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Gendered Wilderness: Gendered Language in Wilderness Discourse

by

Benjamin F Carpenter

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  
April 2019

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## Abstract

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A theory of social nature has proliferated and is becoming widely accepted among social researchers, especially within critical geography. This states that our encounters with the non-human world are always mediated. Whether we engage the outdoors using the park system, television, outdoor outfitters, or political organizations, the rhetoric of race, gender, economics, and politics are always at work on how we interact with landscapes. Three goals for this research include: 1) To outline the discursive constructions of wilderness and gender in connection with the social, and political work they do modern society 2) To outline the lived gender experience among wilderness advocates, highlighting moments when this experience resonates with the dominant discourse as well as moments of dissonance. 3) To use the subsequent categories of experience to arrive at a theories of dominant and subversive wilderness discourse.

Keywords: Social nature; wilderness discourse; the received wilderness idea; gender performativity; normative masculinity

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## **Project Introduction**

Wilderness: the temple of ancient, wrathful gods; the crucible of rugged American character; a morally freighted benchmark for all that is truly natural and balanced. In the United States, cultural mythology firmly plants its roots in stories of American genesis on the shores of a dark, ferocious, fertile continent. Echoes of these same stories resonate in the musings of Henry David Thoreau and John Muir; the paintings of Thomas Cole; the photography of Ansel Adams. The values represented by wilderness are enshrined in the National Park System, which received over 330 million visits in 2017 (NPS Office of Communications, 2018), truly a testament to wilderness' hold on the popular imagination. As a political force, the Sierra Club and Wilderness Society have gathered tremendous reserves of financial and political capital to be marshaled on the fight to protect wilderness. Does wilderness reflect a comprehensive environmental narrative though? Who are the heroes, and who are the villains in frontier stories? Who are pioneers and who are slaves? Was North America people less before European contact? To scratch just below the surface of stories like those about wilderness, one finds that Americans' perceptions of the natural world and their place in it are as diverse as they are. Further, the perceptions of some Americans are wholly incompatible with the lived histories and experiences of others.

The work presented here began in my first semester at SUNY ESF. That is to say, the courses provided on environmental ethics, environmental justice, environmental attitudes, and beliefs provided the theoretical groundwork and the vocabulary needed to flesh out and operationalize the questions that were developed while working for various non-profits in Kansas City, Missouri. In examining the resonance and dissonance between popular environmental narratives and the lived experiences of frontline communities, the focus of my research was drawn to wilderness, especially the social construction of wilderness in advocacy and recreation circles.

This is what environmental historians and philosophers have come to call “the received wilderness idea,” (Callicott 1998; Cronon 1995; Gómez-Pompa & Kaus, 1998; Guha, 1988; Talbot, 1998). This is used to describe what Americans generally think of when they hear the word wilderness: pristine, wild landscapes that are devoid of human presence or impact. This is the timeless and sublime state of nature that supposedly existed in North America prior to European contact. Critiques of such ideas have thrown into question some of Western culture’s most basic assumptions about the nature of nature, and reveal a bias favoring a white, colonial, upper middle class male historical perspective (Finney, 2014; Deluca & Demo, 2001; McNeil, Harris, & Fondren, 2012; Merchant 2003). This is the substrate from which my questions sprung.

In April 2018 I submitted a formal proposal to investigate whether or not there are social discourses that contribute to and maintain overrepresentation of white, upper middle-class males in wilderness advocacy. Additionally, if these discourses exist, how do individuals navigate them in their lived experience?

That is to say, if nature and wilderness are socially produced (Braun, 2002; Braun & Wainwright, 2001; Castree, 2001) and are produced in such a way as to reflect a relatively narrow band of social experience (Castree, 2001; Cronon 1995; Merchant 2003; Vidon 2016), what are the consequences for groups and communities whose perspectives are not reflected? How are they conceptualized as environmental subjects? How do they navigate advocacy and recreation settings infused with historical environmental narratives that privilege white, masculine experiences and figures while at times erasing or aggressively excluding others?

In April 2018, the project I proposed for answering these questions was submitted for review by the Institutional Review Board at Syracuse University. They determined the project met their

ethical standards and I was permitted to proceed with data collection. Additional materials provided the IRB can be found in the appendix, including but not limited to the interview guide (Appendix A), online screening survey (Appendix B), and interview consent form (Appendix C).

Central to my investigation were discourse analyses of online wilderness media and in-depth interviews, sampling for which began in early 2018. The media chosen for this research represents the material published by five wilderness advocacy organizations. Three are local to Northern New York State: Protect the Adirondacks; Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Preserve; and Adirondack Almanack. Two of the organizations are national, and provided a broad reflection of wilderness advocacy in America: the Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club. These organizations were all chosen for their visibility in regional and national wilderness discourse, and for referencing wilderness protection in their organizational mission statements.

The interview data came from respondents to an online screening survey distributed on the publicly available social media pages run by these organizations. Participants were self described outdoor recreationists, environmental educators, and professional as well as volunteer wilderness advocates. Their reflections provide valuable insights about how wilderness is thought of and experienced on the ground, whether that's in the office of the Adirondack Park Agency, or on the John Muir Trail. Discourse analysis was applied to the media content and the interviews, and after multiple rounds of initial coding, focus coding, and thematic consolidation I arrived at what I feel to be compelling answers to my questions. Additionally there is now groundwork laid for future research; important questions emerged in analysis, the investigation of which was beyond the scope of the current project.

The work is presented here in two separate, but complementary parts. The first manuscript is titled “Boys’ Clubs and Beta Sprayers: Masculinized Wilderness and Gendered Disparities in Wilderness Experience.” This paper investigates how perceived wilderness experiences differ between individuals and how those experiences compare to social norms and expectations within wilderness advocacy and recreation settings. It interrogates the notion that a normative masculine bias in wilderness discourse dictates which bodies are welcome in those settings “as is”, and which bodies may be marginalized or held to different standards.

Themes observed to this effect include the overrepresentation of traditional hetero masculinity, or what Joane Nagel (1998) terms, “normative masculinity”, in the historical framing of wilderness, online wilderness media, and personal role models. This paper investigates the entrenchment of normative masculinity in state classification of wilderness to the extent that a masculine frame is imposed upon wilderness advocacy and recreation settings. This is critical considering data suggest a preoccupation on both individual and organizational levels with the state as the primary authenticator, administrator and provider of wilderness experiences.

The second manuscript is titled “Enshrining Normative Masculinity: State Authenticated Wilderness and Normative Gender Roles.” This paper begins where the first leaves off, investigating a narrow, normative masculine frame in wilderness discourse that creates friction and perhaps barriers to participation for marginalized communities. Namely, this means those who are not conceptualized as conventional wilderness subjects according to dominant wilderness discourses. This paper discusses how that frame comes to be formalized in wilderness settings and wilderness experiences through the process of “cool” authentication (Cohen & Cohen, 2012; Vidon, 2018), or the classification of authentic wilderness on the part of the state. Often legislative processes, cool authentication incorporates and cements cultural definitions of

wilderness which are otherwise subjective. In this way, state authentication of wilderness codifies normative masculine perspectives on wilderness into wilderness legislation and lends it the title of authenticity. This paper examines ways in which state authenticated wilderness promotes a nationalistic vision of wilderness that serves as an oasis for what Michael Kimmel (2013) terms, “aggrieved male entitlement,” through the production of remote, rugged, homosocial experiences which become highly valued in cultural identity. “In the United States, many see designated wilderness areas as monuments; symbolically enshrining national values,” (Nelson, 1998, 176). What does it mean then to have a national park system whose own data suggests wild disparities in visitorship and employment across race, nationality and gender? (Taylor, Grandjean, and Gramann 2011).

This paper investigates how this affects the individual experience and argues that construction of a more inclusive wilderness means divorcing our conceptualizations of wilderness from nationalism, and associated masculinizing discourses.

Drawing on theories of social nature, gender performativity, authenticity, nationalism, and discourse analysis, these manuscripts work together to deconstruct the the normative masculine frame that dominates popular wilderness discourse, and the received wilderness idea. In so doing, I hope to present sites of intervention for use by subordinate discourses like queer ecology. Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands (2005) describes queer ecology as a way focusing on dimensions of experience “born in the specific history of a queer community and uses the resulting emotional resonances and conceptual links to live in nature in a way that reflects this queer experience,” (p. 20). The goal here is to supplant the toxic aspects of wilderness ideology that perpetuate colonization, racism, misogyny, and heteronormative bias; to remediate the idea

of wilderness so as to become fertile ground for cultivating more complex relations within local and global ecologies.

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## **Boys' Clubs and Beta Sprayers: Masculinized Wilderness and Gendered Disparities in Wilderness Experience**

### **Abstract**

Engaging the academic debate around the social construction of the “Received Wilderness Idea”, the author examines the masculine framing of contemporary wilderness advocacy and recreation settings, and the ways in which such framing creates rhetorical blind spots for the wilderness movement that result in friction in the individual lived experiences of wilderness professionals, recreationists and volunteer advocates. In this paper, I attend principally to questions regarding the ways masculinity and hypermasculinity occur in wilderness discourse so that definitions of wilderness and wilderness subjects emerge which deter or discourage certain communities from participating. With a focus on gender, this paper looks at how perceived wilderness experiences differ between individuals and how those experiences compare to social norms and expectations within wilderness advocacy and recreation, which dictate who is welcome in those settings “as is”, and who may be marginalized or held to different standards.

Themes observed to this effect include the overrepresentation of traditional hetero masculinity, or what Joane Nagel terms, “normative masculinity”, in the historical framing of wilderness, online wilderness media, and personal role models. This paper investigates the entrenchment of normative masculinity in state classification of wilderness to the extent that a masculine frame is imposed upon wilderness advocacy and recreation settings. This is critical considering data suggests a preoccupation on both individual and organizational levels with the state as the primary authenticator, administrator and provider of wilderness experiences.

**Key Words:** Normative masculinity, Gender, the Received Wilderness Idea, Discourse, Authenticity

I think that there's something to be said for taking up space without doing anything. It's a big issue when it comes to climbing in particular, and it's not like a lot of these dude's fault inherently. They're not doing anything aggressively to take up that space, they're just existing in the way they were socialized, and maybe haven't been challenged to think, why am I taking up so much space physically or emotionally for people? (Dexter, genderqueer, age 29)

### **Introduction: Challenging the Received Wilderness Idea**

Environmental philosopher J Baird Callicott problematizes the received wilderness idea on three primary bases. First, it supports and enforces a false dualism between humans and nature. Second, the wilderness idea is ethnocentric, prioritizing western colonial perspectives of having discovered the “New World” in a “wilderness condition” (Nash, 2014, p. 24) ignoring the “historic presence and effects on practically all the world’s ecosystems of aboriginal peoples”. Finally Callicott claims that notions of pristine wilderness, either as an object to be protected or as a goal to be achieved, “implies the cessation of change”, even though as he and D.B. Botkin argue, “change is as natural as it is inevitable” (Callicott, 1991, p. 348-349).

He is careful to clarify that these issues aren't directed at *wildness*, or autonomous ecosystems within wilderness. Rather he and other scholars (including William Cronon (1995), Ramachandra Guha (1988), Carl Talbot (1998), Arturo Gómez-Pompa and Andrea Kaus (1998), and Carolyn Merchant (2003) to name a few) direct critique at that which represents a hierarchy of landscapes with the most pristine, timeless, and dramatic landscapes at the top. These are apolitical, asocial, outside the realm of human affairs, and are inevitably degraded by the mere presence of humans (see Braun, 2002). That is, wilderness the social construction; the existence

of which is rationalized for specific purposes, and which has real social, political, and economic implications beyond merely looking nice (Braun, 2002; Braun & Wainwright, 2001; Cronon, 1995; Sears, 1989). That is not to say that mountains and rivers and forests in their materiality are constructed by social discourse, but that the categories and boundaries applied to those biophysical elements are. Critique is levelled at what those boundaries represent, the dominant concept of wilderness in the North American psyche: the transcendent, the materially pristine, morally pure and politically neutral space written about by Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Theodore Roosevelt, Aldo Leopold, and Robert Marshall. These challenges to the received wilderness idea made by Callicott, Cronon, Guha and others over the last 40 years constitute pieces of a nuanced argument over the rightful place of wilderness ideology in popular imagination, American identity, and land use policy. They throw some of our most basic assumptions about the nature of “Nature” into question. This is the context within which this paper is written, with the goal of examining only a piece of that complex wilderness ideology. Namely, this research is interested in examining the masculine framing of wilderness settings - defined broadly to include advocacy and recreation spaces - and ways in which this masculine framing creates rhetorical blind spots and creates friction within the individual lived experiences of wilderness professionals, recreationists and volunteer advocates.

The central goal of this paper is to investigate how the prevalence of masculinity in wilderness discourses facilitates construction of definitions of wilderness (and wilderness subjects) that may be marginalizing to certain communities, thus deterring them from participating in wilderness activities or advocacy. Further, how do these discourses act in conjunction with other social narratives that construct wilderness in the popular imagination to reflect a narrow set of experiences and values?

With a focus on gender, this paper looks at how perceived wilderness experiences differ between individuals and how those experiences compare to constructions of wilderness in online media produced by wilderness advocacy and recreational organizations. The participants are outdoor recreationists, environmental educators, and professional as well as volunteer wilderness advocates. Their reflections provide valuable insights about how wilderness is thought of and experienced on the ground, whether that's in the office of the Adirondack Park Agency, or on the John Muir Trail. Sites of resonance and dissonance between constructions of wilderness in the popular imagination by media, and the lived experiences of these individuals reflect social norms and expectations within wilderness advocacy and recreation discourse, dictating who is welcome in those settings "as is", and who is held to different standards. This paper finds that masculinized wilderness discourse authenticates certain experiences and renders invisible or ineligible other forms of wilderness recreation. This discourages diverse membership, saying nothing of diverse leadership, or the prospect that these boundaries will be critiqued from within. Themes observed to this effect include the overrepresentation of traditional hetero masculinity, or what Joane Nagel terms, "normative masculinity", in the historical framing of wilderness, online wilderness media, and personal role models, and the role these play in imposing a masculine frame upon wilderness advocacy and recreation settings. Finally I lay the groundwork for future writing that investigates the entrenchment of normative masculinity in state classification of wilderness. This is critical considering data suggest a preoccupation on both individual and organizational levels with the state as the primary authenticator, administrator and provider of wilderness experiences.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Representation, and its lack, is a topic that frequently arises when discussing the homogeneity of outdoor settings. For example, recent research in wilderness recreation and advocacy has demonstrated an overrepresentation of white, middle class men in environmental media, especially where it engages with wilderness discourse (Chan & Curnow, 2017; Deluca & Demo, 2001; Finney, 2014; McNeil, Harris, & Fondren, 2012).

Trust between diverse communities and environmental organizations will come from those organizations sincerely focused on the social dimensions of environmental problems, and that take equity seriously in the design and implementation of solutions (Bullard, 2008; Finney, 2014). Scholars increasingly stress the importance of establishing relationships built on trust in making environmental recreation, education, and project implementation viable and genuinely comprehensive (Chan & Curnow, 2017; Deluca & Demo, 2001; Deloria, 1999; Di Chiro, 1996; Finney, 2014; Kimmerer, 2002; LaDuke, 1999; Merchant, 2003; Proctor 1996; Russell, Sarick, & Kennelley, 2002; Virden & Walker, 1999). At the very least, environmental solutions must avoid reproducing oppressive power structures that serve to marginalize and disenfranchise. This applies to wilderness advocacy and recreation, and it is important that scholars, advocates, and recreationists better understand the work that existing discourses do to affect participation in these social and physical landscapes.

Despite the attention given to wilderness and recreation in the academic and popular literature there is little explicit focus on individual experience navigating the predominance of normative masculinity in wilderness discourses (Fletcher, 2014; Meyer & Borrie, 2013; and Weatherby &

Vidon, 2018 provide notable exceptions). This research seeks to tease out the nuance in wilderness experiences on this level.

Wilderness advocacy settings also become highly regulated social spaces which tend to retrench normative gender roles. For the participants in this research, regulation manifested as women being snubbed in leadership positions and shouted down in public meetings. Among LGBTQ, discrimination, harassment and physical violence were reported as real and potential consequences for violating gender norms. These narratives are subordinate threads in wilderness discourse as revealed in a framing of authentic wilderness experiences as measured by metrics of solitude, ecological integrity, and rugged aesthetic, rather than equity and inclusion.

Universalizing the stakes in wilderness preservation as dealing solely with a concern over authenticity of experience means these issues go unaddressed, or even normalized. Of course those who suffer under the more obscure structural elements of the issue are erased by predominant narratives of universal vulnerability (Deluca & Demo, 2001; Dunaway, 2015; McCarthy & Prudham, 2004). They go unheard, unheeded, and are in some sense delegitimized as proper environmental citizens. This perpetuates the sense that the wilderness settings don't take the concerns of marginalized groups seriously, and is not landscape those communities should look to for assistance in resolving those issues.

## **Literature Review: The Discursive, Gendered Wilderness in Tourism and Recreation**

### *Gender*

Though this study looks at experiences of groups marginalized along lines gender and sexuality in wilderness settings, this is not a study of gender and sexuality per se. Descriptions and vocabulary used to describe participants' experiences in this particular study come from the

participants themselves. Generally “queer” or “genderqueer” is used in self description by those who experience identities that fall outside heteronormative, or even binary frames of gender and sexuality.

These and others dealing with gender are contested terms in LGBTQIA community (Galupo et al, 2014), and it is not the aim of this paper to suss out definitive descriptions of these terms, or the politics around them. It is rather to examine the conflict that arises in a constructed social setting (wilderness recreation and advocacy) where elements of traditional hetero masculine performances are prescribed for those who recreate or advocate in those spaces. This paper thus attempts to articulate the perspectives of those who find themselves in tension and conflict with those prescriptions, as well as those for whom these prescriptions are *modus operandi*. Below are some terms that are used outside of the context of self description, and how I am using them in this paper.

With that said, this paper draws heavily on Judith Butler’s theories of gender performativity to frame my analysis. Butler’s theory of gender, as well as her promotion of “critical queerness” have gone a long way in transforming understandings of gender and queer identity academia, and have catalyzed various assemblages of political activism, particularly queer activism (Aranguiz et al, 2013; Butler, 2010, 2011, 2013). Her politicizing of gender is what makes her theoretical work so applicable to this project. Butler looks not only at how sex and gender performances are products of a specific political and historical moment, but how those performances can be mobilized as resistance and subversion aimed at toppling dominant discourses (Butler, 2010, 2011, 2013).

