older, not a young 20 year old that's a size 2. Like just regular women. I'm 46 and there’s all ages of women who are out there enjoying it” (Woman 5; Age 46; West).

Not having someone else to recreate with also acted as a barrier to women’s wilderness participation. While many women in the study participated in wilderness recreation alone, most preferred to have a partner with them, “I'm not one to go alone and do things like that. So it took a while to find anyone who would participate in anything” (Woman 22; Age 62; Midwest). Even with more structured activities, one participant explained why it was hard for her to learn to rock climb, stating, “if you go to a rock climbing center by yourself, and my other friends are too
afraid, you can't climb. The workers there won't belay you, they won't help, they won't teach you. So it's hard if you are kind of like in a breakfast club group of friends and no one else is totally interested in your interests. Then where do you go from there?” (Woman 2; Age 25; Northeast). While some participants could find male companions, as one woman noted, “I have lots of guy friends who like to hike but every once in a while it's nice to just hang out with another girl. And none, I mean that sounds horrible but none of my girlfriends like to hike or be outside or do anything of the sort” (Woman 26; Age 26; Northeast).

The third most documented interpersonal constraint was family or social commitments. In this study, it was found that this theme manifested most commonly in the form of motherhood and family commitments. Negotiation strategies that result from this constraint are similar to other interpersonal negotiation strategies. Simply put, “you reach a point in life when children’s schedules prevent you from doing anything but children's schedules” (Woman 16; Age 68; Northeast). In this case, family obligations acted much like social obligations would, and negotiation strategies often took the form of including family or children in the recreation activity.

The emergent theme of risk perception by society or non-participants acted as a constraint on many women. One woman described her past experience by saying, “it's hard to, when you enjoy something, to be told you shouldn't do it…last year I backpacked alone and they were like ‘oh you shouldn't do it’. And the year before, I met someone out there backpacking and went with them and they [society/coworkers/family] were like ‘oh you don't hardly know that person you shouldn't go with them’” (Woman 17; Age 41; Midwest). On a related note, another participant
mentioned “that can put a damper on things for a lot of people when we get that pressure from everyone else” (Woman 20; Age 48; West).

The last theme for interpersonal constraints was the emergent theme of competition. Some women mentioned that competition in wilderness recreation could deter their participation in such activities. One woman commented on her experience, stating, “hiking’s not meant to be competitive. You know, I go out and backpack and hike into the wilderness not because I want to be competitive, but because it's something that I want to enjoy and experience” (Woman 17; Age 41; Midwest). Another participant agreed with the above statement, mentioning something similar, “You need to be the best, you need to do everything and then you will maybe be considered successful. It's even prevalent in hiking, it's prevalent in the outdoor community” (Woman 13; Age 24; Northeast).

**Intrapersonal**

Coding for intrapersonal constraints followed sub-codes as outlined in previous studies (for list see Yang & Tung, 2017). The most commonly stated intrapersonal constraint was risk perception and safety. This differs from the previous examples of risk perception in that as an intrapersonal constraint, the danger is being perceived and evaluated by the participant. Risk included broad based risk assessment, as described in the statement, “You always have to be careful of the creepy people out there” (Woman 34; Age 47; Midwest). More commonly, risk was also evaluated from a social media and privacy perspective. As one woman describes, “Privacy and safety kind of go hand-in-hand… If you are out of the country, it's really not a good idea, or if
you're gone to a national park all day long, it's really not a good idea to advertise in the entire world that you're not home” (Woman 36; Age 65; Southeast).

Women also frequently mentioned the feeling of exclusion, or feeling self-conscious in conjunction with some wilderness activities. These constraints occurred both pre-trip and actively during wilderness experiences. Many women voiced that they wanted to use social media pages as a place to ask questions in preparation for a trip or activity, but as one woman commented, “there's a lot of mansplaining where you feel attacked just for having a question, an honest question that you don't know the answer to. So I think that then turns it into an experience of well why would I ask another question” (Woman 17; Age 41; Midwest). In this case, a feeling of exclusion due to “mansplaining” could be linked to a decrease in her interest in and exposure to new sources of wilderness recreation. Mansplaining is a colloquial term with its origin often attributed to Rebecca Solnit, writer and activist, in her work Men Explain Things to Me (2014), however its origins actually date to 2008 blog comment originating from post about a Japanese artist, in which a user named electricwitch accuses a user Count-vronsky of “mansplaining”. The term “mansplainer” appeared as a Word of the Year in 2010 by the New York Times, and was defined as, “a man compelled to explain or give an opinion about everything — especially to a woman. He speaks, often condescendingly, even if he doesn’t know what he’s talking about or even if it’s none of his business” (Sifton & Barrett, 2010). More officially, mansplain has been added to the Oxford English Dictionary, defined as “of a man: to explain (something) needlessly, overbearingly, or condescendingly, esp. (typically when addressing a woman) in a manner thought to reveal a patronizing or chauvinistic attitude” (Mansplain, 2018).
In addition, feelings of exclusion can occur actively during the activity. One woman described her experience being the only woman on an outdoor recreation experience: “I really felt that I was being treated gingerly like not being respected… It’s still one of those areas where it’s still hard to break into. I feel like being treated equally” (Woman 27; Age 53; Southeast).

Many women also felt that they did not have the skillset required for a particular type of wilderness activity, which barred their participation. While not linked to hiking explicitly, other activities like camping and rock climbing were mentioned. “I think that I thought that it was really hard to do, like oh you have to have a tent you have to have a stove, and before I did this big trip to Zion and the Grand Staircase, I wouldn't go out because neither of us had really camped before…I was a little nervous that I wasn't going to be able to do it because I didn't feel like I knew how to camp” (Woman 4; Age 25; Pacific Northwest).

The last intrapersonal constraint mentioned by participants was not having the health or physical ability to participate in certain activities. This was the least coded intrapersonal constraint and often participants mentioned health as a motivator to participate in wilderness activities. “I worked on getting into better shape. Because you have to be in fairly decent shape to do these activities. You have to be, you don't have to be an Iron Man but you have to have some muscle and some coordination” (Woman 22; Age 62; Midwest).

**Structural**

Structural constraints were the least mentioned out of the three and contained the fewest number of subthemes. Geographic barriers related to physical location of wilderness sites was the most
common constraint. Many participants were located within cities and felt that wilderness recreation couldn’t be found local to them, “I went to college in Detroit so I didn't have a ton of opportunity there” (Woman 35; Age 23; West).