In *Undoing Gender* (1988), Butler separates sex, sexuality, and gender, and though acknowledging they are interconnected semi-autonomously, she wants to elevate the particular fluidity of gender as a social construct.

...gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time -an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts (Butler, 1988, p. 519).

Gender, according to Butler, is a performance played out on a public stage, social assignments worn like masks and costumes to signify social position. Each performer brings their own style, perspectives, and histories to the act. However, while there are individual ways of doing gender, “*that one does it, and that one does it in accord with certain sanctions and proscriptions, is clearly not a fully individual matter*” (Butler, 1988, p. 525).

Butler makes the case that gender performances are strategic with the individual’s cultural survival as their end. She emphasizes that because of this, gender is rarely if ever a full expression of individual will, and is more often punitive, meaning the performance prescribed to individual by society is often characterized by a disconnect with the individual's lived experience, or self identity (Butler, 1988, p. 522). This paper attempts to partly investigate accounts of how individuals navigate gendered subjecthood while engaging a wilderness authenticated historically through a normative masculine frame. In order to accomplish this, masculinity as it is used here must be loosely defined.

When traditional hetero masculinity or normative masculinity are used in this paper, it is to describe a relationship with hegemonic masculine ideals as prescribed by historic connections made between manhood and wilderness, and continuously reiterated in wilderness texts, speech,

images, and individual embodiment. These include themes of rugged individualism, testing oneself through self flagellating privation, concern with conquest in an adversarial relationship with nature; downplaying emotional or physical vulnerability, bravery, and a willingness to take risks (Bryant, 2003; Fletcher, 2014; Hirschman, 2003; Kimmel, 2005, 2013; Mosse, 1996; Rome, 2006; Scott, 2010; Ta, 2006). Joane Nagel (1998) refers to “US and European male codes of honour, which stressed a number of ‘manly virtues’ described by [George] Mosse as ‘normative masculinity’, which included willpower, honour, courage, discipline, competitiveness, quiet strength, stoicism, sang-froid, persistence, adventurousness, independence, sexual virility tempered with restraint, and dignity which reflected masculine ideals as liberty, equality, and fraternity” (p. 239). Elizabeth Hirschman also characterizes masculine symbolism in outdoor advertising as value dualisms that emphasize solitudinal effort, brutal instrumentalization of objects of pursuit, whether they are women or game, and moral superiority of wilderness over culture, but also of civilization over nature (Hirschman, 2003, p. 15). The consequence becomes a narrow and gendered perception of authentic wilderness spaces and experiences that present barriers to participation for those who are not seen as adequately expressing or embodying these principles (Cosgriff, et al., 2009; Swain, 1995; Wearing, 1991; Wilson & Little, 2005).

Gender scholarship has tended to conflate the terms gender and women, often to the effect that such scholarship focuses exclusively on women’s “hidden labour”-- reclaiming that which is made invisible by a hetero-masculine bias in history research. Left unaddressed are ways in which subjects like wilderness are, as Nagel sought to demonstrate of nationalism, “uniquely masculine in a structural, cultural or social sense,” (Jarvis, 2007; Nagel 1998, p. 242). Thus, while it is worth noting that women went in great masses to support the conservation and

wilderness movements in the early 20th century (Jarvis, 2007; Rome, 2006), their structural marginalization in government, business and civil society resulted in their influence being blunted, and the influence of white men prioritized. There are also implications, as discussed below, for the broader environmental movement, which since the 1970s has undergone a period of professionalization that has resulted in “predominantly white, affluent, male leadership”, emphasizing issues like wilderness preservation and wildlife conservation. (Moeckli and Braun, 2001, p. 113) Though the environmental movement and the wilderness movement can be distinguished as two separate movements, their respective gendering as masculine realms has operated in tandem (see Weatherby & Vidon, 2018).

### *Discursive Construction of Wilderness and the Wilderness Subject*

The analysis for this paper draws heavily on discourse theory. Discourse, in the Foucauldian tradition, is a means by which groups and individuals structure reality, and sense of identity. Literally, discourses are taken as text, speech, practices acting as symbols which set parameters for how we talk about and comprehend reality. They thus govern how we interact with reality, and importantly, function to set the limits for what is considered legitimate knowledge of a subject, and what is not. Truth is something work goes into producing rather than an object pre-existing its articulation (Foucault, 1977, 1978).

It is the widespread and intertextual presence of ideas, thoughts, articulations, and practices within a specific historical moment influencing thoughts and behaviors that define discursive structures. They shape and bound the way we navigate our world. Sara Mills provides the example that,

...we can assume that there is a set of discourses of femininity and masculinity, because women and men behave within a certain range of parameters when defining themselves as gendered subjects. These discursive frameworks demarcate the boundaries within which we can negotiate what it means to be gendered (Mills, 1997, p. 19).

An advantage to analyzing discourse is the agency and complexity it lends to individuals enmeshed in discursive structures. Foucault saw the relation between economics, social structures and discourses as being a complex interaction with none of the terms of the equation being dominant (Mills, 1997). Ideological analysis looks at sexism as a system that is imposed as a tactic for securing power. Discursive analysis looks at sexism and the language and actions that accompany these tactics as the arena for resistance as well as oppression (p. 36). Power in this latter scenario is diffuse rather than located in defined, structurally rigid locations. Rather than merely “top down” or “bottom up”, oppression, resistance, subjectification occurs horizontally as well as vertically. In other words, groups and individuals are party to their own subject formation (Foucault, 1977, 1978). This allows room for theorizing on a multitude of gendered wilderness engagements, and the creation of wilderness subjects as a site of immensely complex negotiations of multiple identities and historical moments rather than simply the imposition of, for example, a homogenous masculine wilderness ideology (Butler, 1988; Mills, 1997, p. 86). Further, such theorizing allows for a more nuanced and critical consideration of the many ways wilderness itself has been constructed as gendered.

To say that “wilderness is formed” or constructed, or that nature is socially produced does not mean that biophysical entities are literally materialized by speech or text; rather, nature is socially produced in the sense that it is impossible to have an interaction with objective reality that is not mediated through our own individual histories, experiences, and biases, even those

interactions which don't ostensibly appear to be curated. What we see as "natural" internalizes not only ecological relations, but social relations too, with every interaction between society and nature producing intricate "mixings of the material, textual, cultural, political, and technological" (Braun, 2002, p. 11). We carry with us into wilderness areas hopes, fears, and expectations. Perhaps Bruce Braun (2002, p. 14) articulates the concept of social nature most clearly when he states,

It brings society and ecology together into a single analytic field, allows us to critically examine and evaluate the many ways that nature is socially produced, and draws attention to the ways in which nature's production – including its preservation – is always entangled with much more than nature, including questions of class, race, gender, and sexuality. It does not dictate to us what future natures *should* look like, nor does it provide a template for developing normative statements about nature and its transformation; these are open-ended questions that will be decided by the play of historical forces and political struggle.

Thus, understanding social nature means appreciating that all of our interactions with reality are mediated by the historical moments and narratives within which we find ourselves enmeshed. This is not a "good" or "bad" thing. The theory of social nature is a reflection on the point that history has no inherent narrative, and any curation of the biophysical facts of the world falls to whoever has the time and influence to coordinate it. Because subjectification occurs horizontally as well as vertically, everyone helps to normalize and naturalize these curations of a shared reality (Foucault, 1977, 1978). This theory of discourse and social nature gives us the ability to untangle interpretations of nature invested in false, oppressive dualisms (Castree & Braun, 2001; Braun, 2002). It allows us to identify sites of intervention, and opportunities for new, more just conditions of existence. That said, intentionality lies behind dominant discourses, and authorized

knowledge often serves specific groups (Bourdieu, 2012, 1989; Castree & Braun, 2001; Foucault 1977, 1978; Mills, 1997).

### *Construction of (Masculine) Wilderness*

Authenticity is central to the role wilderness plays in the American identity (Cronon, 1995; Vidon, 2016; Weatherby & Vidon, 2017; Vidon, Rickly, & Knudsen, 2018). There is a well traced genealogy of contemporary wilderness ideology (Lewis 2007; Merchant 2003; Nash 1967; Sutter 2002; Vidon, 2016, 2018), and accounts often begin with the rise of the Romantic Era and its rejection of industrial society as inauthentic and thus corrosive to the human soul. During this time there is a gradual turn away from wilderness as that which must be subdued (Nash, 1967) towards a moment early in the modern era when “the forests of North America were cleared”(Lewis, 2007, p. 8) and frontier nostalgia caused “educated elites and urbanites” to begin to attribute “positive virtues to wilderness” (Nash, 1967, p. 61, 115). Wilderness became a cultural symbol that carried moral weight.

As wilderness ideology evolved over the 20th Century, this moral weight changed but did not diminish (Sutter 2002; Vidon, 2016, 2018), persisting with its language of frontier nostalgia, anti-modernism, and self reliance (Cronon, 1995; Hirschman, 2003; Lewis, 2007; Nash, 1967). This conception of wilderness is often considered ahistorical, static, pristine, and “self-willed” at its most authentic (Foreman, 2000, p. 8; Hays, 1996). Additionally, in its purity wilderness is precarious, and under imminent threat from “industrial mega machines”(Abbey, 1988, p. 30), this precarity is a catalyst for much of the social and political work accomplished by wilderness in hierarchizing landscapes (Braun, 2002; Cronon, 1995; Lewis, 2007; Nash, 1967; Sears, 1989; Sutter, 2002). The fragility of wilderness is paradoxical in this way, considering the association

of these same landscapes, in the West particularly, with “America’s frontier and pioneer past... believed responsible for many unique and desirable characteristics” , endowing a nation and its people with “virility, toughness, and savagery” (Nash, 1967, p. 145).

### *Masculinization of Wilderness*

Historically this discourse is tied to normative masculinity, which is conceived as drawing power from wilderness, and sees wilderness as the last great bastion of white male dominance in an increasingly cosmopolitan, and so feminized, world (Boag, 2003; Bryant, 2003; Denny, 2011; Fletcher, 2014; Hirschman, 2003; Kimmel, 2005, 2012; Mortimer-Sandilands, 2005, 2010; Nash, 1967; Scott, 2010; Ta, 2006). The mountains, prairies, coal mines, and wildernesses thus become ideal homosocial spaces for white American men where their mothers and wives won’t follow, and where they can exercise complete control over fantasies of victimhood. Here calculated sado-masochism is embraced which simultaneously rewards and punishes a subject split between status as victim of oppressive society, and the architect of that same society (Bryant, 2003; Kimmel, 2005, 2013; Savran, 1998; Scott, 2010; Ta, 2006). Connections can now be made between the perceived descent from social and economic dominance by white middle class American men in 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries with an uptick in their engagement with wild spaces and extreme athletics at various points throughout history. In this way wilderness tourism has been highly influential in developing accessible, domesticated wilderness spaces that still subscribe to a masculine frame, and prescribe masculine expressions for any who venture there (Cloke and Perkins, 2002; McNeil, Harris, & Fondren, 2012; Rickard, 2014; Shields, 1991).

A masculinization of wilderness tourism in the 20th century means that wilderness itself has taken on some not so natural characteristics both in how those landscapes are organized, and in

expectations of tourist thought, action, and dress (Kinnaird and Hall, 1994,1996; Rickly & Vidon, 2017; Sears, 1989; Shields, 1991; Vidon, 2016; Weatherby & Vidon, 2018). If wilderness tourism has been framed in the 20th century as a masculine space where one is expected to embody principles of rugged individualism, self flagellating privation, and solitudinal retreat, this becomes normalized mode of engagement with particular expectations for authentic wilderness embodiment. Knowledge of these expectations and their successful embodiment are the sites where the wilderness subject is formed. Conversely, when those expectations-- obligatory points of passage into wilderness subjecthood-- are violated, the experience is degraded, highlighting boundaries, hierarchies, and sources of hostility (Sears, 1989; Senda Cook, 2016, p. 149; Star & Griesemer, 1989, p. 392; Vidon, 2016, p. 104).

Normative masculine control over environmental narratives exists in part thanks to the deep roots, firm establishment, and institutionalization of, the white, patriarchal historical perspective that becomes institutionalized in organizations like the Wilderness Society. In this way representation informs how we construct gendered and racialized Others (Finney, 2014). Those others are either explicitly or implicitly discouraged from participation and leadership (Deluca & Demo, 2001; Finney 2014; Little, 2002; Martin, 2004; McNeil, Harris, & Fondren, 2012; Mortimer-Sandilands, 2010; Nagel, 1998; Said, 1978; Warren, 2002).

How are these hegemonic ideals internalized? Hegemonic ideals can never be reached, we only ever orient ourselves in relation to them (Bourdieu, 2012, 1989). Whether that orientation to wilderness' masculine lens manifests in the individual's assimilation to the ideal; through resistance and formation of new wilderness discourses; and/or through opting to not participate at all (Johnson, Booker & Cordell, 2001; Little, 2002; McNeil, Harris, & Fondren, 2012; Meyer & Borrie, 2013).

## **Methods**

A qualitative discourse analysis blog and magazine articles from The Wilderness Society, Sierra Club Magazine, Protect the Adirondacks; Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Reserve; and the Adirondack Almanack. These materials included the 40 most recent articles from each source, focusing on sections related directly to parks and wilderness dating from between 2016 and 2018.

Additionally, 30 semi-structured, in depth interviews were conducted for this research, each lasting on average 50- 60 minutes, with the longest being an hour and a half. Interviewees were selected through recommendations on the part of organizational contacts inside Protect the Adirondacks and Adirondack Wild, and in addition an electronic screening survey was distributed on publicly available social media pages managed by Adirondack Backcountry Hikers, Sierra Club's Atlantic Chapter, and The Wilderness Society. Thus the individuals here are constituents of these organizations, or anyone within their social media reach.

In-depth interviews are informant led conversations that “explore research participants perspective on their personal experience with the research topic.” It involves selecting participants who have broad experience with the research topic, and “focuses on participants’ statements about their experience, how they portray this experience, and what it means to them as they indicate during the interview,” (Charmaz, 2014: 56-58). Concepts that were operationalized for measurement in participants’ responses included explicit and implicit connections between personal experience with gender and the outdoor. The former include conscious acknowledgment between gender and wilderness experiences, including preferences in companions, experiences with gender discrimination, and normative judgements about the

benefits of wilderness to tapping into authentic genders. Implicit connections between gender and wilderness would include referring to value judgements concerning rugged individualism, authenticity, effeminizing or weakening effects of modern society. Sample interview questions can be found in Appendix A. This style of interview relies on a selection of informants who have experience with the research topic at hand, open ended questions, the objective of obtaining detailed responses, emphasis on understanding the research participants' perspective, meanings, and experience, and practice of following up on unanticipated areas of inquiry, hints, and implicit views. Ideal information to come out of these interviews will include concrete recountings of specific events. To encourage these stories and help the informants particularize scenarios in which their gender was wrapped up in wilderness engagement, prompts were given to the informants to encourage extending descriptions, filling in details, identifying key actors, and what Weiss terms, "inner events". Inner events include "perceptions, what the informant heard or saw; cognitions, what the person thought, believed or desired, and emotions, or how they felt, what strivings and impulses the respondent experienced," (Weiss, 1994: 75). In this way, as mentioned above, individual expressions of how wilderness as a gendered terrain is navigated were illuminated, and specific sites of oppression and resistance identified.

Analysis occurred continuously throughout the data collection process. Materials will be initially open coded using NVivo qualitative data software. During this stage actions, thoughts, theories, and symbols relating to wilderness were inductively extracted with a focus on those with gendered histories and connotations. An example would look at ways in which a conversation about rugged individualism aligned with certain conceptions of hetero-masculinity as historically rugged individualism tends to be heavily associated with a Theodore Roosevelt variety of masculinity (Hirschman, 2003). Several rounds of focus coding determined the acuity and

conceptual strength of initial codes and integrative memos synthesized focus codes into theoretical categories for analyzing the discursive structures which form wilderness in a way that is tied up with various gender performances (Cresswell, 2014; Charmaz, 2014: 188-189). All data entry and management was performed using NVivo 12.

In total, 30 interviews conducted for this research, 29 of which were one on one, and one where a husband and wife elected to interview together. Three participants self described their gender as “genderqueer,” two of whom were also fine with the label of transgender male. Two more respondents self described as transgender men. 20 respondents self described as female, with six using “cis-woman” to describe a comfort they felt between their bodies and their social position as women. Five respondents self described as men or male. All but four participants listed their racial identity as white or caucasian. These individuals described themselves as Latina, biracial with a black mother and white father, and Asian.

Quotes from respondents used in this paper have been anonymized through the use of pseudonyms, though their self described gender and age have been attached for context. This is to acknowledge that interactions on the individual level are too complex to explain through gender alone. Though this study does not directly address race, age, class, or nationality, there is no doubt that these intersections of difference affect the process of wilderness engagement.

Analysis began with open, inductive coding followed by several rounds of focus coding to determine the acuity and conceptual strength of initial codes. Integrative memos synthesized focus codes into theoretical categories for analyzing the discursive structures which form wilderness in a way that is tied up with various gender performances (Cresswell, 2014; Charmaz, 2014: 188-189). All data entry and management was performed using NVivo 12.

The obvious imbalances in the race and gender of respondents is both a limitation of this study, and an important data point. On the one hand the lack of males speaks perhaps to the unwillingness of men to participate in studies concerned with gender due to discomfort or perceived lack of stake in the issue. The racial disparities here can be said to be reflective of the overall underrepresentation of people of color in wilderness settings, of which the work of Finney (2014), Deluca and Demo (2001), and others thoroughly investigates.

## **Discussion**

### *Wilderness' Masculine Social Frame*

Historical restrictions on gender in discourse may account for the overrepresentation of men in wilderness, including women's exclusion from decision making capacities, their artistic and scientific contributions being discredited, and social expectations of women as caregivers, each presenting structural barriers to wilderness settings. This lack of representation also constructs a sense that non-hetero masculine presenting people are not present in wilderness, and are perhaps unexpected or unwelcome according to the resultant discursive prescriptions for how gender and wilderness should be correctly embodied together by an who wish to engage with advocacy or recreation.

This overrepresentation manifests in the data as a comparative overrepresentation of male writers, photographers and subjects in wilderness media. There were 72 articles explicitly concerned with the contributions of men to wild landscapes compared with 14 articles that focused on the contributions of women to wild landscapes. Also of note here is the rigid gender binary within which these articles were framed. Completely absent from the sample was any

mention of lesbian, gay, gender non conforming or transgender contribution to wild landscapes, or even that they might exist.

In the interviews this was mirrored in a comparative overrepresentation of male role models, be they fathers, uncles, brothers, husbands, or non familial role models like teachers, supervisors, philosophers, authors, or historical figures. Male role models were referenced 59 times in the interviews, compared to the 26 instances that familial and non familial female role models were referenced. In addition the list of female public figures was shorter, and the same names were repeated frequently, Rachel Carson, Jane Goodall, Margaret Murie and Terry Tempest Williams. This lack of non-male role models presents an issue in and of itself, particularly considering the lack of visibility for lesbian, gay, gender non-conforming or transgender figures in wilderness discourse. Second to the financial cost of outdoor recreation, participants cited lack of representation of racial and sexual minorities in wilderness as one of the biggest potential barriers to participation.

As a non-white female, National Park Service employee “Rosa” believes this overrepresentation of superordinate groups has impacts that extend far beyond her, women, or the Hispanic community.

I’m Hispanic and I see a lot of, in the advocacy groups and the meetings that I’ve been to, whether it’s by big organizations... or even like the local smaller nonprofits, I’ve seen a lot of... like, the same dominant groups. Usually male, usually white, usually-- I’m assuming they’re heterosexual. So their lens of looking at the outdoors is very different. The activities they provide, the language that they use, not just in advocacy, but even in creating

signage... a lot of the signage. I think one of the easiest things to do is make the signs in different languages, but also the way that these spaces are created (Rosa, female, age 24).

In talking about youth campers from communities of color in and around Chicago, Dexter, a white transgender man explains why his organization struggles to recruit and retain diverse employees. While representation helps, overrepresentation of superordinate groups means the social infrastructure is not always in place to support new members.

They don't keep working at camp, because they don't see themselves reflected. We had one black counselor, in the boys camp, and one black counselor in girls camp, and then no other counselors of color of any other race. So if kids don't see themselves in that stuff, they're not gonna do it. I think that's the biggest barrier. I think that we as any sort of wilderness professionals have, is that you can't just go out and ask a person of color, or a queer person to do it. Can't just be like, "hey, come work for me." I found that having folks like me who are #woke or whatever, vet for my friends, who are from those oppressed groups and be like, no it's cool for you here, or like, "it's not cool for you here, it's not fine, don't come here" (Dexter, genderqueer, age 29).

Earlier in the conversation Dexter mentioned the organization he worked for had removed a transgender flag from their premises without consulting their transgender employees as the result of a client who had taken issue with it. This shows that in cases of race or gender discrimination, members of marginalized communities have good reason to hesitate before vouching for wilderness communities of which they feel themselves to be active participants. Such spaces don't always have the social infrastructure in place to guarantee the safety and dignity of diverse recruits.

*Masculine Social Prescriptions: Which Bodies are Welcome and How*

One consequence of normative masculinity's overrepresentation in wilderness settings and wilderness discourse is the privileging of bodies, behaviors and practices which subscribe to normatively masculine social prescriptions. These prescriptions may determine who is welcomed in "as is", and who is treated as outside the norm. In reflecting on wilderness settings and how welcoming those spaces feel to people of different genders, the following participants indicated similar perceptions,

I think it welcomes certain genders, but it also I mean, gender intersects with so many other things and how you express your gender, and right like, a gay man isn't gonna be welcomed the same way that a straight man is, as is a black man. Like I think I saw one or two men hiking on the AT in 2016 who were Asian, and the number of racist jokes that they got to endure was pretty spectacular (Robin, genderqueer, age 31).

Yes, I think they're more welcoming to like, stereotypical men. [Interviewer: What is a stereotypical man? How is he characterized?] Well just like, all of the sort of privileges that come with that. The ability to not be harassed or questioned as to their interactions with their environment. So mostly white straight male, it's easier for them to have access to, and be safe in a wilderness setting. They're more likely to see others of their... they're represented, I mean Outdoor magazine, right? Like in Outdoor, Outside, you open up and what do you see? I guess I don't know their orientation, it's my own bias, but I'm like, oh yeah, probably straight. They don't have to worry about anything other than the wilderness. They don't have to worry about the other stuff that other people add onto that (Julie, female, age 38).

Some responses clarified that they did not believe wild landscapes were inherently more welcoming of certain genders than others, but that these space's social dimensions were what posed a problem.

I think that our cultural idea about wilderness settings more easily includes people of certain genders than others, but I don't think- nothing about that is like inherent to the natural world or wilderness areas...Which barely even gets to the whole non-binary gender thing which I think is as yet not really accounted for in our cultural understandings of wilderness, other than like queerness is effeminate and therefore not welcome, or not adequate in certain ways (Taylor, transgender, age 26).

This perception is important to note, because it reflects dynamics of wilderness discourse rooted in traditional gender norms that present points of friction for the interviewees, and very well may present strong barriers to participation for others. Participants who disagreed that wilderness settings were in any way more welcoming of certain genders than others tended to have less to say on the subject, cited other more likely causes of deterrence, or pointed to an increase in women's visibility in wilderness as a sign that wilderness is no more welcoming of men than women:

Well, the climbing community was heavily male. There were a couple women who were pretty amazing climbers, but they were definite minority. There were certainly plenty of things that we did that were evenly mixed (Ryan, male, age 56).

I don't know...I think more so I would see it more as a socio economic disparity than a gender disparity, and that may be just my perception... in my personal mind, my personal perception I don't see it being a huge issue (Noah, male, age 27).

In addition, to assume that wilderness settings have homogeneous or neutral social relations makes invisible the social and political work the received wilderness idea does: organizing landscapes, setting the agenda for political environmentalism, and papering over perspectives that fall outside the parameters of legitimate wilderness subjecthood and experience. For example, a narrative that is generally absent from mainstream political environmentalism but present in the interviewees' experience was a tendency among gender non-conforming respondents to see the wilderness as a site for what Meyer and Borrie (2013) term an "escape from a normative gender regime" (p. 304-305). Here wilderness provides a less rigid (if still complex) setting where self exploration can occur away from more populated spaces, where one respondent felt their "role was more locked in and unchangeable," (Taylor, genderqueer, age 26). That this potential exists but is subordinate or invisible in popular wilderness discourse is revealed in the simultaneous sense of physical danger experienced by participants who weren't certain of how their gender nonconformity would be received by their fellow recreationists.

I love the woods when it's just the woods. The woods don't judge. And I feel very much at peace and I frequently find that I would much rather hike for the day, and find a campsite and camp out by myself, and I'm perfectly happy with that, rather than be at a shelter and have to deal with my gender and my body in relation to everyone else. Which can be very stressful. You know, basic things like peeing become potentially dangerous (Robin, transgender, age 31).

This sense of danger may be related to a perception that male recreationists especially tend to revert to and embrace traditional gender roles in wilderness recreation settings, occasionally manifesting in toxic social dynamics. These dynamics include discrimination and harassment towards women, advocates and park employees, and reported instances of homophobic violence.

This elevation of traditional gender roles affects the standards of performance expected from men and women (with gender non conforming participants being pushed into one of these boxes depending on how they are “read”). As a masculine space, normative standards of toughness are applied to all wilderness subjects, resulting in an effective double standard requiring women to perform masculinity in order to gain access to those spaces, or “hang with the bros”, while also being expected to maintain an acceptable level of femininity-- cleanliness, purity, and poise that some felt would never be expected of a man in the same setting.

A brief glance at these answers reflects a certain disparity in outdoor experience that those who find themselves in privileged positions within wilderness’ normative masculine discourse seem to be blind to, uncomfortable in addressing, or in some ways indifferent. What is established here is that there is no such thing as a uniform “wilderness experience”, but that those differences are made invisible when discourse is dominated by a narrow perspective.

#### *Assimilating to Normative Masculine Discourse in Wilderness Settings*

Discouraged participation is not the only consequence of a masculine bias in wilderness spaces. Those who choose to participate in wilderness settings navigate these discourses narratives in ways that affect their gender expression. As a result, respondents felt friction between their existence as female bodied people and other outdoor gendered communities. In a number of instances, even those participants who are normally comfortable in their gender assignment as women felt the need to modify their gender expression to ease this interaction.

I think that wilderness settings prefer masculine characteristics. I find myself dressing or behaving in ways society has deemed “strong” and “capable” for the outdoors, from the clothes I wear (flannel, backward caps), to the alcohol I drink (flasks of whiskey and cheap

beer), which are subsequently more masculine. Because I've been conditioned to believe being a 'tomboy' is strong. But if I were to behave feminine or 'prissy', I'd never make it out in the wilderness. Or so I've been conditioned to believe (Sarah, female, age 26).

This takes on more existential dimensions for gender non conforming or transgender participants. In some cases there was an expressed concern for homophobic or transphobic attacks.

I have to make sure to pitch my voice down, I have to not talk very much, I can't talk with my, I cannot indicate that I might have a male partner. I generally, there have been spaces where I felt so unsafe that I had to pretend to be straight, and not a vegetarian, because I felt like if there was any chance of my masculinity being called into question, the people that I was dealing with were probably going to hurt me. I frequently feel like I have to hide and disguise my body when I am in the wilderness with other people (Robin, genderqueer, age 31).

If certain gender experiences are unexpected, or unwelcome in wilderness settings as contrary to dominant wilderness discourse, those which are welcome are permitted to dominate space and conversation, namely those individuals who pass as adequately masculine. This does not speak to the tyrannical tendencies in any given individual, but the frames within which wilderness spaces are constructed, determining who is entitled to not only the rivers and mountain tops, but the eyes and ears of others. Dexter describes interacting with bro culture, and "beta sprayers", the ways that hetero masculinity is afforded privilege in outdoor recreational spaces.

Do you know what a beta sprayer is? So like beta sprayers are people at the gym who walk around and just tell you how to do things without asking, and all the beta sprayers I've ever

met were like middle aged white guys... Beta spraying I think is a big problem, a very gendered issue, and I think a spatial issue. And you see that at the crags too, it's the same issue. And usually people who are unaware of how much space they take up, which are people who are socialized in that way are more generally straight white guys (Dexter, genderqueer, age 29).

This sense of entitlement to space simultaneously derives from and reiterates dominant discourses and forms of relating to recreational spaces and nature that privilege normative masculinity.

In advocacy settings this entitlement to space can take the form of the "old boys' club". This presents issues of voice, but also potential issues of safety and normalization of abusive behavior. In talking about her new position at a conservation organization in Northern New York State, Leanna expressed frustration with the "old guard" that presented an obnoxious challenge to her professional life.

I'm distinctly remembering on my third day we went to this public hearing and I had to go meet this guy from [\*\*\*] and his comment was just like all about my physical appearance, and I was told to never stay, to be in a room alone with him. There was just always a need to deflect him from me... Yeah and so that was like my first encounter, and it's like, just a bunch of old white men, and the mansplaining and the ego, and being talked over and also not being a member of the old boy's club, has been the largest and most frustrating challenge for me in being here (Leanna, female, age 28).

Similarly, a senior representative from a regional Sierra Club chapter described her experience being sidelined in energy policy conversations despite her professional background in physics and engineering.

At that meeting we had one of the top people involved in policy, myself, and the energy chair, the male energy chair, every time there was any discussion about any of the power plants, how they operate, shut down times, kilowatt hours, projected cost versus actual functional time, those comments were directed at my male energy chair, not at me. Even though i was the group chair. If I said anything, it was basically talked over. I was ignored. That is still going on here (Meryl, female, age 73).

While these women are active participants in wilderness advocacy, they provide clear examples of diverse experiences being discounted or ignored, and the undermining dedicated advocates' ability to interact in a straightforward way with their peers. While this limits organizational potential on the level of civil society, the prospect of these same dynamics playing out at the state and federal level ensure the entrenchment of masculine wilderness in the primacy of state as the authenticator of wilderness. As discussed further in a forthcoming paper, this preoccupation with state authenticated wilderness institutionalizes a masculine frame with material consequences for wilderness and how society organizes landscapes generally.

## **Conclusion**

In the overrepresentation of superordinate groups, i.e. traditionally hetero masculine white men, lies the discursive mechanisms by which environmental narratives which reflect and support that particular perspective are created and re-created. The reinforcement of these discourses, either through media, personal interactions, or organizational agenda setting creates barriers to

participation first by discouraging those who are not represented in those spaces from seeing themselves as eligible for acceptance; second through production of group homogeneity that precludes the development of the social infrastructure necessary to ensure the safety and dignity of marginalized communities.

The social infrastructure that does exist privileges masculine gender expressions, and prescribes masculine embodiments of wilderness recreation. This colors every interaction with wilderness, forcing individuals into assimilation, confrontation, or avoidance. Non-hetero masculine gender expressions are modified, space is ceded to “beta sprayers”, and voices are excluded from old boys’ clubs, or positions of decision making and narrative influence.

While the intersections of race, gender, class and nationality are inextricable from one another and represent a fraction of potential social positions to analyze data through, the scope of this paper focuses primarily on constructions of wilderness in ways that promote white normative masculinity as the hegemonic ideal towards which participants in wilderness advocacy and recreation are forced to navigate.

With that in mind, it is critical to emphasize that without a reconciling of the full range of factors, including identities and social positions related to the formation of wilderness subjects, this research runs the risk of reifying the categories it is meant to deconstruct. “Focusing on one element of identity, such as race or gender, to the exclusion of other relevant identity formations can create a deterministic narrative of winners and losers that oversimplifies the situation and often leads to political impasse,” (Scott, 2010, p. 19). For example, to dichotomize conceptions of gender into oppressive masculinity and victimized femininity leads to overly simplistic and essentialist visions of gender that are nearly useless when talking about people’s infinitely more

complex lived experience. Such visions erase the vast complexity of processes of subjectification of gendered bodies, failing at the very least to account for moments of resistance and suffering of all bodies in relation to patriarchy and hegemonic masculine ideals, saying nothing of the variations of these themes that occur at intersections of race, class, nationality, age, and ability.

As Rebecca Scott notes in her analysis of Appalachian nature and identity tied up in the mining practice of mountaintop removal, “a cultural analysis of the complex interactions between these objects-- race, gender, class, and nature-- requires respecting their irreducibility while recognizing their mutually productive effects in the social world” (Scott, 2010, p. 19).

Conclusions sought in this project are not to be used deterministically, but rather are aimed to contribute a single strand of insight to what would ideally be a tightly woven, comprehensively deliberated web of similarly partial perspectives. Such an approach is necessary for a new aggressive, comprehensive objectivity rooted in rigorous dialogue between partial, situated knowledges. This I believe to be a more comprehensive objectivity than that produced by what Donna Haraway terms “masculinist science”, the realm of the singular scientist who performs the “god trick” of remaining unsituated in the world and impartial to their work as the only legitimate witness to reality (Haraway, 1988). Such a perspective on objectivity, either on the part of the researcher, or those who interpret and communicate the research, leads inevitably to the crystallization and naturalization of power and oppression.

In the second manuscript, the investigation dives deeper into these notions of normative masculinity being entrenched in wilderness via the state as institution of legitimation for wilderness. How do nationalist wilderness ideologies enshrined by the state entrench normative masculine bias in wilderness areas. Additionally, how do these same processes hierarchize landscapes to favor the preservation of some landscapes which are important symbols of white

normative masculinity and the condemn other landscapes which are deemed not symbolic and thus not important?

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## **Enshrining Normative Masculinity: State Authenticated Wilderness and Normative Gender Roles in Wilderness Advocacy and Recreation Settings**

### **Abstract**

This paper discusses how a normative, (and marginalizing) masculine frame comes to be formalized in wilderness settings and wilderness experiences through the process of “cool” authentication, or the classification of authentic wilderness on the part of the state. Often comprised of legislative processes, cool authentication incorporates and cements cultural definitions of wilderness which are otherwise subjective. In this way, state authentication of wilderness codifies normative masculine perspectives on wilderness into wilderness legislation and lends it the title of authenticity. Specifically this paper examines ways in which state authenticated wilderness promotes a nationalistic vision of wilderness that serves as an oasis for what Michael Kimmel terms aggrieved male entitlement through the production of remote, rugged, homosocial experiences which become highly valued in cultural identity. If in the United States parks and wilderness areas stand as monuments which enshrine national values, what does it mean then to have a national park system whose own data suggest wild disparities in visitorship and employment across race, nationality and gender?

This paper investigates how cool authentication of subjective values affects the individual experience, and argues that construction of a more inclusive wilderness means divorcing our conceptualizations of wilderness from nationalism, and associated masculinizing discourses.

**Key Words:** State classification; cool authentication; traditional gender roles; normative masculinity; hierarchy; nationalism

It is reasonable to think that cultural traditions and values constitute a condition-- at least a causal one-- of our political and legal freedom; and therefore insofar as the Constitution safeguards our nation as a political entity, it must safeguard our cultural integrity as well. Citizenship, then, can be seen to involve not only legal and political but also cultural rights and responsibilities... The right to... demand that the mountains be left as a symbol of the sublime, a quality which is extremely important in our cultural history, ... the right to cherish traditional national symbols, the right to preserve in the environment the qualities we associate with our character as a people, belongs to us as Americans. The concept of nationhood implies this right; and for this reason, it is constitutionally based (Sagoff, 1974, 266).

### **Introduction: Wild Heritage**

Mark Sagoff's quote justifying wilderness' constitutional right to protection illuminates more than the interconnectedness between the nation state and the received wilderness idea. His comments join a swath of historical figures, thinkers, and writers like Theodore Roosevelt, Gertrude Stein, Frederick Jackson Turner, Roderick Nash and others who suggest an intimate connection between wilderness and a narrow conceptualization of American tradition and heritage.

This paper seeks to interrogate the social elements of the received wilderness idea, an idea defined here as the dominant conception of wilderness in the American mind; that is, wilderness constructed as a spiritually transcendent, materially pristine, morally pure and politically neutral space (Callicott & Nelson, 1998; Cronon, 1995; Gómez- Pompa & Kaus, 1992; Guha, 1989;

Nash, 2014; Nelson & Callicott, 2008). It is a space over which a strong normative masculine frame is imposed (Boag, 2003; Fletcher 2014; Hirschman 2003; Kimmel, 2005; McNeil, Harris & Fondren, 2012; Mortimer-Sandilands, 2010) which prescribes specific beliefs, practices, and dress for authentic wilderness subjects in authentic wilderness experiences (Kinnaird and Hall, 1994,1996; Rickly & Vidon, 2017; Sears, 1989; Shields, 1991; Vidon, 2016; Weatherby & Vidon, 2018). Importantly for this paper, it is also a nationalistic wilderness (Boag, 2003; Bryant 2003; Nash, 2014) which relies heavily on state classification for legitimacy and protection (Sutter, 2007; Vidon, 2016, 2018).