*Negotiations of Identified Constraints by Women*

Women identified various negotiation strategies related to the above constraints. For most, these strategies successfully overcame barriers to participation. Interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural constraints were all identified. Although equal number of participants mentioned motivations, constraints, and negotiations, the frequency of negotiation strategies by participants was almost double the frequency of described constraints.

*Interpersonal*

Interpersonal negotiations included increasing a sense of community and female visibility, finding physical partners to participate in wilderness recreation with, and finding advice and expertise. All three were used to address all the stated interpersonal constraints listed above and were facilitated by the use of social media.

The most common interpersonal negotiation strategy used by women was finding a community and increasing visibility of women in wilderness spaces. In all cases, social media was used as a central negotiation tool to increase connections to online communities, which in turn increased the visibility of female representation in wilderness spaces. When asked about the role of online communities, one woman stated, “I didn't really realize how big the hiking community really was until I got on this page or on these pages really, and then it just seemed to kind of open up
and I got the chance to see that it is everywhere” (Woman 37; Age 27; West). When asking about women’s specific online communities or interactions, one respondent stated, “I feel like there's a sense of community even if you can't see each other or physically meet each other right away. I feel like there is a community where women support each other” (Woman 19; Age 27; West).

Closely related to the increased sense of community that women gain through online communities, connections with other media users often extended beyond the screen. Various social media groups would post meetup events in which users could meet in person and participate in a form of recreation; “I have gone on a few meetups where they'll post and say, ‘Hey, I need someone to go hiking with me here’, and I'll be like, ‘Hey, I live close to you, I'll go!’” (Woman 37; Age 27; West). Another woman even indicated that finding other women to go hiking with was her primary motivation for joining social media groups: “I was able to connect with some ladies in an area where I was hoping to find people to go hiking and backpacking with” (Woman 30; Age 61; West). In addition to making connections to online users, one woman found that social media allowed her to better connect with women in her social life within the realm of wilderness recreation: “It wasn't until I started on these social media pages that I was like, oh my gosh she does that too! I didn't know she did that and I didn't know that she enjoyed, you know, hiking after work and all of those types of things” (Woman 21; Age 45; Northeast).

The creation of a virtual and physical community of women speaks to what Turner et al (2011:xxx) describe as communitas, “an experience of oneness or unity felt by those sharing a
rite of passage experience…communitas therefore describes a model of sociality and a way of experiencing unanimity with other human beings” (see also Turner, 1973). What separates communitas from community is its unique relationship with shared experience “ideally sought outside of home and work structures [which] produces a special feeling of excitement and close bonding among the participants” (Graburn, 2004:29) where “structures fall apart, and differences arising out of the institutionalized socioeconomic and sociopolitical positions, roles, and status disappear” (Wang, 1999:364). The role of communitas in both women-based leisure tourism (Berdychevsky, Gibson & Bell, 2013) and adventure tourism (Varley, 2011) have been explored and similar results were found.

In addition to these social media pages creating communities both online and in the real world, they also act as a platform for information sharing. When asked about motivations for joining Facebook groups, one respondent mentioned:

I've decided I'm going to start doing [backpacking] this year, so I joined this group so I could learn more about it from other people that are more experienced than me. People share lots of information about their water filtration, and their backpacks, and shoes. So I've learned a lot from the people on there that actually have the experience, rather than me trying to read the reviews online and trying to figure out what I need to buy online (Woman 23; Age 38; Midwest).

Multiple women mentioned the importance of feeling safe when looking for information, and the avoidance of “mansplaining”, with one woman stating, “the women's group [on Facebook] seems much more of people posting things and educating each other and feeling like they have a
safe place to ask questions that they definitely would not have posted in the other co-ed group” (Woman 10; Age 26; Pacific Northwest).

Intrapersonal

Intrapersonal negotiation strategies were reported the most, and included three subthemes: increased self-confidence or inclusion, increased exposure or experience in wilderness recreation, and decreased personal risk perception. Most women mentioned that social media has helped them overcome the feeling that they don’t belong in wilderness spaces; “It [social media] has been inspirational for me and has helped me realize that it is an appropriate thing for me to be doing, and that it’s good for me to be doing, going out and hiking…. It verified it for me” (Woman 18; Age 57; Northeast). Actual and virtual social inclusion also helped women feel included and better represented in wilderness activities; “I’m 68 years old and there aren’t a whole lot of people in my peer group that do these activities so having a broader [Facebook] group to be a part of … just been huge” (Woman 16; Age 68; Northeast).

Risk perception has also been negotiated through social media, mainly the perceived risk in solo traveling. Specifically, women’s only Facebook groups have helped women navigate this social and physical terrain, as indicated by this participant, “I know I am less afraid to go out by myself since being in women’s groups because of the empowerment that they give you. They actually talk about it more because they are upset because everyone else is telling them they should be scared” (Woman 5; Age 45; West). Another woman had the same sentiment, stating, “I feel more comfortable with going out hiking by myself because of all of the women's backpacking groups that I am a member of” (Woman 28; Age 23; Southeast).
Social media has also helped women increase their experience or exposure to new outdoor wilderness activities or skills. One woman commented that social media exposed her to new wilderness recreation options, “I want to do a lot because of some of the things I've seen on social media so, I think that it's a powerful tool because you can look at things and be like wow that's awesome, I really want to do that” (Woman 2; Age 25; Northeast). More specifically, one woman stated, “I never would have thought about hiking the PCT had it not been for just getting hooked on reading PCT Trail journals and blogs” (Woman 9; Age 47; West).

**Structural**

Three structural negotiations were coded: Knowledge of place, women specific gear, and negotiating issues specific to women. Photos and geotags were used to help women find new places to participate in wilderness recreation. “I was curious about where these photos were coming from. And I would look them up on the map and be like wow it’s just like a two hour drive or three hour drive which is not a big deal for me” (Woman 19; Age 27; West).