Conceptualizing authentic wilderness as existing primarily or solely in the context of state management presents challenges to subordinate wilderness discourses for several reasons. This includes conducting boundary work in the hierarchizing of landscapes and land uses that distinguish wilderness and wilderness experiences from everything else. The effects of classifications are often disparately felt, with landscapes symbolically important to white, normatively masculine American national identity being preserved, and landscapes perceived as less aesthetically or culturally valuable being disqualified from the same type of protection. It happens that these landscapes tend to intersect with low income communities, communities of color, and indigenous communities (Bullard, 2008; Deluca & Demo, 2001; Finney, 2014; McGuire & Lynch, 2017; Scott, 2010). Additionally, scholars who have underscored the close linkage between the received wilderness idea and American national identity also highlight the interweaving of traditional norms into this relationship, including norms related to gender roles (Boag, 2003; Denny, 2011; Kimmel, 2005, 2013).

Primacy of state authenticated wilderness provides the state with power and duty to surveil and regulate wilderness areas, determining what goes on there and how. As noted above, the lack of

objective definition of wilderness, and an emphasis on the process of authentication often means that ideals come to define these spaces, including those ideals which create barriers to access. One example of this is in the codification of motor vehicles framed as the antithesis of the wilderness aesthetic. The received wilderness idea requires not only the absence of certain noises, sights and smells, but also prioritizes an individualistic, self powered wilderness experience (Cronon, 1995; Sutter, 2002, 2007). Often legislative processes, cool authentication incorporates and cements cultural definitions of wilderness which are otherwise subjective (Cohen & Cohen, 2012; Vidon, 2018). In this way, state authentication of wilderness codifies normative masculine perspectives on wilderness into wilderness legislation and lends it the title of authenticity. This becomes problematic for both the hierarchizing of landscapes that elevate those which carry symbolic value for a white hetero patriarchy, and the prescription of normative masculine expectations for those who hope to engage in authentic wilderness.

In addition to the regulation and hierarchization of landscapes, control over wilderness designation places the state in a unique position of control over popular wilderness discourse, manifesting in messages that carry nationalistic overtones referencing heritage, birthright, and tradition (Boag, 2003; Cronon, 1995; Nash, 1967; Nelson, 1998). Nationalism thrives on tradition and re-culturation around gender norms especially, and predisposes discourses that adopt nationalist perspectives, e.g. the received wilderness idea, to unintentionally retrenching these same gender norms (Lievesley, 1996; Nagel 1998; Yuval-Davis, 1993). This interconnectedness of traditional gender roles, wilderness, and nationalism is well documented by scholars (Boag, 2003; Bryant, 2003; Denny, 2011; Jarvis, 2007; Kimmel, 2005, 2012; Mortimer-Sandilands, 2005, 2010; Scott, 2010).

## Statement of the Problem

These trends were reflected in the discourse analysis of online wilderness media and interviews conducted for this research. Thus this paper asks, given the preoccupation with state classified wilderness in discourse produced by advocacy and recreation communities, *how does this affect the gendered individual's experience?* Are the hierarchized landscapes and subjecthoods recognized? How is a normative masculine frame codified in state authenticated wilderness? Do these present barriers to participation for certain groups of people marginalized along lines of gender? In the end this paper argues that construction of a more inclusive wilderness means divorcing our conceptualizations of wilderness from nationalism, and associated masculinizing discourses. The interview responses provide valuable insights on these tensions. The participants are outdoor recreationists, environmental educators, and professional as well as volunteer wilderness advocates and express having witnessed these dynamics in their experience on the ground, whether that's in the office of the Adirondack Park Agency, or on the John Muir Trail. Questions of structural bias in knowledge production matter dearly to social movements of all stripes. Wilderness and environmental initiatives especially rely in large part on behavior change and the support of broad, diverse populations (Braun, 2002; Dunaway 2014; Raymond 2016). Thus questions of ecological sustainability are as much questions of social science as they are biophysical science. Social change in this instance precedes environmental change (Chan & Curnow, 2017; Deluca & Demo, 2001; Deloria, 1999; Di Chiro, 1996; Finney, 2014; Guha, 1988). Before wilderness advocates and recreationists can mobilize constituents for the wilderness ideal, they need to demonstrate that this ideal doesn't exist merely to serve the interests of a narrow band of privileged social groups (Chan & Curnow, 2017; Deluca & Demo, 2001). The threat of a looming ecological crisis is going to require political action catalyzing

broad engagement across the diverse global populations, and environmentalism may have to confront its historical reluctance to participate in social movements concerned with civil rights and other more human centered struggles (Chan & Curnow, 2017; Deluca & Demo, 2001; Deloria, 1999; Di Chiro, 1996; Finney, 2014; Guha, 1988; Kimmerer, 2002; LaDuke, 1999; Merchant, 2003; Proctor 1996; Russell, Sarick, & Kennelley, 2002; Virden & Walker, 1999).

## **Literature Review**

### *Discursive Production of Wilderness and Wilderness Subjects*

Discourse, in the Foucauldian tradition, is a means by which groups and individuals structure reality, and sense of identity. Literally, discourses are taken as text, speech, and practices acting as symbols which set parameters for how we talk about and comprehend reality. They thus govern how we interact with reality, and importantly, function to set the limits for what is considered legitimate knowledge of a subject, and what is not. Truth is something work goes into producing rather than an object pre-existing its articulation (Foucault, 1977, 1978). Of interest here is the discursive production of wilderness, part of something geographers like Bruce Braun and Noel Castree (2001) refer to as “social nature.”

Social nature is a theory that interrogates the processes and contexts within which conceptions of nature are formed. To say that wilderness is formed or constructed, or that nature is socially produced does not mean that biophysical entities are literally materialized by speech or text; rather, nature is socially produced in the sense that it is impossible to have an interaction with objective reality that is not mediated through our own individual histories, experiences, and biases, even those interactions which don't ostensibly appear to be curated (Braun, 2002, Braun

& Wainwright, 2001; Castree, 2001). To quote Noel Castree, “knowledge of nature is invariably inflected with the biases of the knower/s” (Castree, 2001, p. 10).

The received wilderness idea is a function of this socially produced nature. This references the dominant concept of wilderness in the North American psyche: the transcendent, the materially pristine, morally pure and politically neutral space written about by Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Theodore Roosevelt, Aldo Leopold, and Robert Marshall. To acknowledge that even these most “natural” elements of reality are social artifacts is to open them to critique of the power relations that inform their construction. Often these constructs behave as discursive conduits for power in social hierarchy (Braun, 2002; Castree, 2001).

For example, one could observe ways in which wilderness (and state classification of wilderness especially) is wrapped up in the settler colonial project to erase indigenous histories through an insistence on pristine and perfectible environments prior to European contact with North America (Braun 2002; Cronon, 1991, 1996; Deluca & Demo, 2001; Haraway 1992; Perrault, 2007; Watts, 2015; Wolfe, 2006). Such claims that deny the complexities of indigenous knowledges and cultures fit seamlessly into a colonial program of elimination, an organizing principle of settler colonialism. Such discourses aim to erase what was here, build something in its place to legitimize the cause and discredit the claim made by the original inhabitants to the land (Wolfe, 2006). When landscape is declared a peopleless landscape, settler society is given license to appropriate it as needed (Perrault, 2007, p. 23; Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). Insofar as we go to the wilderness to reenact frontier myths, it is an exercise in colonial nostalgia. The “facts” of nature are never just laying around waiting to be discovered, they do not preexist articulation (Haraway, 1989). Again, to quote Castree (2001, p. 9), “In reality, what counts as the truth about nature *varies* depending on the perspective of the analyst.”

## *On Gender as Performance*

When referencing gender and gender expression, this research draws heavily on Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, in which,

...gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time-- an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts (Butler, 1988, p. 519).

As an act with cultural survival as its end (Butler 1988), gender becomes a performance aimed at producing specific social outcomes, namely the positioning of oneself in relation to others on a social field. These positionings are the performances demanded by specific cultural, political, and historical moments, and the moment under investigation here is that produced in wilderness settings by the received wilderness ideology. Specifically, in this paper I will examine ways in which state authenticated wilderness promotes a nationalistic vision of wilderness that serves as an oasis for what Michael Kimmel terms, "aggrieved male entitlement," (Kimmel, 2013). This is accomplished through the production of remote, rugged, homosocial experiences which become highly valued in cultural identity. Michael Nelson speaks to this point when he says "in the United States, many see designated wilderness areas as monuments; symbolically enshrining national values," (Nelson, 1998, 176). If parks and wilderness areas are to reflect national values, what does it mean then to have a national park system whose own data suggests wild disparities in visitorship and employment across race, nationality and gender? (Taylor, Grandjean, and Gramann 2011: 10)

## *Masculine Wilderness*

Recent scholarship has reflected the overrepresentation of the white hetero masculine perspective in outdoor media (Chan & Curnow, 2017; Deluca & Demo, 2001; Finney, 2014; McNeil, Harris, & Fondren, 2012) and the subordination of other gender groups as passive participants in the outdoors (Berryman, 2015; McNeil, Harris & Fondren, 2012; see also Weatherby & Vidon, 2018). The result is a historical framing of wilderness as being predominantly masculine space (Bialeschki and Henderson, 1993; McNeil, Harris & Fondren, 2012; Pritchard and Morgan, 2000a; Yang et al., 2017).

When traditional hetero masculinity or normative masculinity are used in this paper, it is to describe a relationship with hegemonic masculine ideals as prescribed by historic connections made between manhood and wilderness, and continuously reiterated in wilderness texts, speech, images, and individual embodiment (Kimmel 2005; Scott 2010). These include themes of rugged individualism, testing oneself through self flagellating privation, concern with conquest in an adversarial relationship with nature; downplaying emotional or physical vulnerability; bravery; and a willingness to take physical risks as part of an authentic wilderness experience (Bryant, 2003; Fletcher, 2014; Hirschman, 2003; Kimmel, 2005, 2013; Mosse, 1996; Rome, 2006; Scott, 2010; Ta, 2006).

In her 2003 piece on outdoor recreational advertising that targets men, Elizabeth Hirschman conceptualizes these themes in terms of hierarchical dualisms. Here, value and honor is ascribed to perceived differences in outdoor engagement. Examples include:

*Manual labor/ Purchased Labor:* Manual labor, the construction of your own materials, and self sufficiency are seen as more authentic. This is reflected in wilderness experiences that center the demonstration of physical and mental competency in brutal contest with the landscape.

*Solo performance/ Teamwork:* This duality places an emphasis on solo performance, which is seen to speak to a more pure victory of the self over the land. This informs and is informed by the call for solitudinal retreat to wilderness.

*Instrumentalism/ Anthropomorphism:* This describes objectification of those things which subjects pursue, e.g. game animals, sex partners, mountain summits and other geographical features to be conquered.

*Wilderness/ Culture:* Wilderness is represented here as the better testing grounds for one's true self, and characterizes culture as imbuing personal fragility and corruption in the individual.

These dualisms exist within the same logic of domination that produces binaries like man/woman, natural/ unnatural, and provides an environment conducive to the erasure and perpetuation of pervasive (sometimes violent) gender and racial discrimination (Moeckli and Braun 2002; Warren 1987). When discussing normative gender roles and expectations these dualisms become important in designating insiders and outsiders, of which everyone is some sort of combination to the extent that they fail or succeed at performing the dominant discourse.

Through these and similar discourses, wilderness discourse has been strongly tied to hegemonic white hetero-masculinity, which is conceived as drawing power from wilderness, (Boag, 2003, 51; Bryant, 2003; Hirschman, 2003; Kimmel, 2005, 2012; Mortimer-Sandilands, 2005, 2010;) and portrays wilderness as the last great bastion of white male dominance in an increasingly cosmopolitan, and so feminized world (Boag, 2003, 51; Bryant, 2003; Denny, 2011, 32; Fletcher, 2014; Hirschman, 2003; Kimmel, 2005, 2012; Mortimer-Sandilands, 2005, 2010; Nash, 1967; Scott, 2010; Ta, 2006). This self-conscious, threatened masculinity is not new.

Kimmel, in analysis of male escape fantasies in 18th and 19th century American literature says,

The increased roles of mothers and decreased role of absentee fathers meant that it fell increasingly to women to teach their sons how to be men... Thus did the definition of manhood become the repudiation of the feminine, the resistance to the mother's, and later the wife's efforts to domesticate men," (Kimmel, 2005, p. 21).

"What we lose in reality we create in fantasy" (Kimmel, 2005, p. 39), and American manhood is notoriously insecure. Masculinity since the end of the 19th century has been something that requires constant testing and demonstration (Savran, 1998, p. 25). In explaining this anxiety and anger, Kimmel (2013, p. 18) suggests white American men suffer from a sense of thwarted, or "aggrieved" entitlement. "Their very adherence to traditional ideals of masculinity leaves so many white men feeling entitled to a dream" (Kimmel, 2013, p. 19) that was perhaps never going to come to fruition anyway. This is the feeling of being robbed of that which the individual feels they have earned, e.g. social status, prosperity, or at least financial stability. This feeling exists regardless of whether or not the individual is actually entitled to those benefits, or whether or not the benefits were there to be had at all (Kimmel 2013: 120). For example, Kimmel notes that as real wages across the country stagnate or deflate, white men recognize the comparative forward momentum of those around them, such as women, people of color, the LGBTQ community who have made meaningful social and economic strides in the last 50 years. Even if the comparative *privilege* these men have goes unrecognized, there is a sense that they are being cheated, fomenting an angry victimhood among those who have otherwise never missed economic or political opportunities in life on account of their being perceived as men by society (Kimmel, 2013). The mountains, prairies, coal mines, and wildernesses thus become ideal homosocial spaces for white American men where their mothers and wives won't follow, and where they can exercise complete control over fantasies of victimhood. In their homogeneity, wilderness

becomes a space where tradition and traditional gender norms are allowed to persist. This is well represented in the institution of scouting in America, in other words the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. In these and similar organizations, the threads of traditional gender roles, nationalism, and wilderness ideology become intertwined

### *Gender Expectations and Early Childhood Exposure to Nature*

At the same time that America's crisis of masculinity was driving men into the newly legislated wilderness (Kimmel, 2005, 2012; Mortimer-Sandilands, 2005, 2010), there were concerted institutional efforts made to ensure young boys weren't left behind (Nash, 2014, 147). Kathleen Denny articulates this point neatly:

Scouting was an opportunity to counteract the perceived "forces of feminization" impinging on boys' and men's lives at the time, and the rhetoric and content of Scouting were explicitly designed to allay "masculine fears of passivity and dependence".

Experiencing nature and developing outdoor skills were integral parts of the project of masculinization (Denny, 2011, p. 32).

In prescribing these gender roles and expectations in relation to wilderness, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts have significant relevance. Scholars point to ways in which early childhood exposure to cultural norms around gender impact not only future paths into education and occupation (See Correll, 2001; Ridgeway and Correll 2000, 2004) but environmental attitudes and perception of self as environmental subject (Cheng & Monroe, 2012; Morgan, 2010; Wells & Lekies, 2006). This scholarship was corroborated by the data for this research in that many respondents emphasized the importance of early childhood exposure to the outdoors in shaping their present environmental attitudes and wilderness engagement, and/or recognized these experiences as

critical in developing positive environmental attitudes in others. This speaks to the importance of representation in media, personal role models, as well as the institutions like Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts which all factor into shaping future environmental subjecthood.

With this in mind, single sex youth organizations, along with schools, families, and cultural contexts (Smith, 1990), become prominent sources of subtle gender messaging that are critical . This is pertinent to this paper considering the scouting's historical affiliation not only with the outdoors and wilderness (Nash, 2014; Kimmel, 2005) but also state nationalism (Rosenthal, 1986) to be discussed below. In 2017 the Girl Scouts reported "2.6 million adult and girl members..." (Girl Scouts USA, 2017) and in 2015 2.4 million youth were members of the Boy Scouts of America (Boy Scouts of America, 2015). Thus the role of scout organizations in framing cultural norms for young Americans cannot be overstated, whether speaking of wilderness or gender. These organizations' impacts on framing traditional gender roles for young people is discussed in Kathleen Denny's 2011 paper, in which she examines the gender messages present in the Boy Scout and Girl Scout handbooks.

Denny lays out a number of findings in her analysis to support her argument that girls' messages promote an "up-to-date but still traditional woman" consistent with the Girl Scouts' organizational roots; boys' messages promote an assertive heteronormative masculinity" (Denny, 2011, p. 40). Her analysis looks at the content of activities, with girls were more likely to be offered art or creative projects compared to boys, whose activities were more likely to be science and outdoor oriented. This matters in the context of wilderness engagement when much of the frame for access to leadership, or decision making positions are framed in terms of technical knowledge (p. 38). The content of badges too were different, with embellished femininity and stoic masculinity being measured in terms of playfulness or lack thereof in badge title. For

example, compare the Boy Scouts' "Geologist Badge" to the Girl Scouts' "Rock Rock Badge." There are layers to these comparisons however, as there are plenty of examples of Girl Scout badges which represent a reversal of feminine stereotypes from earlier decades, encouraging girls to take on leadership positions and envision themselves in decision making capacities in business (p. 41).

Scout organizations are significant in their relationship with state nationalism, American conceptualizations of how the individual should relate to the outdoors, and gendered cultural expectations. They reflect ideas Americans have regarding how various genders are to be performed, and thus their eligibility as wilderness subjects. The crystallization of these norms is supported by the authentication processes that occur in the reciprocal relationship between wilderness engagement and state management.

### *Authenticity and Tourist Experience*

A masculinization of wilderness tourism in the 20th century means that wilderness itself has taken on some not so natural characteristics both in how those landscapes are organized, and ways in which tourists were expected to think, act, and dress (Kinnaird and Hall, 1994,1996; Rickly & Vidon, 2017; Sears, 1989; Shields, 1991; Vidon, 2016; Weatherby & Vidon, 2018). If wilderness tourism has been framed in the 20th century as a masculine space where one is expected to embody principles of rugged individualism, self flagellating privation, and solitudinal retreat, this becomes the normalized mode of engagement with particular expectations for authentic wilderness embodiment. Knowledge of these expectations and their successful embodiment are the sites where the wilderness subject is formed. Conversely, when those expectations-- obligatory points of passage into wilderness subjecthood-- are violated, the

experience is degraded, highlighting boundaries, hierarchies, and sources of hostility (Sears, 1989; Senda Cook, 2016; Star & Griesemer, 1989; Vidon, 2016).

When it comes to recreation, the production of authentic spaces has received plenty of attention over the last 60 years, with much research pointing to a variety of means by which authenticity is established, and what ultimately constitutes an authentic space's construction in social discourses. Registers of authenticity include objective, constructivist, postmodern, and existential, (Wang 1999) to which notions of place and landscape are inextricably tied. Indeed, as Jillian Rickly and Elizabeth Vidon (2017) state, "the materiality of place is crucial to a more complete engagement with existential authenticity and its constituent factors" (p. 1421). The more a landscape appears to meet the expectations tourists have, the greater the potential for feelings of authenticity in their experience (Knudsen, Rickly & Vidon, 2016; Senda Cook, 2016; Vidon, 2016, 2018; Vidon, Rickly & Knudsen, 2018). Tourist ideas for what that authenticity looks like come from all matter of influences: media, culture, and normative values like conflating nature with purity (MacCannell, 1972; Urry, 2005).

As noted above, wilderness is expected by tourists to be pristine, even sacred and thus precarious, i.e. in need of protection. Here the sacred is intimately connected with power (Sears 1989). As mentioned above, the social perspectives that inscribed this narrative of holy wilderness constructed it to serve the specific needs and desires felt by those who are viewing wilderness from those perspectives at the time (Sears 1989). Accordingly those who produce the dominant discourse prescribe ways in which tourists are expected to think, act, and dress (Rickly & Vidon, 2017; Vidon, 2016; Weatherby & Vidon, 2018) which suit those social needs. This reflects again the desire for a white, masculine homosocial space to soothe Kimmel's (2013) aggrieved entitlement, and combat the urbanization of American populations, the simultaneous

perceived feminization of boys, and moral degeneracy associated with homosexuality and social “pollution” caused by the increasing presence of non-European immigrants (Mortimer Sandilands, 2005, p. 5). According to Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands, parks-- and associated symbols of wilderness-- were presented as a “clean space for white folks, embodying a *masculine* ideal of nature that excluded women, the urban working class, and non-Europeans,” (p. 5). The consequence becomes a narrow and gendered perception of authentic wilderness spaces and experiences that present barriers to participation for those who are not seen as adequately expressing or embodying these principles (Cosgriff, et al., 2009; Swain, 1995; Wearing, 1991; Wilson & Little, 2005) and importantly, a compulsion from the public to protect and preserve these vulnerable spaces, and ultimately the traditions they symbolize.

In supporting the pure wilderness tourists expect to find, the state is expected to perform the work of codifying through legislation and enforcing values (Vidon, 2016) that elevate traditional, normatively masculine notions of authentic wilderness experience, e.g. spaces that promote solitude, ruggedness, and remoteness (Fletcher, 2014; Kimmel 2005). Demands are made by tourists in the form of wilderness advocacy that the state preserve and support these values and aesthetics. Demands are made of tourists as well: once wilderness is formalized they must relate to and interact with the landscape in specific, often gendered, ways.

Formalizing and codifying these values in order to define authentic spaces and experiences is what Erik Cohen and Scott Cohen (2012) describe as “cool” authentication. As opposed to “hot”, or subjective authentication of a space or experience through personal, or individual validation, cool authentication is a formal codification of authenticity:

Typically a single, explicit often formal or even official performative (speech) act, by which the authenticity of an object, site, event, custom, role or person is declared to be original, genuine or real (p. 1298).

The process is what matters here, rather than how wilderness or authenticity is defined. Because it is the process, and not the content of the definition that matters, it represents an opportunity for the reification of ideals-- for example, masculinized wilderness-- in legislation (Vidon, 2018, p. 222).

Again this is in opposition to “hot” authentication which, is a process rooted more in the emotive capacity of the individual.

“Hot” authentication is an immanent, reiterative, informal performative process of creating, preserving and reinforcing an object’s, site’s or event’s authenticity. It is typically an anonymous course of action, lacking a well-recognized authenticating agent. The process of “hot” authentication is emotionally loaded, based on belief, rather than proof, and is therefore largely immune to external criticism (p. 1300)

It is through a subjective interpretation of events and objects as authentic, and then the spread of this perception informally (through an individual’s social media account or vacation pictures) that the event or object becomes “hotly” authenticated. No formal pronouncement codifies these emotions necessarily, although Cohen and Cohen do mention the interlinkage between hot and cool authentication (p. 1305). Since cool authentication relies on process of formal acts rather than objective definition of an object to determine authenticity, it often provides opportunity for the hotly authenticated

experiences reflecting subjective values and aesthetics to become codified and crystallized, as in the case of wilderness designation.

Examples of official acts codifying cultural values into wilderness are found in section 2(c) of United States Public Law 88-577, the Wilderness Act of 1964.

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value (Public Law 88-577 (16 U.S. C. 1131-1136)).

In this paragraph we can see reflected cultural aesthetics, an outline of conditions under which authentic wilderness experiences are possible, and a valuation of landscape along lines of national utility and cultural symbolism.

Again this often reflects the state's prioritization of the gaze of the male recreationist, (Pritchard & Morgan 2000). From the social perspective enshrined in the Wilderness Act, authentic

wilderness experience is only found in remote, primitively accessed spaces, implicitly discounting the perceived ability of semi urban, and front country parks to provide legitimate wilderness experiences. As the interviews show however, even when a park is remote, state definitions of wilderness hierarchize landscapes to privilege lonely, roadless spaces as most authentic. Spaces made accessible to families (through the addition of amenities like bathrooms, parking lots, and picnic areas) are disqualified from consideration as proper wilderness designation. This is a particularly important point considering the perception that persists (though is increasingly challenged) in Western culture of women as primary caretakers of children. (Jordan & Gibson 2005; Haldrup & Larson 2003; Laurendeau 2008; Little, 2002)

Scholars have also shown how the production of maps is another means by which territory becomes codified and made “legible” (Braun, 2002, p. 49). Maps and legislation lend a sense of objectivity, or methodological rigor to wilderness, and precludes discussion about how else the public may relate to such spaces. In fact, “legibility is not something *in* nature awaiting discovery by the disinterested observer; it is achieved through historically situated representational practices,” (Braun, 2002, 49).

The positive attributes and moral weight leant to wilderness are thus examples of why the process by which wilderness is authenticated matters. The costs and benefits of this authentication are not distributed evenly. Truth claims about nature almost always serve as conduits of power and domination (Braun, 2002; Foucault, 1977, 1978; Kosek, 2006; Vidon, 2016).

*State Authenticated Wilderness, Nationalism, Traditional Gender Roles*

Preoccupation with state classification matters for a number of reasons. First, because of a history of hostility towards women and non gender conforming individuals in decision making circles, in particular within preservation and conservation contexts. The 19th and 20th centuries are rife with histories of state oppression and exclusion of women's perspectives and voices in land management decision making processes (Carson, 2002, p. xvii; Lievesley, 1996; Moeckli & Braun, 2001, p. 113; Rome, 2006; Yuval Davis, 1993). This general hostility and exclusion persists today, reflected in the repeated reference by women and gender non conforming interview participants to "old boys clubs" in both recreation and advocacy settings. Additionally, to the extent that wilderness authentication is an enterprise dominated by state institutions, it is linked to images of patriotism, national heritage, and tradition. Certainly nationalist wilderness discourse and other forms of nationalism share the problem of male domination in their relationship with the state.

By definition, nationalism is political and closely linked to the state and its institutions.

Like the military, most state institutions have been historically and remain dominated by men. It is therefore no surprise that the culture and ideology of hegemonic masculinity go hand in hand with the culture and ideology of hegemonic nationalism (Nagel 1998: 249).

According to Nagel, nationalism, colonialism, imperialism, and western masculinity evolved together in the late 19th century, parallel with some of the earliest prominent manifestations of the modern wilderness movement. Wilderness and the frontier have since come to hold privileged positions in contemporary American identity (Cronon, 1995; Nash 1967; Vidon 2016, 2018; Weatherby & Vidon, 2017). Examples of this amalgamation of nationalism, western

masculinity, and state designated wilderness finds itself in the archetype of the rough riding cowboy, or in the figure Theodore Roosevelt who has become the archetype of rugged masculinity in the American mythic pantheon. To this extent, inextricable from images of wilderness and the frontier are themes of American militarism, Manifest Destiny, the presumed God given right of Anglo-American men to confront, conquer, and exploit the American wilderness. Following this narrative of American Exceptionalism, wilderness contributes to form a character and a country that is uniquely American (Nelson, 1998). It was from the wilderness that the American man drew his integrity, resourcefulness, and disposition to upholding liberal democratic principles (Cronon, 1983; Nash 1967; Turner 1921).

To recap, connections between wilderness and nationalism, where one can be seen as reinforcing the other, persist in the inscription of a hetero masculine frame on wilderness discourse by the state, delimiting what can be conceptualized as an appropriate concern of the wilderness movement. When wilderness advocates are promoting the idea of wilderness, they are often promoting legislated wilderness. It is presumed that this manifests as preserved land, “where man is but a visitor” (the Wilderness Act of 1964), and solitudinal, ruggedly individualistic experiences become privileged as authentic and responsible means of engaging with those landscapes. This linkage elevates forms of patriotism or correct wilderness embodiment that “emphasize and resonate with masculine cultural themes”(Nagel, 1998, p. 251). These themes, appropriately embodied and performed, produce authenticity in experience that is sought after by recreationists (Rickly and Vidon 2017, p. 1421). If modernity is seen to compromise individual’s authentic, masculine self through a regime of accelerated urbanization, the only way an individual can feel secure in their masculinity is through the demonstration of specific performances, modes of consumption and relationships with human and non-human

environments, the embodiment of middle class wilderness habitus (Fletcher, 2014) fills that need (Boag, 2003, p. 51; Kimmel, 2005, p. 48). The individual may incorporate rugged individualism into their set of guiding values, relish the calculated pain and privation of “raw wilderness experience,” purchase the correct gear, and hold certain ideas of authentic self to which they orient their behavior to embody to the best of their ability. With that said, hegemonic ideals of gender and wilderness embodiment are never meant to be achieved, subjects can only orient themselves in relation to such ideals (Bourdieu, 2012, 1989; Fletcher, 2014; Lizardo, 2004).

With this in mind and with an eye towards expanding notions of authentic wilderness landscapes and subjects, experientially based definitions of wilderness may be useful, drawing on Ning Wang’s (1999) theory of existential authenticity, which “denotes a special state of Being in which one is true to oneself and acts as a counterdose to the loss of ‘true self’ in public roles and public spheres in modern Western society,” (p. 359). The experience is authentic because it *feels* authentic intrapersonally (through bodily engagement, and feelings of self-making), and interpersonally, through building of community ties in what are otherwise liminal settings, known as *communitas* (Turner, 1973; Wang, 1999). This becomes relevant in the discussion when participants theorize on alternative means of defining wilderness that provide more potential for inclusivity than definitions that rely on state classification.

### *Wilderness and Resource Managerialist Environmental Governance*

Beyond the entrenchment of traditional gender norms in legislated wilderness areas, preoccupation with state classified wilderness in wilderness discourse matters for the production of landscape hierarchies. When the state is relied on to classify wilderness and enforce its

boundaries, wilderness becomes a highly surveilled and managed space (Foucault, 1980), contributing to a resource managerialist regime of eco-knowledge through its hierarchization of landscapes both within culture, and within the context of the state's responsibility to perform the role of environmental protector (Luke, 1995; Sutter, 2013). This is a function that gained special traction in the second half of the 20th century. Timothy Luke aptly articulates the purpose of the state adopting the seemingly apolitical role of environmental protector:

Paralleling the managerial logic of the Second Industrial Revolution, which empowered technical experts on the shop floor and professional managers in the main office, resource managerialism imposes corporate administrative frameworks upon Nature in order to supply the economy and provision society through centralized state guidance. These frameworks assume that the national economy, like the interacting capitalist firm and household, must avoid both overproduction (excessive resource use coupled with inadequate demand) and underproduction (inefficient resource use in the face of excessive demand) on the supply side as well as overconsumption (excessive resource exploitation with excessive demand) and underconsumption (inefficient resource exploitation coupled with inadequate demand) on the demand side (Luke, 2005, p. 70).

This administrative structure becomes responsible for the simultaneous preservation of nationally sacred spaces, and justifies the exploitation and destruction of other spaces-- two activities upon which nation state capitalism relies for growth and sustenance (Althusser, 2008; Cronon, 1995; Luke, 1995; Sutter, 2013).

Mapping and cool authentication becomes of special relevance here as a process of knowledge production (Foucault, 1972). It is in the fractioning of landscapes on a map where the work of

resource managerialism supports and is supported by wilderness designation. Land managers produce and circulate maps where landscapes are “divided and categorized entirely apart from their cultural and ecological surrounds and displaced and resituated within other systems of signification,” (Braun, 2002, 50). These other systems of signification are often those which benefit special interests and extractive economies. The production of space in this way means the legal separation of local, cultural, and ecological processes, and their transformation into separate entities that are legible to state interests. Braun covers an example of this transformation as it occurred in the rainforests of British Columbia in the 1990s. In this case the native inhabitants and their complex social relationship with the landscape were dispossessed of the land, and the areas became conceptualized and mapped either as working timber forests or as recreational zones. The rationalization of the forest reduced the landscape’s prior social and ecological dimensions to a singular defining characteristic more conducive to the nation building project: a region of pristine, old growth forest, either for consumption within the economy, or for the playing out of naturalistic recreational fantasies important to North American national identities (Braun, 2002).

In other words, the work of fractioning landscapes that occurs through the cool authentication process of mapping facilitates the justification of protection of certain landscapes and the condemnation of others. Assignments of protected or condemned landscapes are not evenly distributed across space.

If state designated wilderness is prioritized in dominant discourse as that which is worthy of attention and protection, and the state is headed by white, middle class, hetero men at the aggressive exclusion of others, this lends special discursive license to a narrow band of experience and perspective. This results in a hierarchization of landscapes and social groups in

conservation, assigning lesser importance to other forms of environmental subjecthood and landscapes to which marginalized groups have greater access, or call home (Weatherby & Vidon, 2017; Vidon, 2016). A significant historical example would be the dispossession of native land for, among other purposes, the production of national parks and the federal wilderness system at the hands of the federal government (Braun, 2002; Cronon, 1991, 1996; Deluca & Demo, 2001; Merchant, 2003; Perrault, 2007; Watts, 2015; Wolfe, 2006). The creation of the National Parks has been extremely effective at erasing Native American histories, allowing the illusion that sites such as Yosemite Valley were unpeopled before the parks were designated (Braun, 2002; Cronon, 1991, 1996; Deluca & Demo, 2001; Merchant, 2003; Perrault, 2007; Wolfe, 2006).

At the other end of such landscape hierarchization is the production outright sacrifice zones. These are regions that are rich in natural resources and cheap labor where the state and capital work together (particularly in extractive industries) to benefit from a reshuffling of human and environmental health priorities in order to produce wealth for those living in non sacrifice zones. This point is illustrated in the fact that communities marginalized along lines of class, gender and race are grossly overrepresented in such areas, which are often distant from landscapes considered adequate for wilderness designation (Bullard, 2008; McGuire & Lynch, 2017; Scott, 2010). This cool authentication of a wilderness ideal is what William Cronon (1995) credits for the predominance of national parks in coastal regions and mountain ranges, and the lack of national parks that are prairies and swamps (Cronon, 1995). As seen in the struggle against the construction of the Bayou Bridge Pipeline in Southern Louisiana (EarthJustice, 2019), these hierarchizations of landscapes that often result in environmental injustices have a disproportionately harmful impact on low income communities of color, with particularly damaging effects on women in those communities who are often less mobile than men (McGuire

& Lynch, 2017). Wilderness as the fantastical homosocial space devoid of human imprint (that of feminizing urbanization) or social responsibilities (to those marginalized members of society) (Bryant, 2003; Kimmel, 2005, 2013; Scott, 2010; Ta, 2006) is a construct authenticated by the state that deliberately renders these hierarchies invisible.

Considering the cultural expectations for masculine wilderness encoded and coolly authenticated, and the hierarchizing of landscapes, how do individuals who participated in interviews for this research navigate these discourses in their individual experiences?

## **Methods**

A qualitative discourse analysis blog and magazine articles from The Wilderness Society, Sierra Club Magazine, Protect the Adirondacks; Adirondack Wild: Friends of the Forest Reserve; and the Adirondack Almanack. These materials included the 40 most recent articles from each source, focusing on sections related directly to parks and wilderness dating from between 2016 and 2018.

Additionally, 30 semi-structured, in depth interviews were conducted for this research, each lasting on average 50- 60 minutes, with the longest being an hour and a half. Interviewees were selected through recommendations on the part of organizational contacts inside Protect the Adirondacks and Adirondack Wild, and in addition an electronic screening survey was distributed on publicly available social media pages managed by Adirondack Backcountry Hikers, Sierra Club's Atlantic Chapter, and The Wilderness Society. Interview participants are thus constituents of these organizations, or anyone within their social media reach.

In-depth interviews are informant led conversations that “explore research participants perspective on their personal experience with the research topic.” The method involves selecting participants who have broad experience with the research topic, and “focuses on participants’ statements about their experience, how they portray this experience, and what it means to them as they indicate during the interview,” (Charmaz, 2014, pp. 56-58). Concepts that were operationalized for measurement in participants’ responses included explicit and implicit connections between personal experience with gender and the outdoors. The former include conscious acknowledgment between gender and wilderness experiences, including preferences in companions, experiences with gender discrimination, and normative judgements about the benefits of wilderness to tapping into authentic genders. Implicit connections between gender and wilderness would include referring to value judgements concerning rugged individualism, authenticity, effeminizing or weakening effects of modern society. Sample interview questions can be found in Appendix A. This style of interview relies on a selection of informants who have experience with the research topic at hand, open ended questions, the objective of obtaining detailed responses, emphasis on understanding the research participants’ perspectives, meanings, and experiences, and practice of following up on unanticipated areas of inquiry, hints, and implicit views. Ideal information to come out of these interviews will include concrete recountings of specific events. To encourage these stories and help the informants particularize scenarios in which their gender was wrapped up in wilderness engagement, prompts were given to the informants to encourage extending descriptions, filling in details, identifying key actors, and what Weiss terms, “inner events”. Inner events include “perceptions, what the informant heard or saw; cognitions, what the person thought, believed or desired, and emotions, or how they felt, what strivings and impulses the respondent experienced,” (Weiss, 1994, p. 75). In this

way, as mentioned above, individual expressions of how wilderness as a gendered terrain is navigated were illuminated, and specific sites of oppression and resistance identified.