The second structural negotiation was finding women-specific gear. One woman commented about her use of female only Facebook groups and Instagram, saying, “I still go there for gear. So if one of the people I follow has a type of gear, then I'll more likely buy that gear because I know that that person is using it” (Woman 14; Age 40; Northeast). Lastly, women also mentioned that social media helped them negotiate biologically feminine issues that could occur on the trail and negatively affect participation such as menstruation and menopause. These topics were mentioned to be exclusively discussed on women’s only Facebook groups; “In women's
groups we’re free to come up we can ask each other questions about how do you pee and menstruate when you’re backpacking, something I would never ask in a co-ed group. Because that's just personal, it's just personal stuff and it's an experience that biological women share and we feel more comfortable talking to each other about it” (Woman 25; Age 39; Pacific Northwest).

It is important to note here “woman” has been a self-identified term of gender by participants regardless of their biological orientation in an attempt to be inclusive of a range of female experiences outside of the traditional masculine/feminine dichotomy. However, this structural constraint has less to do with self-identity than physical biology of women (i.e., hiking while pregnant, menstrual cycles, menopause, etc.).

**Emergent Themes**

Three emergent themes were developed outside of Motivations, Constraints, and Negotiations and their subthemes. These three will be discussed in the section below.

“*It’s not always perfect… it’s not always fun*”: Honest and Real Posting

Many women indicated that with social media it can be hard to see the reality of a situation, especially women’s wilderness recreation. Many women recognized, and admitted of themselves, “people in general usually post their best picture of the day, or the highlights of their vacation. You don't post the moment where you had sand in your eyes or you had a terrible blister from hiking” (Woman 11; Age 32; Southeast). In addition, another woman commented on
how she liked the narratives people post about the struggles they faced, and how it can be
democratizing for other women to hear similar experiences:

I want to see them dirty like they are really hiking and they are really struggling. I want
to see that, so it's all on an even playing field in that we all do really struggle when we're
out there no matter what. You can be an experienced hiker but you're going to struggle at
some point and you're still going to look like a hot mess. I just wish it was more realistic
to what I've seen on the trail (Woman 29; Age 29; Midwest).

While this code shares similarities with increasing female visibility, it holds more complexity
than just the visual of relatable women. Women wanted to see and hear more about women’s
struggles and hardships in wilderness; “I just really like it when people are okay with standing up
and saying, hey the trail sucks when it rains, and you are going to hate yourself while you're out
there, but you need to do it” (Woman 13; Age 24; Northeast).

In essence, these women want to see an “authentic” wilderness experience. It is not to say that
photographs of highlights of a trip are not authentic, but rather participants seemed to see them
as incomplete narratives of the whole authentic experience. What they perceive is missing could
be classified as the “back stage” of wilderness recreation; most people don’t post about the
struggles and hardships, but rather the result of overcoming them (see Goffman, 1959;
truly “authentic and demystified” experiences through glimpses or even participation in
backstage reality which, as a tourist, can never be accomplished. However, in this case, women
are looking to see their own back stage experiences in wilderness recreation portrayed in other
women’s experiences to create a greater sense of communitas within their physical and virtual groups.

“I don't want any pink in my camo. I just want camo that fits”: Un-gendering and Normalizing women in wilderness

The second emergent theme was women pushing for wilderness to become a more neutral space between genders. While women often sought out women’s only virtual spaces and events, many wanted wilderness as a whole to be removed of gender associations. In wilderness spaces and activities, “there shouldn't be a distinction between men and women but there is” (Woman 14; Age 40; Northeast). Participants recognized the efforts of brand advertising focused on increasing women’s participation in wilderness, but many did not like how these messages seemed to increase the gender divide in wilderness, “I think I would like to see more posts that women aren’t any different than men. That you can be out there and do it just like a guy, you don't have to ‘do it like a woman’. You're just a person” (Woman 6; Age 64; West). Another participant stated similar thoughts in saying: “I think a lot of the things that I seem to appreciate is when the posts are not shoving it in your face how miraculous it is that a woman did this activity. I see more of normalization of women being capable and women getting out there being powerful and being strong on their own without having to be shocked about it every time” (Woman 10; Age 26; Pacific Northwest).

“The outdoors is, and has not been for at least 10 years, something that they felt was important for girls and women to focus on”: Encouraging young women to engage in wilderness

The last emergent theme focused on the concern participants had over increasing wilderness participation for women. This occurred through both a broad sense of mentorship and through encouraging specific program participation such as Girl Scouts. Support could come from
anyone, as one woman stated, “I think that the women who do have the background in the outdoor activities can do so much to have the next generations appreciate what we have and that we have to care for it and preserve it” (Woman 16 Age 68; Northeast). This same participant mentioned the strong role Girl Scouts played in her motivations to participate in wilderness activities as a girl, but expressed reservations about the current status of the program, “the program continues to focus not as much on the outdoors as it was when I went through the program” (Woman 16; Age 68; Northeast). Others echoed this same thought and highlighted the divide between Boy Scout wilderness programming and the lack of Girl Scout wilderness programing. One woman who is active in Girl Scout leadership mentioned that the program “had actually, up until about a year-and-a-half ago, dropped all of their outdoor badges. They just reintroduced last summer the camping badges and you can actually earn the camping badges without having to spend a night in a tent” (Woman 32; Age 40; Northeast).

A study of gender messaging in the handbooks of both Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts found that Girl Scout activities were much higher in group oriented and artistic activities in contrast to Boy Scout activities focused on individual and science based projects (Denny, 2011). Other differences were “instances of intellectual passivity for boys and intellectual criticality and autonomy for girls throughout the handbooks” specifically since “the reliance on provided answers is pervasive in the boys’ handbook, while badge activities throughout the girls’ handbook encourage the girls’ use and development of research skills, proactive behavior, and independent and critical thought” (Denny, 2011:40-41). The Girl Scout handbook also includes “competing feminine and more progressive messages” with badges ranging from “Caring for
However, in 2014, Girl Scouts created new outdoor and STEM centered programming to increase exposure to underrepresented fields. In July 2017, 23 new badges within these two areas were added with seven focused on outdoor skills for a total of 32 outdoor badges between all levels of membership. This was largely in response to outdoor themes Girl’s Choice Badges being elected by Girl Scouts themselves each year since 2015. (Everything You Need to Know, 2017). It is unclear how the recent admission of girls into Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts will affect Girl Scout participation or programming; however, the organization issued a statement stating, “the need for female leadership has never been clearer or more urgent than it is today—and only Girl Scouts has the expertise to give girls and young women the tools they need for success” (Girl Scouts Is the Girl Leadership Expert, 2017).