Analysis occurred continuously throughout the data collection process. Materials were initially open coded using NVivo qualitative data software. During this stage actions, thoughts, theories, and symbols relating to wilderness were inductively extracted with a focus on those with gendered histories and connotations. An example would look at ways in which a conversation about rugged individualism aligned with certain conceptions of hetero-masculinity as historically rugged individualism tends to be heavily associated with a Theodore Roosevelt variety of masculinity (Hirschman, 2003). Several rounds of focus coding determined the acuity and conceptual strength of initial codes and integrative memos synthesized focus codes into theoretical categories for analyzing the discursive structures which form wilderness in a way that is tied up with various gender performances (Cresswell, 2014; Charmaz, 2014). All data entry and management was performed using NVivo 12.

Of the total 30 interviews conducted for this research, 29 of which were with individual respondents, and one involved a husband and wife who elected to be interviewed together. Three participants self described their gender as “genderqueer,” two of whom were also fine with the label of transgender male. Two more respondents exclusively described themselves as transgender men. 20 respondents self described as female, with six using “cis-woman” to describe a comfort they felt between their bodies and their social position as women. Five respondents self described as men or male. All but four participants listed their racial identity as white or Caucasian. These individuals described themselves as Latina, biracial with a black mother and white father, and Asian.

The obvious imbalances in the race and gender of respondents is both a limitation of this study, and an important data point. On the one hand the lack of males speaks perhaps to the unwillingness of men to participate in studies concerned with gender due to discomfort or perceived lack of stake in the issue. The racial disparities here can be said to be reflective of the overall underrepresentation of people of color in wilderness settings, of which the work of Finney (2014), Deluca and Demo (2001), and others thoroughly investigates.

Quotes from respondents used in this paper have been anonymized through the use of pseudonyms, though their self described gender and age have been attached for context. This is to acknowledge that interactions on the individual level are too complex to explain through gender alone. Though this study does not directly address race, age, class, or nationality, there is no doubt that these intersections of difference affect the process of wilderness engagement.

## **Discussion**

### *Primacy of State Authenticated Wilderness*

The unique position of wilderness in the American psyche was not lost on respondents, and many explicitly referred to wilderness as a key piece of American heritage. One full time Sierra Club volunteer reflected on the uniqueness of American wilderness in an international context.

I think preserving our wild spaces, you know, it's just part of our heritage as Americans I think. People from Europe just marvel at the fact that we actually have wilderness in this country because they have so little of it (Emily, female, age 71).

The online media samples and interview respondents reflected a pervasive preoccupation with legislated wilderness as the focus of authentic experiences, and political attention.

In the analysis, state classified wilderness, or what respondents described as “big ‘W’ wilderness”, emerged as the predominant subject of conversation. State designation was an assumed condition of wilderness as it exists in the world, for better or for worse. Even when participants noted that there was an experiential basis for defining wilderness, they would ultimately return to state classification for their final point of reference. This is typified in the response from Noah, a graduate student of Environmental Studies, after he had indicated that what constituted an authentic wilderness experience was relative. He starts by backtracking on his initial assessment:

I kinda, I guess I put my foot in the mouth because I said that wilderness can mean something different to each individual. I think that it’s important to have consensus about what we define as wilderness, because I think that if we can put language around it, and define very clearly what wilderness is, then we can go about protecting it. In terms of legality, I think that’s the most crucial piece of protecting wilderness, being able to really clearly define what the boundaries separating wilderness versus not wilderness. Because if we can’t do that, then there is no way that we can go about protecting it. Because you know, somebody that’s wanting to exploit it will find some loophole in order to exploit it. So making it really airtight is really the best way of going about making sure that it is preserved (Noah, male, age 26).

Whether it was in the Adirondack Park, or on a federal scale, the fate of wilderness was presumed to be a matter of state power, contingent on a system of public lands managed by state and federal governments. These institutions were often framed as the only legitimate classifiers, administrators, and gatekeepers for wilderness. This also meant that as often as the state was sanctified as the provider of and for wilderness, it was characterized as the antagonist or foil of

wilderness values. Frequently the state and its representatives are characterized as bumbling custodians of public assets reluctantly left in their care. This is reflected in articles from the Adirondack Almanack's coverage of tense and highly complex negotiations over classification of land recently acquired by New York State:

Thus the outcome at Boreas Ponds will not be remembered as an historical achievement. All of the decisions made so far by New York State have placed at hazard the wilderness characteristics we implored our civil servants to protect: the sensitive shorelines, the wetland habitats, the waterways unclogged with invasive species, the sense of remoteness (Ingersoll, May 29, 2018, Adirondack Almanack).

When the state's misdeeds in relation to wilderness were seen as more calculated, often it was the fault of specific politicians. This was particularly true of highly visible figures, like state governors, the Secretary of the Interior, and the President of the United States, each of which was portrayed as a bad actor having personal animosity towards the very concept of wilderness. One article published online by the Wilderness Society read, "Trump pushes 90% cut to America's most important public lands program; here's what the Land and Water Conservation Fund does."

They warn that the Trump administration's rush toward "energy dominance" and its promise to increase oil, gas, and coal extraction on federal lands threatens dozens of protected sites across the country (Mark, September 19, 2017, Sierra).

Despite perceptions of incompetency and bad faith negotiations, the state consistently retains the role of an institution of legitimation for authentic wilderness. Importantly, the tension between the state's dual positions as the protector of wilderness as well as its antagonist may reflect the

inextricability of wilderness preservation from a resource managerialist regime of environmental governance. The state has the power to preserve and to condemn landscapes in the interest of markets and nation building (Luke, 2005). This is discussed at greater length below.

This paper is concerned less with why the state is considered the legitimate classifier of authentic wilderness, and more with the implications such preoccupation has for retrenchment of nationalistic wilderness discourse. In particular, I am most interested here in the aspects of this discourse that are responsible for inscribing normative masculine frames into wilderness settings. Questions of access are particularly relevant when discussing a preoccupation in wilderness discourse with state designated wilderness. To elevate remote, state designated wilderness to the level of *authentic* wilderness means protecting a narrow tradition of able-bodied, white, normative masculinity that values the homosocial spaces as a salve for aggrieved male entitlement (Kimmel, 2005, 2013). This necessarily produces a version of wilderness that is open to some, and closed to others. Sophie, an activist from the South expressed frustration with the barriers to participation she felt this preoccupation with state designation represented.

I mean, you know, ableism is very folded into misogyny, and racism, so it's like, anyone who's viewed of being the most capable of navigating places like this, and easiest for [outdoor recreation firms] to bring to the trail. There's stuff geared towards like getting women outside yeah.... but you know, in general, there's a lot of systemic barriers, like socially, financially, etc. to women and people of color and other people, just going and just recreating in the wilderness, and then depending on your definition of wilderness, or outdoors or whatever, but yeah. I think it's really significant, definitely (Sophie, female, age 29).

Despite these reservations, reliance on state designation of wilderness was well represented in the interview data, where respondents consistently referred to a material wilderness that was distinguished from other landscapes by state designation. In the next section I will demonstrate the connection between a preoccupation with state classified wilderness and the entrenchment of traditional normative masculine values through the cool authentication process.

### *Nationalism and Traditional Gender Roles*

State sanctioned wilderness ideology is nationalistic in its claim to tradition. Nationalism tends to be conservative, because tradition and re-traditionalizing are effective substrates for cultivating national and cultural cohesion (Nagel, 1998; Yuval-Davis, 1993). Since American tradition reflects hetero patriarchal power structure, this could explain such a reversion to traditional gender norms reported by interview respondents. It is important to note the barriers to participation this may present.

I mean, I think a lot of it is still just that, it's actually sort of funny because I feel like a lot of the outdoorsy community considers themselves to be very open, and like, you find a lot of left leaning liberals who really like backpacking and stuff. But in my experience, once you really start diving deep, or having a conversation it's still pretty traditional gender dichotomy stuff. There's not, it's just not something that's, like if you are, the people who I meet that are like cis, out in the woods and stuff, they just aren't spending a lot of time thinking about other genders, and how they could be, they aren't thinking about a lot of other genders, and they aren't thinking about how what they're doing could be very off putting to other genders. (Selena, cis-woman, age 28)

Beyond the erasure of gender non-conforming recreationists, traditional gender roles also manifest in the different expectations for education, occupational trajectory, and engagement with the outdoors and environmental science (Correll, 2001; Ridgeway and Correll, 2000, 2004).

One interview participant noted that in his experience as a youth environmental educator, children of all genders held similar interest in nature until the age where they started learning science. His wife corroborated his analysis, and provided her own insight regarding the unequal representations of men and women in science and environmental education.

Clint: There's some ways in which males are sort of more accepted, but I think that that's mostly around science identity. And then it, which is kind of a confounding data point, but in my formal training in environmental education, the environmental education field is, there's more women than men, in environmental education. I was at the recent North American Association of Environmental Education conference in Spokane two weeks ago, but I will bet you any amount of money that there were more women than men at that conference. But I think that that's more associated because environmental education gets associated with education, more than environment.

Patty: And as soon as it starts getting into service fields, and people are, the people who are willing to earn less money are usually women.

Clint: Yeah, yeah that's right. And but it's as soon as when you start emphasizing the science part of it, it's way more men than women in my experience. (Clint, male, age 51;

Patty, female, age 52)

Clint and Patty's comments are consistent with Denny's (2011) argument that differences in programming between Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts result in the promotion of an "up-to-date

traditional woman " while "boys' messages promote an assertive heteronormative masculinity that is offset by facilitating boys' intellectual passivity," (Denny, 2011, p. 40). Internalized misogyny was reported to have kept a number of participants from spending more time in the woods earlier in life. Being raised as a girl, Sam found they did not receive the same support as their brother when it came to interest in the outdoors, and this had a long lasting effect on subsequent wilderness engagement.

I feel that my experience of the wilderness, and of nature, and of being just outside is so much affected by the gender expectations that are put on me.... Like not feeling safe to be out at night, to just go walking around by myself. Getting ready to go to Yellowstone involved having to do all this primitive camping ahead of time locally, learning so much more about myself and what I'm capable of, instead of my parents, were like, 'no no no, you can't do that.' And watching my brother go be in Boy Scouts, and get to go do all sorts of cool shit, but my only option was Girl Scouts, and they didn't do any of that stuff, and that was the only reason I would want to join... There was always someone telling me no you can't do that it's too dangerous... I remember when I came back my dad was like, "I'm really proud of you, I didn't think you'd be able to do this." and I was like, what? He's like, well I didn't think you'd have it in you to do it. And it's like... of course not! You know on the one hand I have him telling me it's too dangerous and on the other hand I have my mom telling me I don't know what real work is... and it's like, well how am I supposed to have felt empowered enough to be able to do this stuff if I was told my whole life that I can't? (Sam, white, genderqueer, age 29)

Respondents felt cultural expectations around which bodies are typical wilderness subjects, and which are considered anomalies informs discrimination against women in wilderness settings,

and to the extent that they are internalized they prevent women from feeling safe in the outdoors. Though many of the women and gender non conforming or transgender participants noted that they often felt safe hiking alone, they understood why others did not. The pervasiveness of this sentiment in the outdoor recreation community is reflected in a consistent reporting among participants of other hikers, towns people, and loved ones at home who were “shocked” to see a female bodied person hiking alone, or even alone with a dog.

I think that you get a lot more questions about going to the wilderness to have a solitary experience as somebody who identifies as female, versus somebody who identifies as male. I don't think that when you're in the wilderness that there's a tremendous difference, and those differences that you have are not in your interactions with the wilderness, but in your interactions with other humans in the wilderness (Jess, Female, age 39).

As discussed above, these expectations originate from gendered cultural assumptions about which bodies most closely approximate the ideal wilderness subject, and which are deviations from that ideal. These socializing elements are represented in institutions like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts which promote a nationalist wilderness discourse that entrench traditional gender roles.

Disparities in expectations can themselves become barriers if those expectations, representing normative regimes of gender, are internalized. Selena, a respondent in her twenties, reflects on potential deterrents for those who are told it's not safe for them in the wilderness.

I do think that in general... I get this response as a woman who spends a lot of time in wilderness alone, that it's not a safe place, and I think that that also contributes to the

access and diversity of the people who are out there, is whether or not it is safe for them to be in wilderness. And I always think that that's a ridiculous question, and I also get this response, while I'm thinking about it real quick, when I run into people on the trail, I always get this surprised response that I'm a woman backpacking alone. And I don't know if men get the same response...People are like, "oh! You're out here all alone, which actually creeps me out more, like especially if I'm camping near them? Like you have noticed that I'm alone and said something about it, that creeps me out. (Selena, white, female, age 28)

These gendered expectations are also present in the work places related to wilderness. Lorie is an interpretive ranger in the Adirondack Park who described unpleasant interactions with tourists that centered on her being a woman in a role the tourists were expecting to be performed by a man.

Right, I do think that it's a culture, I think that you know, I've had older women kind of be shocked at me being out alone on the mountain before. One of the most offensive things that someone has said to me was a woman, we were on top of Mount Marcy, and she couldn't believe that I was out here by myself. And she was like, you're out here alone! And I was like, yeah, this is my job, this is what I do, I live and work out here, and she just couldn't believe it. And then she was like who let you do this? (Lorie, white, female, age 30)

These encounters reflect widespread cultural expectations of wilderness as a masculine space. This includes jobs and careers associated with wilderness and environmentalism outside the

context of education. Barbara speculates that this comes from a frontier mythology which persists in wilderness discourse today.

There was this idea that that frontier which really was where people were interacting with the wilderness then that like, it was men who came in first and cleared the way, literally and metaphorically, that they cleared the forest to build the town site, and cleared the farm land, and it wasn't until a town was civilized enough that women would come other than in brothels. And you know, I think a lot of it, especially in the West is really tied up in that idea of like, the frontier like, the man's world, and I think that still is translated into how we think about wilderness as that last frontier. (Barbara, female, age 30)

This is in no small part thanks to codification of those values in wilderness legislation. Perhaps one example would be the term "man" or "men" used throughout the Wilderness Act as a stand in for "human"; another would be the normative masculine values of rugged individualism, privation, and solitude inscribed in the act itself.

### *Hierarchizing Landscapes*

State designated wilderness is nationalistic in its claim to tradition, but also in hierarchizing of landscapes and experiences which qualify some individuals as authentic wilderness subjects, and disqualifies others. Participants relied on state designation for their definitions of wilderness if for no other reason than the state was the only entity capable of providing the level of protection their version of wilderness needed in order to persist. State designation was perceived as important because of the state's enforcement capacity, which facilitated the maintenance of barriers keeping out human activity determined to be inappropriate for wilderness areas.

Preference for these barriers is reflected in comments typified by those from the executive director of a wilderness advocacy organization

Wilderness... to me is purely a management program. And it's how land, how public lands are managed. How they manage in such a way that there's wilderness insofar as ecological processes are allowed to exist and advance without significant impacts by humans, and the way that the humans use those lands are, is a very light touch. They walk, they camp, that's about it, they canoe, that's about it (Ryan, male, age 56).

There were hard lines drawn between activities that were acceptable in wilderness and those which were unacceptable. Some individuals were seen as legitimate wilderness subjects, and even valorized in their subjecthood through acceptable engagement with remote spaces. Others who engaged these same spaces in decidedly inappropriate ways were seen as compromising the essence of experiencing wilderness, affecting not only their own status as wilderness subjects, but the experiences of those around them. An environmental educator from the Rocky Mountains drew strong distinctions between horseback riding and mountain biking, which for her respectively reflected the difference between authentic wilderness engagement and activity which threatened the essence of wilderness experiences.

Well i think I touched on that before, you know, the non mechanized, unmotorized aspect that I think I stand a much higher chance of seeking solitude in designated wilderness than on any other parcel of National Forest land... [Interviewer: What is the conflict between mechanization and wilderness in your mind?] Well again, I can give you a real concrete example, mountain bikes. Have you ever read Rod Nash's Wilderness and the American Mind? Well in the preface he gives a couple quotes by Bob Marshall and Aldo

Leopold, and they define wilderness as big enough to absorb a 2 week pack trip. And so when I talk to mountain bikers, they say ‘well we have less impact than horses!’ And that’s true, but mountain bikes shrink the concept of wilderness. Because you can get across there so much quicker than the two weeks you know that it would take a packstring to get through. And some people don’t get it. They have to really think about what I’m talking about, but I think that technology, and mechanized, motorized, absolutely shrinks the vastness, mentally and physically of those places (Ellie, female, age 63).

This is an example of ways in which “cooly” authenticated wilderness areas reflect the codification of values rather than objective reality. Although Ellie admits that horses have a greater impact than mountain bikes on wilderness areas, the authenticity of experience is degraded because mountain bikes are incompatible with traditional notions of how wilderness should be engaged. Ellie relies on designated wilderness to provide this experience through codification of her values.

This a hierarchization of landscapes and land uses with remote, state designated wilderness ranking the highest on the list in terms of capacity to provide authentic leisure experiences. This both results in the disqualifying of certain recreationists as legitimate wilderness subjects, and allows for the creation of sacrifice zones. Another example of this seemingly arbitrary division of legitimate and illegitimate wilderness activities is represented in the “primitive” element of authentic wilderness areas. This means that those with disabilities, incorrect gear, or young children in tow are in some cases barred from wilderness subjecthood by default. For participants this held true even if one went “car camping” (camping from the back of one’s car on a managed site with certain amenities nearby) in an otherwise remote location. Killarney Provincial Park,

for example, is located on a remote stretch of Georgian Bay in Ontario Province. Emily, the Sierra Club volunteer, divided the park up into spaces for families to camp, and then space for more authentic wilderness subjects to have fun.