Discussion

Social Media and Women’s Wilderness Recreation, Authenticity, and Communitas

Social media plays an active role in motivations, constraints, and negotiations in ways that benefit women in wilderness recreation, but in some cases also dissuades participation. Unique from recent studies, it was found that social media influenced women’s motivations to participate in wilderness. Posting in groups or for followers was a direct motivation for some, getting satisfaction from photo “likes” and supportive comments. Hashtags were used most often to increase the reach of user’s photographs to others in hopes of increasing their social media audience. While not typically identified as being the only motivation, all participants mentioned
that social media was influential in some form of additional motivation to participate in wilderness activities. As the number of digital natives increases, it can be expected that social media will play an increased role in motivations and planning recreation activities (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

Prior studies identified that women have a high perception of risk when participating in outdoor recreation, thus creating an intrapersonal barrier to participation (Bialeschki and Henderson, 1993; McNiel et al., 2012; Pritchard and Morgan, 2000a; Yang et al., 2017; Coble, Selin, Erickson 2008; Wilson & Little, 2005; Reisinger & Crotts, 2010). However, other studies, including that by McNamara & Prideaux (2010) have shown a slight shift in perceiving risk and gender, where risks perceived by women act less as a constraint to leisure participation. Women in this study found that others perceived their wilderness recreation as being a higher risk than what they themselves perceived. However, when talking about self-perceived risk, participants noted a different source. Rather than the actual activity being risky, many noted that actively using social media during recreation was a bigger risk than the activity itself. Geotagging photographs or even more generally posting about an activity while away from home was avoided by most participants for fear of their cars or homes being robbed. This perception of risk is similar to men who participate in the same activities (Coble, Selin, Erickson 2008) indicating a shift from highly gendered perceptions of risk to a more universal understanding.

Other constraints limiting participation included interpersonal relations on social media sites. Women often talked about “mansplaining” that occurred on social media sites which, in order to avoid, reduced their use of social media as a negotiation tool. Many avoided asking questions or
looking for advice on co-ed Facebook pages because they did not feel like safe spaces, but rather ones where they could be attacked. In this sense, many women’s responses indicated that they may feel safer in wilderness spaces than within co-ed virtual spaces.

On women’s only pages, participants noted that they felt comfortable asking questions and felt that they would get appropriate responses. This led to feelings of support and allowed many women to get more involved in various outdoor recreation activities. Again, communitas acts to eliminate barriers between participants (Turner, 1973; Turner et al, 2011; Wang, 1999; Graburn, 2004). Questions also allowed women to find specific gear and recommendations of places to visit, and even women specific tips and tricks for various activities. This is just one example of how social media acts as a multifaceted negotiation strategy. Women use various aspects of social media (Instagram, Facebook, blogs, groups, messaging, events etc.) to confront constraints on a multi-level approach. In this way, one use of social media, like participation in Facebook groups, can help negotiate multiple constraints simultaneously.

Social media also allowed women to play the dual role of student and expert through their virtual identity. While many women felt free to ask questions on women’s only sites, they also were free to share their experiences. One woman recognized this dual role, stating, “it did allow me to assume a role of a quasi-expert that I would have never thought that I had…when you don't know anything, somebody who knows just a little bit more than you can be an expert” (Woman 36; Age 65; Southeast). Her comments speak to both the role of self-making within existential authenticity and communitas which have extended beyond the wilderness into virtual space. Gaden & Dumitrica (2014:n,p) reference social media’s role in creating existential authenticity
when stating “on social media, being authentic means getting personal and having personality; both of which come to signify ‘being real’ as opposed to putting up a façade or playing a (public) role…The Other, by linking, liking, sharing, posting or re-tweeting, validates the ‘authenticity’ of the Self, it’s worth and validity”. In this case, sharing personal advice or experience with other social media users in a space that is seen as being open and safe space can enhance one’s sense of self. MacWilliams (2004: 235) also attests that social media, or cyberspace, can also offer virtual communitas to users because “although disembedded from their ordinary social relations in physical space, members of these cybercommunities have a highly articulated symbolic arena on their shared Web sites”. Therefore, social media can extend the effects wilderness recreation has on existential authenticity and communitas through virtual connections and validation of self.

Limitations of Constraints Theory

Constraints theory offered a highly studied and applicable initial lens into the intersection of constraints negotiations in wilderness recreation and social media due to its application in leisure, tourism and recreation studies (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Jackson 2000; Coble, Selin, & Erickson, 2003; Herridge, Shaw & Mannell, 2003; Wilson & Little, 2005; White, 2008; Son, Mowen & Kerstetter, 2008; Godbey, Crawford & Shen, 2010; Henderson & Gibson 2013; Avery, 2015; Yang & Tung 2017). However, as evident by emergent themes and those found outside of this framework, as well as works by structuralist and post-structuralist theorists, this model was not fully adequate to assess all constraints or negotiations faced by women in American wilderness recreation. While missing aspects of nature tourism such as communitas (Turner, 1973; Wang, 1999; Graburn, 2004; Turner et al 2011; Varley, 2011; Berdychevsky, Gibson & Bell, 2013; Vidon 2015) and authenticity (Cloke & Perkins, 2002; Perkins & Thorns
Theorists like Gramsci, Foucault, and Althusser would argue that structural constraints on individuals go far beyond issues of time and money and that power, knowledge, and social society play a much larger role. Gramsci argues that power and control are not only based in physical confrontation, but rather in cultural hegemony, ideological manifestations where knowledge acts as a social construction to legitimize power and social structures (Gramsci, 1971). In this case, what is seen as knowledge or social truth is not universal or objective, but rather the works of leading classes, or “the state”, to establish and maintain power. Althusser argues that state power acts through various apparatuses within society that act to perpetuate power and ideology. As Vidon (2016: 104) notes, “According to Althusser, ideology conditions individuals as subjects, familiarizing them with its doctrines to the extent that those ideas become natural and internalized in the subject; a subject never recognizes ideology and its power, and always believed him/herself to be outside of it”. This social and structural conditioning on society can act as structural barriers to a variety of practices. Vidon (2016:105) applies this representation of power and control to American ideas of and performances in Wilderness, arguing that wilderness ideology informs how nature tourists preform in wilderness and how that performance thus perpetuates the ideology.
Foucault extends Gramsci’s model of power, and Althusser’s state apparatuses as power by arguing that discourse or cultural hegemony are more fluid in creating and maintaining power structures, stating “we must not image a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between dominate discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play” (Foucault 1978:100). In American wilderness, and more specifically within the findings of this study, this fluidity of discourse in restructuring ideas of power are actively presented in women’s use of social media. While social media helps elevate constraints outlined in the study framework, they are also working to dismantle long standing ideologies of power and place in wilderness as well as patriarchal social structures that effect female identity. In summary, while constraints theory may be useful on a more individualist level in wilderness recreation, power and privilege are important aspects when looking at wilderness on a social scale which are not fully accounted for within the model.