Up in Killarney the last day of our trip we paddled across one of the lakes. It's an interesting park, there's a car camping part to it for families, but then we paddled for about an hour, you're away from everything. It's really the quietest place I've ever been in my life, and there aren't planes flying overhead, because there's no Air Force base nearby, it's just, there's no roads to speak of except the little two lane road that goes into the village and that's miles away, so you really feel, really away from civilization (Emily, female, age 71).

Despite the overall remoteness of Killarney Park, Emily sees a boundary between which parts are for families, and which are for those who seeking wilderness experiences. In Emily's case, as with others, wilderness was determined by the presence or absence of roads and by population density. This means that even in extremely remote spaces which are made accessible to family groups through the addition of bathrooms, parking lots or picnic areas, these same groups are disqualified from consideration as proper wilderness subjects.

Another respondent, Robin, hiked the Appalachian Trail over several years and shared an anecdote about meeting a family of eight outside Baxter State Park in Maine. A mother, a father, and their six children had completed 2200 miles of the trail over four months. Their journey was cut short however, when they were barred from entering the famed 100 Mile wilderness to complete the hike.

So they hiked the entire trail from Georgia all the way up to Maine, I think the oldest was 15 maybe? And they had the youngest in a backpack and would swap the kid around through the adults and the older kids. But when they got to Baxter, Baxter would not let them take up the younger kids. And so the whole family was like, welp, we started this together, and we're ending this together. If we can't all go up, we're not going up. Like all of us or none of us. So they didn't even end up summiting Katahdin because Baxter wouldn't let them (Robin, genderqueer, 31).

In being unable to finish their thru hike, this family was deprived of a certain authenticity of accomplishment jealously defended by American thru hikers. The point being made here is not that more children should be let into the 100 Mile Wilderness, but that families with young children violate discursive prescriptions of wilderness as a (normatively masculine) homosocial space where mothers and wives are not permitted to follow. This is a problem for men who are not expected to be carrying children, and the women who are often seen as children's primary caretakers. In this particular case it was a state official who passed this judgment.

#### *Wilderness Designation, Resource Managerialism, Inadequate Nature*

State designated wilderness is nationalistic in its claim to tradition, and in its hierarchizing of experiences to favor a normatively masculine perspective. It is also nationalistic in its contribution to a resource managerialist regime of land policy which permits the preservation of national symbols of (patriarchal) strength in some places, while facilitating industrial exploitation in sacrifice zones. The promotion of the resource managerialist regime of governance is also included in the Wilderness Act, as indicated in the ample room given by the legislation for the interpretation or re-interpretation of wild areas as resource areas (Gerard,

2000). This gray area allows for plenty of opportunity to distinguish between sacred national symbol and sacrifice zone at the convenience of the Secretary of Agriculture, Congress, and the President. This represents again the cool authentication of subjective perspective. Reliance on state authentication of wilderness experiences comes at the expense of the hotly authenticated, or subjective and experiential definitions of wilderness that do not have access to the levers of decision making power. When asked to clarify whether or not they thought lack of race and gender representation was a significant barrier to participation in wilderness advocacy and recreation, Jordan considered the question in terms of opportunities for exposure to authenticated wilderness in youth that might lead to this outcome.

Yeah I think so. And also if there aren't, like if people don't come into exposure to those activities-- but also then they get, you know I was thinking about how you were asking me like, well what do I think what's wilderness, and what's not-- like you're in Cleveland, right, I think that everybody, a lot of people use the metro park system because they are everywhere, they're all over the city. And are forested areas, and beaches, it's really cool actually, but I don't know if people would consider that to be environmental anything or whatever. They're just using the spaces that are there. So maybe not having a connection there is... well... people do engage in activities, er... some people do community gardens and grow their own stuff or whatever, but not being connected to a larger movement necessarily (Jordan, transgender, age 27).

Jordan highlights an observation that while exposure to nature is important in conceptualizing oneself as an environmental subject, only certain kinds of exposures count. Community gardening, and utilizing urban parks are not adequate to connecting people to a larger wilderness movement because those activities and spaces are not authenticated as serious or “real”

interactions with nature. Real interactions with nature require engagement with state designated wilderness areas, or spaces that fit state definitions of wilderness. This distinction allows for the continued degradation of “fallen” spaces by blocking political capital from environmental groups that may otherwise flow to urban parks and community gardens, and redirecting it to more “exotic” locales.

Beyond validating diverse perspectives on what constitutes wilderness experiences, there are other, more dire consequences for resource managerialist formation of landscape hierarchies. Prominent among these consequences would be the political and financial capital that gets directed away from landscapes that are perceived as inadequately wild, towards landscapes that are worthy of state authentication as wilderness. Sophie, the activist, participated in direct action opposing the construction of the Bayou Bridge Pipeline in Southern Louisiana. She was frustrated with this preoccupation with official wilderness designation, and the effect it had on her issue’s visibility. In answering a question about why it was that she perceived little to no overlap between social justice advocacy and wilderness advocacy, Sophie criticized the wilderness idea’s hierarchizing of landscapes:

It’s another huge conversation, how we talk about place. How we talk about every place as distinct and different, and having value or not, being saved or not. Those kinds of conversations impact that hugely, because people don’t think of southern Louisiana and they don’t think of land as beautiful, they don’t see it as a place that’s important, that matters, that they want to save, that people live in, so... that’s one factor, the other one is like, a fight that’s not supported by organizations that make you feel good about stuff. So if the Sierra Club isn’t saying it matters, then if you’re some upper middle class white person, knowing like, how would you even hear about it, or why would you care? No one

is saying that this is the intersection of you caring about climate change and fossil fuels, and preserving land. No one presents it that way, or if people communicate it that way, or presents it that way, their voices aren't amplified or given money or time and attention (Sophie, female, age 29).

This goes back to the role of wilderness designation as a form of codified hierarchizing of landscapes - determining which landscapes are worthy of protection, and which are slated as sacrifice zones (Bullard, 2008; McGuire & Lynch, 2017; Scott, 2010). In this instance hierarchizations of landscapes often reflect more than just a rational decisions made about which landscapes to preserve and which to exploit. Rather, the distribution of violence and compassion within this patchwork system of land management reflects white, normatively masculine perspectives. Environmental justice scholarship shows that to have a disproportionately harmful impact on low income communities of color, with particularly damaging effects on women in those communities who are often less mobile than men (McGuire & Lynch, 2017). Thus, wilderness as the fantastical homosocial space devoid of human imprint (that of feminizing urbanization) or social responsibilities (to those marginalized members of society) is a construct authenticated by the state that deliberately renders these hierarchies invisible (Bryant, 2003; Kimmel, 2005, 2013; Scott, 2010; Ta, 2006).

### *Existential Definitions of Authentic Wilderness*

It is an important point of analysis that those interviewed for this research who claimed to interact with the public through an educational capacity had broader definitions of wilderness than the others. They also usually desired to promote broader definitions to include experiences that may not be considered backcountry, but were challenging to their students nonetheless, and

inspired positive environmental attitudes afterwards. Taylor, an interpretive ranger from Arizona is one participant who took issue with a discursive preoccupation with state designated wilderness in wilderness advocacy and recreation settings.

But there's, I think a lot of value in, for humans, in being able to leave like I was saying earlier, this human landscape of living in suburban areas, and even agricultural areas to a certain extent, and I guess I'll take a tangent into one thing that I don't really have entirely worked out but, one thing I've been thinking about through grad school is this idea that, if you're from the inner city, then going out to the suburbs in some ways that can be a wilderness experience, and if you're from the suburbs maybe you can go visit a farm, if you're from a farm maybe you need to go out into a designated federal wilderness area to get that. So it's all relative in certain ways, and I think a big part of it is the ability to get away from what is familiar. And sort of reground yourself in the world in a way that requires you to use whatever physical abilities you have, or navigational skills, or learn some new navigational skills, or something. It's like, it's this opportunity to do something that is unfamiliar in ways that can let us grow as people (Taylor, transgender, age 26).

Critical to respondents' ideas of authentic wilderness experience was the ability to extract oneself from the day to day routine and social structures, and enter spaces that are comparatively less structured, comparatively more remote. Taylor believes it is important to recognize this as a subjective metric. He goes on to note that the strict means by which wilderness is defined and wilderness experience is authenticated tends to alienate broad swaths of the public. He makes the claim that in order to remove this discursive barrier, authenticity in wilderness should move

away from prioritizing state classified wilderness in order to become more inclusive as a community and to garner broader support.

I've seen where there's this tendency to always be moving towards wilderness and it's like, you know, your little city park isn't good enough. You're not doing enough. You're not doing it right, it's only right if it's a federal wilderness area, it's only right if you make it a national park, it's only right if you have these really restrictive rules that conform to whatever idea about what a wilderness should be. I think that can be really alienating, especially for people who have no experience, but maybe are interested. It's like, if every meeting or the [wilderness advocacy] organization's rhetoric is all about how can we do away with society and get back to primitive humanity kind of stuff, is like obviously that's kind of extreme, but like if you don't give people a chance to fall in love with their little city park first, if you push them and push them and say that's not good enough, the stuff you like isn't adequate, it doesn't matter. Like obviously that's not going to work (Taylor, transgender, age 26).

Dexter, youth camp manager, expressed similar views on defining wilderness. When asked whether or not they agreed with Edward Abbey's perception that authentic wilderness was threatened by the development of roads in Arches National Park, Dexter expressed feelings that such a position lacked imagination:

I think that philosophically, realness is only as real as something is real, like that's the idea right? Things are as real as we make them? So is it authentic? Like it's authentic to him. He decides what authenticity is for himself. But I don't think that things at their most natural state are necessarily the most authentic. I don't buy that idea. I think that

because so much of what I believe in the power of wilderness is contingent on the ways that humans use it. I think that if people are there for whatever reason they need to be there and they're getting whatever out of it that they're getting out of it. I don't necessarily believe that that's either good or bad. That just seems too simple (Dexter, genderqueer, age 29).

This call for a more existentially based definition of authentic wilderness echoes inconsistencies between traditional wilderness values and the motivations of respondents for engaging with wilderness. For example, while solitude is consistent with the homosocial oases prescribed to soothe aggrieved male entitlement and thus a common metric of authentic wilderness experiences, many respondents reported more social motivations for participating in wilderness recreation. This was reported across all genders.

I don't know, but I would be willing to bet that men were more likely to start out solo. But, since coming back from the PCT, for almost everybody when I talk about it, almost always the first question is so did you go alone? And the answer is, well you start off alone but you're immediately in a community, in a group. Because you hook up with other people. And I assume it's just that way for everybody (Clint, male, age 51).

Asked if there was a difference between reasons men and women had for going out into the wilderness, one professional wilderness advocate claimed that both groups, but especially men, enjoyed the gender solidarity one experienced camping with friends.

Men? I mean we value that same kind of conception but more often than not we probably value more being out with our buddies! You know? [laughs] I think there's a camaraderie between men in climbing, and it's also possible to have that same camaraderie with

female climbers as well. But you know, most of my experience is climbing with guys  
(Doug, male, age 58).

Beyond inclusivity, issues of justice were at the root of critiques leveled at the narrow definition of wilderness that relies on state classification. These critiques reflected highly complex relationships between locals and the ecologies they inhabit. Annie, who grew up in rural Oregon, highlighted the effects of preservationism that place restrictions on local rural livelihoods, and contribute to the decline of rural economies.

I've seen the negative effects of said preservation. So I think preserving wilderness is important. I'll point to, what was it 1974 when the Wilderness Society was pushing the Three Sisters Wilderness Act, and they were pushing hard on it, and I believe the president at the time was like, he kind of ignored this large swath of people that it was going to affect which was the rural economy. And so in a really intelligent, and I think quite a bit of foresight move, he engaged a lot of the loggers, and people who worked in the woods, and they were one of the key groups that were instrumental in helping the Wilderness Society get that passed. And that to me is kind of, if we want to preserve something we all have to work together. And so it's important that we meet kind of those rural economic needs, that the importance of preserving swaths of areas that maybe are important to an endangered, not threatened, endangered species (Annie, female, age 36).

This is not to give license to rampant extractive industry. Sophie, the activist from Houston, took issue with single species campaigns like those around the spotted owl in Oregon, but not because they prevent development. Rather, she seemed to take issue with the notion that a singular focus on the "natural world" discounted the human elements of those spaces.

Conservation and environmentalism focusing on a “natural world” in itself is not... useful, and it’s... actually stopped people [from getting help]. It’s destructive, it’s classist, it’s... it’s not helping anyone when you come from the frame of mind of like, here are these tracts of land that aren’t completely fucked, let’s only work to preserve them, like, there’s no use in that! I mean yeah it’s not one or the other, because there’s use in preserving what we have left and fighting for what we should have, or everyone should have access to in our communities, but it’s.... I think environmentalism itself is a huge failure, I mean if you see, like just watch how much attention the Sierra Club’s [social media page] gets anytime they post anything that’s anti-racist, or any kind of intersectional. People are like, ‘Agh! What’s this? I’m not gonna give you money anymore’, you know? It’s just ridiculous... Wilderness and outdoor recreation is something I absolutely love and I need, and I want other people to have, but I want more people to have a nuanced view of what that is, and recognize what they can do to try and subvert that and change that (Sophie, female, 29).

For Sophie, the preoccupation with preservation of pure landscapes through state classification obscures the intersections of social justice and environmental health, and potentially leaves the environmental discourse vulnerable to being used as a mask for classism and white supremacy. In this way white, hetero masculine privilege is legislated, with the symbols of patriarchy enshrined in the national wilderness system.

## **Conclusion**

To the extent the state itself is an old boys’ club, and a cultural preoccupation with state classification of wilderness as true and authentic wilderness persists, normative masculine

perspectives are enshrined in America's parks and wilderness areas. This process occurs in legislative settings where women and members of LGBTQ communities feel themselves underrepresented in positions of influence. In turn, a legislated boundary around proper wilderness erects further barriers between proper wilderness subjects and everyone else. It also erects barriers around which landscapes are eligible for moral consideration and political action. However, the received wilderness idea has not gone unchallenged.

In civil society, examples of organizations making space in the outdoors for women, LGBTQIA communities, and other marginalized groups are growing. Queer Nature is one such organization. Based in the Pacific Northwest, their mission includes implementing, "ecological awareness and place-based skills as vital and often overlooked parts of the healing and wholing of populations who have been marginalized and even represented as 'unnatural'," (Queer Nature, 2019). Given the historical categorizing of non heteronormative gender and sexuality as "deviant" and "unnatural" (Foucault, 1978; Mortimer-Sandilands, 2005), finding gender and sexual fluidity in nature is a truly transformational discourse. Working along a similar vein is the Venture Out Project, which envisions "a world where queer, trans, and LGBTQ+ youth and adults create community, develop leadership skills, and gain confidence through the shared experience of outdoor adventure and physical activity." Their organizational mission is:

- To provide a safe and fun space for queer, trans, and LGBTQ+ people to experience the outdoors
- To provide education and support that helps schools and organizations affirm their LGBTQ+ community members (Venture Out Project, 2019)

The focus on capacity building is important. It indicates effort directed at changing broad cultural narratives, rather than merely providing niche spaces in which marginalized communities can gather. Folded into these broad, marginalizing discourses of naturalized heteronormativity are intersections of colonialism, racism, and misogyny which erase native histories. The United States federal government in particular plays a role in erasing the matricentered indigenous land relations which serve to disempower Native women, and destroy traditional indigenous social relations (Weisiger, 2009). Native Women's Wilderness, an organization operating out of Boulder, Colorado, is one voice that figures prominently against such colonial narratives. They seek, "to inspire and raise the voices of Native Women in the Outdoor Realm" (Native Women's Wilderness, 2019). Here is one example demonstrating how the sacred in wilderness ideology can be maintained, while also discarding notions of pristine, or human-nature dualities. This last element is most present in N.W.W's goal of promoting "a healthy lifestyle within the Wilderness." Recognizing the interconnection of even ostensibly remote spaces with human society, history, and culture is a crucial piece of wilderness ideology that could benefit from critical transformation.

These and others are working to transcend the colonial, racist, and normatively masculine discourses that dominate and shape wilderness advocacy and recreation settings. It is through the promotion of conceptions of wilderness that do not rely on state classification that the gendered expectations of proper wilderness subjects can begin to change. Definitions of wilderness that incorporate subjective, existential notions of authenticity will allow for the broader inclusivity of wilderness communities when metrics like solitude, remoteness, and ruggedness are softened. In letting go of notions of purity and moralized wilderness, one hopes the hierarchies which

distinguish between land deserving protections and land which falls short of consideration for protection will fall under greater scrutiny.

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## **Project Conclusion**

This research began with the question: are there social discourses that contribute to and maintain overrepresentation of white, upper middle class males in wilderness advocacy (Chan & Curnow, 2017; Deluca & Demo, 2001; Finney, 2014; McNiel, Harris, & Fondren, 2012). Additionally, if these discourses exist, how do individuals navigate them in their lived experience? The research conducted for this project drew important observations that move towards answering these questions.

In the first manuscript it was observed that in the overrepresentation of superordinate groups, e.g. traditionally hetero masculine white men, lay the discursive mechanisms by which environmental narratives which reflect and support that particular perspective are created and re-created. The reinforcement of these discourses, either through media, personal interactions, or organizational agenda setting creates barriers to participation in two central ways. First, it creates barriers by discouraging those who are not represented in those spaces from seeing themselves as eligible for acceptance, and second through the production of group homogeneity which precludes the development of the social infrastructure necessary to ensure the safety and dignity of marginalized communities. The social infrastructure that does exist within wilderness advocacy and recreation settings privileges masculine gender expressions and prescribes masculine embodiments of wilderness recreation. This colors every interaction with wilderness, forcing individuals into assimilation, confrontation, or avoidance. Non-hetero masculine gender expressions are modified, space is ceded to “beta sprayers”, and voices are excluded from old boys’ clubs, or positions of decision making and narrative influence.

In the second manuscript it was observed that normative masculine perspectives are enshrined in America's parks and wilderness areas through the authentication of a nationalistic wilderness ideology which privileges traditional gender roles in its discourse. The authentication process occurs in legislative settings where women and members of LGBTQ communities feel themselves underrepresented in positions of influence. In turn, a legislated boundary around proper wilderness erects further barriers between proper wilderness subjects and everyone else. It also erects barriers around which landscapes are eligible for moral consideration and political action.