Emergence of Digital Social Capital

When women share place locations, experiences, and photographs of their travels they are changing the social value, popularity, and perceived cultural capital of place. When discussing social media’s influence on finding locations to recreate in, many participants shared the same sentiments illustrated in this comment: “A lot of the accounts I follow show these places that are so beautiful and all I want to know is where is it and then I'll figure out kind of how to get there” (Woman 12; Age 23; Pacific Northwest). Social media, especially through image sharing on platforms such as Instagram, helps establish cultural capital around place and in turn become places nature tourist seek (Myers & Pearson 2010; Snee, 2013; Regan, 2010).
Digital sharing of an individual’s cultural capital has become increasingly important in the advancement of (digital) social capital and existential authenticity. Importance is placed on the photograph and the digital audience, or the Other. One participant mirrored Urry’s (2005:127) argument about the importance of photographs in shaping reality by stating, “I like to have a picture of me because that is the proof that I was actually there and not just stealing pictures off of Facebook or some Google site or something” (Woman 37; Age 27; West). In this, “the act of being consumed by Others entails the recognition and validation of the ‘authentic’ Self in the public-private space created by social media (Papacharissi, 2010). On the other hand, the Other is also present in the ‘imagined audience’ for whom the social media user shares herself online…we present ourselves to the imagined Other” (Gaden & Dumitrica, 2014: n.p). Portrayals of a personal or authentic-self online validates feelings of existential authenticity while at the same time rejecting notions that authenticity of the self depends on the Other (see Lacan 1949/2006).

Consumers are looking for authenticity not only in tourism, but (perhaps ironically or paradoxically) also via social media. Through presenting what is assumed to be an authentic self on social media, (digital) social capital can be gained by the user due to higher engagements and affirmations by the digital audience. Balleys and Coll (2017:889), in their study on adolescent social media use found that social capital could be measured quantitatively by popularity and network engagement, but also through “qualitative terms, that is, by the ‘authenticity’ and degree of intimacy that the teenager enjoys and that is acknowledged within the various networks of peers he or she is part of”. For this study, sharing photos and narratives of wilderness accomplishments increases the users’ cultural capital due to the location, but also can increase
one’s (digital) social capital through consumption of a user’s posts by a virtual community. Social media creates a vast web of connections between users on various platforms, especially through public posts, hashtags, and geotags. While a user may be aware of some of these connections through likes, shares, and follower counts, other social connections may not be as apparent. These may include non-interactive visual consumption or activities such as sharing posts from the public to private domains, which thus increase (digital) social capital.

Conclusion
Women’s only Facebook pages offer community, safety and support for women looking to erode heretofore enduring and persistent barriers to wilderness participation. In this study, participation with social media, including Facebook, Instagram, and blogs, helped women navigate and overcome these barriers and even played a role in motivations for women participating in wilderness recreation. It is important to note that all participants were active on social media and participated in wilderness activities before the start of this study and therefore results cannot be extended to those who are not actively engaged in these activities. In addition, it must be acknowledged that social media does not always provide positive experiences such as those described by participants in this study, and social media itself cannot be singularly categorized.

While all women indicated benefits associated with specific social media sites like women only Facebook groups, they also indicated that increased comparison to others, digital confrontation with “mansplaining” and “keyboard warriors”, and privacy concerns were also prevalent on a broader scale, indicating the importance of community and shared experience within structured platforms on social media. The term “keyboard warrior” was used by participants to refer to other users who are internet trolls, or “a person who, being unable to express his anger through physical violence, instead manifests said emotions through the text-based medium of the internet,
usually in the form of aggressive writing that the Keyboard Warrior would not be able to give form to in real life” (Chi Z, 2007). However, these issues were either avoided or negotiated through other social media interactions.

Effects of social media participation were most powerful in negotiation strategies, although to some degree interacted with motivations and constraints as well. Due to these interactions, emergent subcategories were added such as a social media audience as a motivator, and digital privacy concerns as a constraint. All participants found social media to be influential in their wilderness participation and can therefore be seen as a positive tool to increase women’s wilderness participation.

As social media is increasingly incorporated into everyday life, its function as a tool for negotiating long standing barriers to wilderness participation should be reevaluated. Future studies could examine the difference between wilderness recreators active with social media and those who are not, as well as the role social media plays in changing the association between motivations, constraints, and negotiations. Social media use varies between different age groups and may influence them differently. In addition, differences in constraints and negotiations may differ based on the participants’ frequency of creating their own user generated content and their consumption of other’s content. These findings, and future findings on the role of social media in wilderness recreation, has applications for park managers, recreation groups, and advertisers.
References


Berryman, G. (2015) “Solo Female Travel: Barriers and Benefits.” Available at: http://www.travelconference.co.uk/commentries.php?paper=323#.WFGwQ3fMxmA


http://blog.girlscouts.org/2017/10/girl-scouts-are-girl-leadership-experts.html


1

or guys in disguise? *Human Dimensions of Wildlife, 8*(3), 165-180.


Rabin, H. L. (2014). Revisiting Gender Constraints and Benefits in Leisure Tourism: Man-Up,
It’s Time to Travel Like a Woman. *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, 92.


Sturges, J. E., & Hanrahan, K. J. (2004). Comparing telephone and face-to-face qualitative
interviewing: a research note. *Qualitative research, 4*(1), 107-118.


Williams, R. (1976) Keywords. New York: Oxford University Press


Conclusion

This work addressed how the masculine and patriarchal social system has worked to create an American wilderness ideology as one replete with risk and often alienating to women participants. Although socially constructed, the wilderness ideology is perpetuated through legal terminology, nature tourism, wilderness advertising, and even by nature tourists themselves regardless of gender (Cloke and Perkins, 2002; Colten and Dilsaver, 2005; MacCannell 1976; Vidon 2016, 2017). These associations contribute to constraints faced by women looking to participate in wilderness recreation. However, despite these constraints, social media acts as a tool that enables women to more nimbly navigate this socially and physically defined space.

Results of this study indicate that women’s use of social media is actively changing their perceptions of and activities in wilderness spaces. Specifically, women only Facebook groups facilitate experiences of communitas and act as sources of empowerment. These feelings of empowerment and communitas are not housed exclusively in these pages, however, but are spread discursively, affecting outsiders’ perceptions of women’s place in wilderness through visual representations of accomplishments. In addition to social media’s role in women’s negotiation of constraints in wilderness, it was found to be important in the creation of existential authenticity, cultural capital of place and accumulation of (digital) social capital by users.

While this study found themes regarding the intersection of social media use and wilderness recreation, it cannot account for women who are not yet active on either social media or in wilderness recreation. In addition, the framework used did not allow for full analysis of broader social constructions within Western culture that may account for additional barriers faced by
women. Aspects outside of the masculine/feminine dichotomy, such as race/ethnicity, gender fluidity and nonconformity, socioeconomic status, and education, were also not addressed in this study.

Despite these limitations, the implications of this study are far reaching. Findings show that women are more than just the constraints they face; indeed, they can act as their own facilitators in wilderness participation. Tools such as women specific gear, social support and social media help women help themselves overcome constraints they face to wilderness recreation. Social media was found to be a powerful negotiation tool within constraints theory for inter, intra, and structural barriers, as well as in other areas such as authenticity and (digital) social capital accumulation under the theme of wilderness recreation. Social media is too often seen as a deterrent to outdoor recreation; however this study shows its usefulness in increasing participation rates of women, showing that social media can be an instrumental tool for park managers, outdoor recreation organizations, nature tourism and gear related advertising, local clubs, and even for individuals.

Future studies may examine the role of social media in outdoor participation and nature tourism outside of advertising and focus on user to user interactions, which were shown to be invaluable to women’s positive recreation experiences. In addition, comparative studies for other underrepresented demographics could show variance between social media use and application between user groups (i.e. age, ethnicity, socioeconomic class) or between different geographic regions (i.e. Pacific Northwest, Northeast). In looking at these factors, it will be important to account for larger systemic norms that cannot be accounted for through constraints theory.
Studies on online performance and displays of power could shed light on how these social and power ideologies, such as the patriarchy, are perpetuated and maintained in American wilderness ideology.

As social media users continue to incorporate the digital into all aspects of daily life, including entertainment, health and socialization, it is increasingly important to understand the influence of these digital engagements on the physical landscape, and interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships.
Appendices
Appendix A: Recruitment Statement

Are you a woman active in wilderness recreation in the United States? Have you posted on social media about your past or upcoming adventures? Our study is looking for women participants active in both wilderness and social media— including publicly accessible blogs, Facebook groups, and/or Instagram profiles. For more information, please comment below or email thweathe@syr.edu. You must be 18 years or older to participate! If you’re ready to start, please participate in our initial screening survey (https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JWQMHBN ) to get started!
Appendix B: Screening Survey

What is your age?

Do you identify as female?

Have you participated in wilderness recreation within the United States?

What social network sites are you active with?

Are these pages/groups/profiles publicly accessible? Explain:

If you are interested in participating in an additional phone interview, please leave your contact information.
Appendix C: Interview Questions

Interview:

1. What is your preferred gender identification?
2. How do you define wilderness?
3. What types of wilderness recreation have you participated in while in the US?
4. What influenced your decision to participate in wilderness activities?
5. Where (geographically) have you participated in wilderness activities the most?
6. In what types of landscapes (mountains, plains, forests, rivers, etc.) have you participated the most?
7. What types of activities have you posted about and on which social media sites?
9. In what stages were you active with social media (before, during, after recreation)?
10. What social media sites are you following or are a member of that deal specifically with wilderness or outdoor recreation, if any?
11. What type of engagement have you had with other social media users (i.e. direct comments, tagged photos, direct messages, connections beyond social media like email, skype, or physical meetups)?
   a. Which sites have provided you with the greatest connections with other users?
12. What benefits from social media posts or interactions have you experienced, if any?
   a. What posts or content did you find most helpful, if any?
13. What types of social media posts would you like to see more of pertaining to women and outdoor recreation, if any?
## Appendix D: Codebook Constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
<th>Intrapersonal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical and demonstrable barriers to participation.</td>
<td>Barriers to participation due to lack of social or role model</td>
<td>Fear of Risk: Preference for exclusion/appropriateness of perceived skill: self-concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance: lack of money; lack of transportation; lack of knowledge of place</td>
<td>Barriers to commitment to family/social role model or female mentor.</td>
<td>Feeling of inadequacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Time of Money</td>
<td>Lack of Female Participants</td>
<td>Lack of Prior Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Risk Perception by Others</td>
<td>Health or Physical Ability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Examples

- "I want to go to school in Detroit. I don't have a lot of opportunity there."

- "I'm not one to go alone and do things like that. So it took a while to find anyone who would participate in anything and most people don't like to do that."

- "Unfortunately, while men dominate hiking, dominate outdoor activities, it's just a fact. When you look at social media, when you look at advertising, it's almost always white men."

- "I think it's even worse now."

- "Because I am not thin, super thin, I just feel more like I get judged more by athletic guys. It's left a bad taste in my mouth that, where I went to go out because either or us had a really cramped before..."