I would like to reiterate that despite the evidence presented here, without a reconciling of the full range of factors, including identities and social positions related to the formation of wilderness subjects, this research runs the risk of reifying the categories it is meant to deconstruct. To repeat again the words of Rebecca Scott (2010, p. 19), "Focusing on one element of identity, such as race or gender, to the exclusion of other relevant identity formations can create a deterministic narrative of winners and losers that oversimplifies the situation and often leads to political impasse." Such visions also erase the vast complexity of processes of subjectification of gendered bodies, failing at the very least to account for moments of resistance and suffering of all bodies in relation to patriarchy and hegemonic masculine ideals, saying nothing of the variations of these themes that occur at intersections of race, class, nationality, age, and ability.

There are also methodological limitations in this research that should be addressed in future projects. Limits to in depth interviewing and reliance on subjective recounting of personal experiences are inherent to most qualitative research. They are also that which makes qualitative research valuable, at it's best reflecting the structures and pressures behind the formation of social identity. Inductively drawing observations from interview data inevitably means

conclusions based on incoherent answers, misremembered events, disconnect between how one prefers to be seen or reflected in the interview, and the practices or values with which one actually engages. Thus it is important for the researcher to continuously return to and adjust the interview approach, being flexible in recognition that the mode of inquiry influences data and analysis (Charmaz, 2014, p. 59). Future research should account for these shortcomings, while also being sure to preserve the nuance of individual perspectives on the nature of Nature.

Additionally, the scope of data collected for this project presented several potential paths for investigation that had to be passed up for want of time, but are of interest for future research. For example, future work might focus on the role prominent anti-modernist discourse plays in bounding wilderness subjects. Does the production of wilderness as a space that stands in direct confrontation with what one respondent called the “corrupting influences” of modern urban society (Mortimer-Sandilands, 2005) tie into gendered and racialized perspectives of wilderness?

Finally, this research has focused largely on notions of wilderness as national heritage, aesthetic, and rugged ideal. What about those arguments claiming that wilderness provides broad scientific potential? (Nelson, 1998) What are the hidden social structures behind supporting the language of wilderness as a living laboratory and preserve for biodiversity?

In Robert Service’s poem titled, “The Man of the High North”, the polar wilderness is characterized as a void: strange, nameless, inhospitable, but from which masculine honor is earned. This is one narrative of many that could be used to describe such places, and not a single one is inherent to the landscape. All that we know is known through the stories we are told, and the stories we are told are products of those who came before us, and those who surround us. The world we experience is filtered through past experiences, values, attitudes, and perspectives, like

light through a prism. The reflection we each cast may be beautiful, but it is hard to say anything more than that.

When thinking about the relationship we have with the natural world it is important to examine how we come to know what we think we know. Inextricable from knowledge are the power relations and context within which it was produced (Foucault 1972/2010, 1980). If what we know about wilderness is couched in histories of colonialism, racism, and heteronormative patriarchy, does wilderness have any place in a future society that values justice and equity? Of course. The question becomes then, are we able to excise that which is toxic from that which is good and wanted, even transformative? Are we even able to identify and differentiate between these categories? Certainly there is revolutionary potential for wild spaces to provide escape from disciplinary regimes of power. There is also real empowerment and solidarity to be found in these spaces, but how can they be built without subscribing to oppressive dualities? In allowing for the possibility of multiple, even many narratives, a comprehensive conversation can begin.

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## Appendix A: Interview Guide

Each interview will be approximately 40 minutes, including introductions during which time rapport will be built and written consent to be interviewed and recorded will be attained. Also included in the one hour will be a period of denouement in which conversation will be gradually move to lower stakes subjects in order to avoid leaving the informant in a state of heightened emotion, and to convey my sincere appreciation for their participation.

This protocol is a rough guide only. Participants will determine the direction of the interview as the interviewee follows “markers”, or cues in the natural flow of conversation that indicate topics of interest and significance to the participant.

### Begin

The interview will take 40-60 minutes. We don't anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time. The interview will be recorded, and transcript sent to you upon request. Do you want to continue?

This project looks at the different ways we talk about wilderness on the individual and organizational levels in private and public settings. As the title suggests research will pay specific attention to how those conversations take on gendered language, and how such language is used to encourage or deter people from participating in wilderness advocacy and recreation. Further, the project will examine differences in the wilderness experiences of individuals throughout their lives, comparing and contrasting experiences across various gender identities.

### Personal Relationship with Wilderness

1. Are you comfortable sharing your gender?
2. What is it that you do for a living?
3. What's the first thing that comes to mind when you think about wilderness? OR Describe Wilderness in your own words
  - a. In what ways do you engage with wilderness? (Advocacy, recreation, home or work)

**(If the informant frequents wilderness spaces a lot, ask them what keeps them going back, and whether or not they go to the same places over and over again, or if they frequently seek out new destinations. If their wilderness involvement is limited to advocacy, ask them why they think it's important they advocate for wilderness. If they have no experience engaging with wilderness, go to bottom.)**

4. Do you have one or more specific role models who were instrumental to your engagement with the outdoors? Who is it? What is their relationship to you?
5. Do you have an especially vivid memory of being in wilderness?
  - a. Who was there with you?
6. Were there any books or movies that influenced your view of the importance of wilderness? Which ones?
  - . Who did you watch/ read these with?
  - a. How does your experience in wilderness compare to what you see in the movies?

## Self-identity and Behavior

7. Sometimes people go to the wilderness to “relax” and “meditate”, or “just be a guy”, things they don’t feel like they can do elsewhere. Does going to wilderness let you express certain behaviors that are important to you?
8. Have you ever modified your beliefs or behaviors to fit in with the “wilderness crowd”?
9. Do you think wilderness settings are more welcoming of certain genders than others?  
Do some genders get more out of wilderness than others?
10. Do you ever take trips that are all (men/women)? Do you think these are qualitatively different from mixed gender trips?
11. Do you feel like your wilderness experiences have affected your sense of self as a gendered person?  
. For example: Some people have stated that time in the wilderness “Makes them feel more like a man or a woman”. Do you notice a difference in your behavior as a gendered person while you are in wilderness versus when you aren’t? How would you characterize that difference?

## Wilderness and Society, Asking about Wilderness in Advocacy

12. I’ve heard from environmentalists and wilderness advocates alike that they need to expand their base, but are having a hard time recruiting diverse members. Are there aspects of the way wilderness is portrayed and spoken about to the general public that may discourage diverse engagement
13. Has the state of wilderness improved or degraded since you were younger?
14. In your view, what is the relationship of wilderness to society?
15. Would you consider yourself an environmentalist? Either way, from your perspective, how would you describe the role of wilderness in the environmental movement?
16. Wilderness advocate Edward Abbey and many like him were not subtle in their belief that wilderness is under threat from a “tourism industrial complex” that threatens to make the most remote places accessible to the drive-by tourist. Beyond that, Abbey expressed an interest in keeping only primitive access to wild spaces as critical to its authenticity. This necessarily means keeping it available only for those who are physically and financially able to make the trip. In your view, who do you think should have access to wilderness?
17. **Does wilderness have value to people who never go to wilderness? Beyond Ecosystem services?**
18. **Does wilderness have intrinsic value?**
19. **Can a wilderness experience be media based?**

## **Appendix B: Sample Screening Questionnaire for Online Participant Applicants**

*Sections numbers indicate different pages to which the participants are directed depending on their level of interest in participating. A link to the actual form is here*

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSephrGdoMdLTDCJxh7WjKjCcVdDnfecODSkYA\\_99IwlVcbIww/formResponse](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSephrGdoMdLTDCJxh7WjKjCcVdDnfecODSkYA_99IwlVcbIww/formResponse)

### **Section 1**

#### **Gendered Wilderness: Gendered Language in Wilderness Discourse**

This project looks at the different ways we talk about wilderness on the individual and organizational levels in private and public settings. As the title suggests research will pay specific attention to how those conversations take on gendered language, and how such language is used to encourage or deter people from participating in wilderness advocacy and recreation.

##### **What is your age?**

- [Short answer response]

##### **How would you identify your gender?**

- [Short answer response]

##### **How would you identify racially?**

- [Short answer response]

##### **Are you currently, or have you ever advocated politically on behalf of wilderness or other environmentalist issues, i.e. signing petitions, writing, lobbying, etc.?**

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

##### **Have you participated in wilderness recreation within the United States?**

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

##### **Have you ever had positive or negative experience within the outdoor recreation or advocacy communities that you felt could be attributed to your gender identity?**

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

**If you are interested in participating in a 40-60 minute phone interview on these subjects, proceed to the next page.**

- Yes (*Directs to next section*)
- No (*Terminates form*)

## Section 2: Interview Consent Form

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of our study on gendered perception of outdoor and wilderness experiences. Please read this consent form in its entirety and leave your contact information at the bottom of the page. We will contact you in coming weeks.

Ethical procedures for academic research undertaken in the United States require that interviewees explicitly agree to being interviewed and how the information contained in their interview will be used. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation.

The interview will take 40-60 minutes. We don't anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time. Would you therefore sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

- The interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced.
- You will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors the transcript.
- The interview will be analysed by Ben Carpenter as research investigator (contact information at bottom).
- Access to the interview transcript will be limited to Ben Carpenter and academic colleagues and researchers with whom he might collaborate as part of the research process.
- Any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify yourself is not revealed.
- The actual recording will be kept for the duration of research project (through June 2019), and destroyed thereafter.
- Any variation of the conditions above will only occur with your further explicit approval.

Your words may be quoted directly. With regards to being quoted, please indicate which of the statements you agree with:

<p>I wish to review the notes, transcripts, or other data collected during the research pertaining to my participation.</p>
---

I agree to be quoted directly.
I agree to be quoted directly if my name is not published and a made-up name (pseudonym) is used.
I agree that the researchers may publish documents that contain quotations by me.

All or part of the content of your interview may be used;

- In academic papers, policy papers or news articles
- On our website and in other media that we may produce such as spoken presentations
- On other feedback events
- In an archive of the project as noted above

### **Researcher Contact Information**

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Ben Carpenter, Graduate Researcher  
 B 07 Marshall Hall, SUNY ESF  
 1 Forestry Drive  
 Syracuse, NY 13210  
 Tel: 585-683-2186  
 E-mail: [BeCarpen@syr.edu](mailto:BeCarpen@syr.edu)

Elisabeth Vidon, PhD, Primary Investigator  
 108 Marshall Hall, SUNY ESF  
 1 Forestry Drive  
 Syracuse, NY 13210  
 Tel: 315-470-6908  
 Email: [EsVidon@esf.edu](mailto:EsVidon@esf.edu)

Office of Research Programs  
 200 Bray Hall  
 SUNY-ESF  
 1 Forestry Drive  
 Syracuse, NY 13210  
 315-470-6606  
 315-470-6779 (fax)  
 Email: [ctnomura@esf.edu](mailto:ctnomura@esf.edu)

**By continuing, I agree that all of my questions have been answered, I am 18 years of age or older, and I wish to participate in this research study.**

- Yes (*Directs participant to next section*)
- No (*Terminates form*)

### **Section 3: Participant Contact Information**

So you are interested in participating. Great!

Please leave your contact information in the box below and we will reach out to you soon about scheduling a phone interview. Thanks again for your time, and we look forward to talking.

Cheers,

Ben Carpenter, Graduate Researcher.

## Appendix C: Sample Interview Consent Form

### Gendered Wilderness: Gendered Language in Wilderness Discourse Interview Consent Form

Research investigator: Benjamin Carpenter

Research Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project. Ethical procedures for academic research undertaken in the United States require that interviewees explicitly agree to being interviewed and how the information contained in their interview will be used. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation.

The interview will take 40-60 minutes. We don't anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time. Would you therefore sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

- The interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced.
- You will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors the transcript.
- The interview will be analysed by Ben Carpenter as research investigator (contact information at bottom).
- Access to the interview transcript will be limited to Ben Carpenter and academic colleagues and researchers with whom he might collaborate as part of the research process.
- Any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify yourself is not revealed.
- The actual recording will be kept for the duration of research project (through June 2019), and destroyed thereafter.
- Any variation of the conditions above will only occur with your further explicit approval.

I also understand that my words may be quoted directly. With regards to being quoted, please initial next to any of the statements that you agree with:

I wish to review the notes, transcripts, or other data collected during the research pertaining to my participation.
I agree to be quoted directly.
I agree to be quoted directly if my name is not published and a made-up name (pseudonym) is used.
I agree that the researchers may publish documents that contain quotations by me.

All or part of the content of your interview may be used;

- In academic papers, policy papers or news articles
- On our website and in other media that we may produce such as spoken presentations
- On other feedback events
- In an archive of the project as noted above

By signing this form I agree that;

1. I am voluntarily taking part in this project. I understand that I don't have to take part, and I can stop the interview at any time;
2. The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used as described above;
3. I have read the Information sheet;
4. I don't expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation;
5. I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview and may make edits I
6. feel necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about
7. confidentiality;
8. I have been able to ask any questions I might have, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future.

Check here to affirm that you are 18 years or older \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Printed Name  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Participants Signature & Date  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Researchers Signature & Date

### Contact Information

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Ben Carpenter, Graduate Researcher

B 07 Marshall Hall, SUNY ESF  
1 Forestry Drive  
Syracuse, NY 13210  
Tel: 585-683-2186  
E-mail: [BeCarpen@syr.edu](mailto:BeCarpen@syr.edu)

Elisabeth Vidon, PhD, Primary Investigator  
108 Marshall Hall, SUNY ESF  
1 Forestry Drive  
Syracuse, NY 13210  
Tel: 315-470-6908  
Email: [EsVidon@esf.edu](mailto:EsVidon@esf.edu)

*What if I have concerns about this research?*

If you are worried about this research, or if you are concerned about how it is being conducted, you can contact the Vice President for Research, Christopher Nomura at:

Office of Research Programs  
200 Bray Hall  
SUNY-ESF  
1 Forestry Drive  
Syracuse, NY 13210  
315-470-6606  
315-470-6779 (fax)  
Email: [ctnomura@esf.edu](mailto:ctnomura@esf.edu)

353 Roosevelt Ave  
Syracuse, NY 13210  
(585)683-2186  
BenjaminFCarpenter@gmail.com

## Benjamin F. Carpenter

### SUMMARY OF SKILLS

Adobe Photoshop; Adobe Premiere Pro; Microsoft Word; Microsoft PowerPoint; Microsoft Excel; Qualitative Research Methods, e.g. Interview, Content, and Discourse Analysis; Public Writing; Public Speaking; Natural Resource Interpretation; Volunteer Management; Youth Instruction; Event Coordination; Copy Editing; Proofreading; Web Design; Creative Writing

### RESEARCH INTERESTS

Environmental Communication, Environmental Education, Environmental Advocacy Campaigns, Outdoor Recreation, Gender and Racial Justice

### EDUCATION

**MS, Environmental Studies, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, May 2019  
(Projected)**

- Thesis: Carpenter, Benjamin F. (2019). *Gendered Wilderness: Variations in Gendered Perceptions and Experiences in Wilderness Advocacy and Recreation Settings*. (Master's thesis, State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry).
- Advising Professor: Elizabeth Vidon, PhD

**BA, English, SUNY Fredonia, August 2013**

- Minor in Creative Writing
- Graduated Cum Laude
- Dean's List from November 2010- August 2013
- Member of the International English Honor Society, Sigma Tau Delta

### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2019. Carpenter, Benjamin. "Boys' Clubs and Beta Sprayers: Masculinized Wilderness and Gendered Disparities in Wilderness Experience." American Association of Geographers Annual Conference, Washington, DC

### PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- American Association of Geographers,
  - Recreation Tourism and Sports Specialty Group
  - Environmental Perception and Behavior Specialty Group

### EXTRACURRICULAR

**February- April 2019, Video Production for SUNY ESF, Department of Environmental Studies**

- Filmed and conducted interviews with graduate and faculty Pack Grant recipients about the work the grant allowed them to do.

**March 2019, Paper Submission to American Association of Geographers,**

- Recreation Tourism and Sports Specialty group Student Paper Contest

**March 2018- April 2019, Graduate Student Association**

- Environmental Studies Department Representative
- Awards and Grants Committee Member

**March 2019, Carbon Tax and CNY: A Community Forum on March 22, 2019**

Event outreach coordinator

## **WORK EXPERIENCE**

**January 2018 -- Present, Graduate Assistant, Digital Storytelling Studio, Dept. of Environmental Studies, SUNY ESF**

- Developed and organized inventory for the newly instituted Digital Storytelling Studio
- Created and implemented equipment rental and room use policies
- Tutored students on using video and sound recording equipment
- Supervision of student audio and video project editing using Adobe Creative Cloud

**August 2018- December 2018, Graduate Assistant, EST 366: Environmental Values and Attitudes, Dept. of Environmental Studies, SUNY ESF**

- Facilitated classroom discussion for EST 366: Environmental Values and Attitudes
- Administered and graded class writing assignments and essays

**January 2017- July 2017, Program Assistant, Bridging the Gap**

- Fulfilled Heartland Tree Alliance contract with Kansas City, MO to plant 500+ 1" caliper street trees in FY 2016-17
- Coordinated volunteer planting days
- Managed data for KCMO Tree Inventory using ARC GIS

**August 2016- August 2017, Youth Program Instructor, BikeWalkKC,**

- Lead instruction of BLAST curriculum for 4th, 5th and 6th grade students in a PE setting
- Lead instruction of Earn-a-Bike curriculum for 4th, 5th and 6th grade students in after school settings
- Lead instruction of Youth Ambassadors curriculum for 8th, 9th and 10th grade students after school
- Maintain bicycle fleets, and restore donated bicycles to working condition for use in Earn-a-Bike curriculum

**September 2015- August 2016, Food Drive AmeriCorps, Harvester Community Food Network,**

- Coordinated food and fund drives by phone and email with individuals, corporate, faith based and government agencies
- Delivered food drive materials using cargo vans and box trucks regularly
- Accrued 1700+ hours of service in the Kansas City, MO metropolitan area

**August 2014 – July 2015, Assistant Team Leader, AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps,**

- Managed team food and housing budget
- Accrued 1700+ hours of national and community service with the Bureau of Land Management
- Accrued 100 additional Independent Service Project hours
- Speciality roles: Team Media Representative; Team Sustainability Coordinator

**August 2013- November 2013, Naturalist Intern, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation,**

- Lead interpretive tours and workshops at Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve
- Composed and distributed press releases for public programs at Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve
- Created documents for internal review by the DEC Division of Public Affairs and Education
- Researched available grant funding and sources of information on funding for environmental education.