- "They're not going to be as strong."
Appendix E: Codebook for Negotiations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
<th>Negotiation Description</th>
<th>Actually Coded</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Know how | Social | Media is being | Female Visibility | Increased | "I feel more comfortable with going out hiking by myself & having other women as a member of the group.
| Knowledge | Media is being | combing | and Community | Experience | inspiratioin."
| of Gear | used to combat | existing | | | "And so I never would have thought about hiking the PCT had it not been for just getting hooked on reading PCT Trail journals and blogs." |
| Locations | existing | barriers | | | "I never once seeing anyone women doing it and even doing it on their own..."
| Physical Meetings | used to combat | barriers | | | "I just realized how big the hiking Community really was until i got on this page or on these pages really and then I just started kind of open up and I got the chance to see that it is everywhere."
| | existing | barriers | | | "I have made actually quite a few friends that I text with or I'll go hike with...that's the whole point of having those pages as well, it's to meet new people and to introduce each other to new places and new things." |

"And sort of sharing you know women's specific situations or tips and tricks for you no handling your period while you're on the trail."
## Appendix F: Codebook for Motivations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Actually Coded Subthemes</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Directly linked to the physical environment</td>
<td>Personal and individual motivation factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>Time/Money</td>
<td>Motivation of accomplishment/excellence, experience, achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Nature/Physical</td>
<td>Self confidence, self discovery, self acceptance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Physical health, mental health, social interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socialize with friends, family, and others</td>
<td>Escape from others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoy solitude</td>
<td>Shared values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Examples

- "I just did my first climb and I got to the top and I said 'This is it!'"
- "I realized that it just is good being back a lot. I feel better. I feel more centered. I found that I rejuvenates my sense of wonder."
- "For hiking I just wanted to get fit so it sort of came as a fitness thing for my health."
- "I've always grown up loving the outdoors so those were the areas that I felt most myself, most accepted, and the least judged."
- "I've retired and so I have had more time to pursue outdoor activities."
- "Getting that awesome picture to post on social media is sometimes a big motivational factor too."
- "'Oh my goodness. I grew up with Girl Scouts and the Adirondack Mountain Club."
- "We would say a lot of it has been friends have encouraged me. I started snowshoeing because of friends I would have never done that before."
- "I was born into it. Basically my family camped and back packed from the time I was in diapers. It's just part of my life."
- "I've always been part of a lot of outdoor activities both as a child and so that started as a fitness thing for my health."
- "I just want to see what it looks like and then get inspiration of places to go or to see where people are going."

---

### Appendix G: Codebook for Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Directly linked to the physical environment</td>
<td>Personal and individual motivation factors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>Time/Money</td>
<td>Motivation of accomplishment/excellence, experience, achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Nature/Physical</td>
<td>Self confidence, self discovery, self acceptance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Physical health, mental health, social interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socialize with friends, family, and others</td>
<td>Escape from others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoy solitude</td>
<td>Shared values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Examples

- "I just did my first climb and I got to the top and I said 'This is it!'"
- "I realized that it just is good being back a lot. I feel better. I feel more centered. I found that I rejuvenates my sense of wonder."
- "For hiking I just wanted to get fit so it sort of came as a fitness thing for my health."
- "I've always grown up loving the outdoors so those were the areas that I felt most myself, most accepted, and the least judged."
- "I've retired and so I have had more time to pursue outdoor activities."
- "Getting that awesome picture to post on social media is sometimes a big motivational factor too."
- "'Oh my goodness. I grew up with Girl Scouts and the Adirondack Mountain Club."
- "We would say a lot of it has been friends have encouraged me. I started snowshoeing because of friends I would have never done that before."
- "I was born into it. Basically my family camped and back packed from the time I was in diapers. It's just part of my life."
- "I've always been part of a lot of outdoor activities both as a child and so that started as a fitness thing for my health."
- "I just want to see what it looks like and then get inspiration of places to go or to see where people are going."

---

### Appendix H: Codebook for Incentives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incentives</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Directly linked to the physical environment</td>
<td>Personal and individual motivation factors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>Time/Money</td>
<td>Motivation of accomplishment/excellence, experience, achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Nature/Physical</td>
<td>Self confidence, self discovery, self acceptance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Physical health, mental health, social interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socialize with friends, family, and others</td>
<td>Escape from others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoy solitude</td>
<td>Shared values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Examples

- "I just did my first climb and I got to the top and I said 'This is it!'"
- "I realized that it just is good being back a lot. I feel better. I feel more centered. I found that I rejuvenates my sense of wonder."
- "For hiking I just wanted to get fit so it sort of came as a fitness thing for my health."
- "I've always grown up loving the outdoors so those were the areas that I felt most myself, most accepted, and the least judged."
- "I've retired and so I have had more time to pursue outdoor activities."
- "Getting that awesome picture to post on social media is sometimes a big motivational factor too."
- "'Oh my goodness. I grew up with Girl Scouts and the Adirondack Mountain Club."
- "We would say a lot of it has been friends have encouraged me. I started snowshoeing because of friends I would have never done that before."
- "I was born into it. Basically my family camped and back packed from the time I was in diapers. It's just part of my life."
- "I've always been part of a lot of outdoor activities both as a child and so that started as a fitness thing for my health."
- "I just want to see what it looks like and then get inspiration of places to go or to see where people are going."

---

### Appendix I: Codebook for Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Directly linked to the physical environment</td>
<td>Personal and individual motivation factors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>Time/Money</td>
<td>Motivation of accomplishment/excellence, experience, achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Nature/Physical</td>
<td>Self confidence, self discovery, self acceptance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Physical health, mental health, social interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socialize with friends, family, and others</td>
<td>Escape from others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoy solitude</td>
<td>Shared values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Examples

- "I just did my first climb and I got to the top and I said 'This is it!'"
- "I realized that it just is good being back a lot. I feel better. I feel more centered. I found that I rejuvenates my sense of wonder."
- "For hiking I just wanted to get fit so it sort of came as a fitness thing for my health."
- "I've always grown up loving the outdoors so those were the areas that I felt most myself, most accepted, and the least judged."
- "I've retired and so I have had more time to pursue outdoor activities."
- "Getting that awesome picture to post on social media is sometimes a big motivational factor too."
- "'Oh my goodness. I grew up with Girl Scouts and the Adirondack Mountain Club."
- "We would say a lot of it has been friends have encouraged me. I started snowshoeing because of friends I would have never done that before."
- "I was born into it. Basically my family camped and back packed from the time I was in diapers. It's just part of my life."
- "I've always been part of a lot of outdoor activities both as a child and so that started as a fitness thing for my health."
- "I just want to see what it looks like and then get inspiration of places to go or to see where people are going."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I seem to appreciate is when he pose are not striking in your face now anymore it is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;How can we foster their self can be done to get more kids out? I'll be interesting to see</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;to what I've seen on the hill&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I seem to appreciate is when he pose are not striking in your face now anymore it is&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;How can we foster their self can be done to get more kids out? I'll be interesting to see&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;to what I've seen on the hill&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In-Gender:**

- Normalizing women in wilderness
- Encouragement with young girls
- Referred to Inescapable Wilderness
- Women, Girl

**Outside:**

- Women actively experience passed
- Experiences and/or images of hardships, stereotypes, and negative
- Seems completely more descriptive
- Poses content like they are really列入和他们 really belonging. I want

---

Appendix G: Codebook for Emergent Themes
Theodora Weatherby

**Permanent Residence**
29 Cortland Street
Homer NY 13077

**Local Residence**
209 Harvard Pl, Apt1
Syracuse, NY 13210

Email: thweathe@syr.edu
Phone: 607-745-4225

**Education:**

Masters of Science in Environmental Science;
Coupled Natural and Human Systems  
SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry Syracuse, NY  
Thesis: "Beyond the Screen: How women’s use of social media is changing the American wilderness landscape"

Bachelors of Arts in Anthropology & Environmental Studies  
Minor in Honors  
Ithaca College, Ithaca NY  
Class of 2016  
GPA: 3.7

**Practical Skills:**

Plant identification, invasive species management, copy editing, qualitative data collection and analysis, report production, content analysis and development, public speaking, interviewing, community outreach and collaboration, field notation, intermediate background in Chemistry and Biology, basic PCR and Genetics, osteological analysis, artifact preservation

**Internships & Work Experience:**

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry  
Graduate Writing Assistant  
Syracuse, NY  
August 2016-Present  
- Tutored undergraduate and graduate students on writing styles and techniques, citations, and paper organization
- Lead classroom based workshops individually and as part of a team
- Managed scheduling website and social media pages

NY Natural Heritage Program; NYS DEC  
Student Botany Assistant  
Albany, NY  
May - August 2017  
- Preformed field inventory and documented rare plant occurrences across the state
- Updated the New York Rare Plant Status list, photo database, and element occurrence records
- Worked with historical data forms, current DEC GIS records, and herbarium pressings to inform current ongoing DEC projects
- Attended and contributed to weekly debriefings, district meetings, and botany workshops; Organized and led workshops and species ID walks for Invasive Species Week

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation  
Landscape Restoration Specialist  
Ithaca, NY  
June - August 2016  
- Designed, planted, and managed new planting beds throughout the park
- Conducted invasive species management as part of a larger team of workers
- Worked alongside visitors and transferred information, plant identification, and species variation to the public

Plowbreak Farm  
Intern  
Hector, NY  
May 2015 - August 2016  
- Planted and maintained farm crops, including: seeding plants both by hand and with various seeders, transplanting, direct planting, weeding (by hand or with other tools, i.e. wheel hoe), setting up irrigation systems, mulching, hilling, harvesting,
- Organized CSA pickups, involving harvesting, filling orders and organizing 5-10 volunteers with ages 7 to 35.
Project Look Sharp                Ithaca, NY
Copy Editor & Website Manager     November 2012 - July 2016
• Created curriculum kits on the Environment with print and multimedia resources
  for teachers in Elementary and Middle school
• Collaborated with the Ithaca College Bookstore on creating and delivering orders
• Created conference materials for staff
• Updated and edited the company's website, and email outreach databases
• Compiled data and outside research for future kits and edited final versions

Bev and Company                  Homer, NY
Sales Associate                   July 2010 – May 2016
• Accountable for answering phone calls, attending to customers who need
  assistance, and entering new inventory as delivered and putting out on sales floor
• Helped with advertising for current and upcoming sales

Ithaca College under Professor Jen Muller   Ithaca, NY
Research and Lab Assistant        Fall 2014- Spring 2015
• Conducted osteological analysis of infant remains, including cleaning,
  measurements, and documentation
• Analyzed and compiled historical records

Graduate Assistant Positions:

Publications:

Conferences:

American Association of Geographers (AAG) 2018         New Orleans, LA
Paper Presenter                  April 2018
• “Women Gone Wild: Social media and women's wilderness empowerment”

American Association of Geographers (AAG) 2017         Boston, MA
Paper Presenter                  April 2017
• “Delegitimizing Wilderness as The Man Cave: Tourism, Wilderness & Woman”

Bioarchaeologist's Northeast Regional Dialogue              Ithaca College, Ithaca NY
Local Arrangement Committee          October 5th 2014
• Organized the event, set up venue, and assisted speakers

Conference On National Affairs               Black Mountain, NC
Delegate from New York State           July 2011
• Presented proposed legislation and participated in national press corps group

Other Research Projects:

Access and Waste in the Localvore Movement: Case Study in Syracuse, NY
(Spring 2017)

A Holistic Approach to a Modern Problem: Healing the Culture of Hawaiian People
Through Holistic Herbal Healing
(Spring 2015)
Memberships:

- **American Association of Geographers**
  - General Member
  - 2016-Present

- **Izaak Walton League of America, Cortland Chapter**
  - General Member
  - 2013- Present

- **Ithaca College Student Anthropological Society**
  - Member 2012-2016
  - Vice President 2014-2015
  - President 2015-2016

Grants, Honors & Awards:

- **Graduate Student Association (SUNY-ESF) Spring Travel Grant**
  - 2018

- **SUNY-ESF Alumni Association Grant**
  - 2018

- **Dean's Graduate Student Spring Travel Grant (SUNY ESF)**
  - 2018

- **Graduate Student Association (SUNY-ESF) Spring Travel Grant**
  - 2018

- **Oracle Honors Society- Ithaca College**
  - Awarded November 2013
  - Represent the top 10% of the Ithaca College School of Humanities and Science

- **Lambda Alpha- Ithaca College,**
  - Awarded Spring 2014
  - Honors society for Anthropology, held role as Secretary 2015-2016

Volunteer Experience:

- **Boy Scouts of America**
  - Archery Director for Cortland, NY

- **Ithaca College Archaeology Lab**
  - Illustrator and Volunteer
  - Spring 2015- Spring 2016

- **Service Learning in Hawaii (Kona)**
  - Student Volunteer
  - January 2014, January 2016

- **Ithaca First Peoples Festival**
  - Volunteer
  - Fall 2012, 2013, 2014