



reclamation & RESILIENCE

POST CONFERENCE REPORT



VIRTUAL March 5 and 6, 2025
IN PERSON March 7 and 8, 2025



natureforward.org/conferences



ABOUT TAKING NATURE BLACK

Since its launch in 2016, Nature Forward's Taking Nature Black Conference has grown to be one of the nation's premier environmental forums showcasing diversity, inclusion, and equity. Although centered primarily on issues impacting the Capitol Region, the event's recurring focus on environmental justice, empowerment, and belonging in nature resonates with diverse nature professionals and advocates from coast to coast and around the globe who face similar challenges in their own communities. Taking Nature Black is held every other year rotating with its sister Naturally Latinos conference.





TAKING NATURE BLACK 2025: **THEME & SPEAKERS**

Themed "Reclamation and Resilience," the 2025 Taking Nature Black Conference included two virtual days; one in person conference day in downtown Silver Spring, MD; and one day of outdoor nature experiences.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



REV. LENNOX YEARWOOD, JR
President/CEO
Hip Hop Caucus



JYLANA L. SHEATS, PHD
Applied Behavior Scientist
Tulane University



CAROLYN FINNEY, PHD
Author of
Black Faces, White Spaces



MATT SCOTT
Director of
Storytelling & Engagement
Project Drawdown



WAWA GATHERU
Founder
Black Girl Environmentalist



DR. MUSTAFA SANTIAGO-ALI
Executive Vice President
National Wildlife Federation



"This conference is proof that together we are a powerful force..."



Wawa Gatheru
Founder, Black Girl Environmentalist

"Inspirational"

"Engaging"

Attendee Feedback

"Powerful"





TAKING NATURE BLACK 2025: PANELS

“An amazing Taking Nature Black 2025 conference gathered an array of trailblazers in the environmental movement to spread wisdom, poetry, community building, ethical storytelling, and a lot more!” - Layla Razek, Green 2.0

“It was an honor and joy to hold sacred space with you... I was inspired by the experience.”

Hope Khodaei
Panelist, Honoring Our Ancestors



Building Floodwise Communities

(Clockwise from top left: Dennis Chestnut, Jamoni Overby, and Tyrah Cobb-Davis)

Restorative Park Engagement: Addressing Intersectionality

(Clockwise from top left: Karol Gilmore, Akiima Price, LaShawn Johns, and Prince Hamn)

Fireside Chat: Faith in Action

Robin Lewis (top) and Sidra Siddiqui



Honoring Our Ancestors: Land and Labor Acknowledgment

Jacqueline Patterson (inset), Hope Khodaei, and Alex Green



SPECIAL SCREENING: Hip Hop Caucus Underwater Projects Viewing & Discussion

Panel discussion with Brittany Bell Surratt and JaRel Clay of the Hip Hop Caucus, moderator by Sharon Dorsey of SharInNature, LLC.

“These are great discussions!

Definitely looking forward to getting involved more in community initiatives”

Jasmine Jones
Parent and Prince George’s County Resident





CAROLINE BREWER



XAVIER BROWN



KEONA GARDNER



DR. JOCELYN IMANI



DONTE JACKSON



DIANE LILL



MARÍA-ELENA MONTERO



BRYCE MORGAN



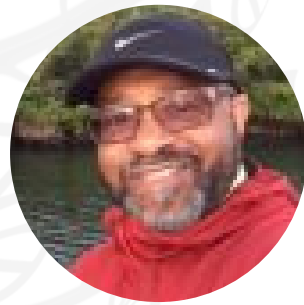
DR. MAMIE PARKER



ALISON PEARCE, PHD



INGA SKIPPINGS



RAYMOND SMITH



COLBY VINE



FREDERICK TUTMAN



DR. SACOBY WILSON

TAKING NATURE BLACK 2025: PRESENTATIONS

2025 NATURE FORWARD TAKING NATURE BLACK ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPIONS



Taking Nature Black Co-Chairs Lydia Lawrence (left) and Jamoni Overby (right) with 2025 Nature Forward Taking Nature Black Regional Environmental Champion Mariah Davis.

VINCE LEGGETT
LEGACY ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPION



AURÉLIE LABORDE
YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPION



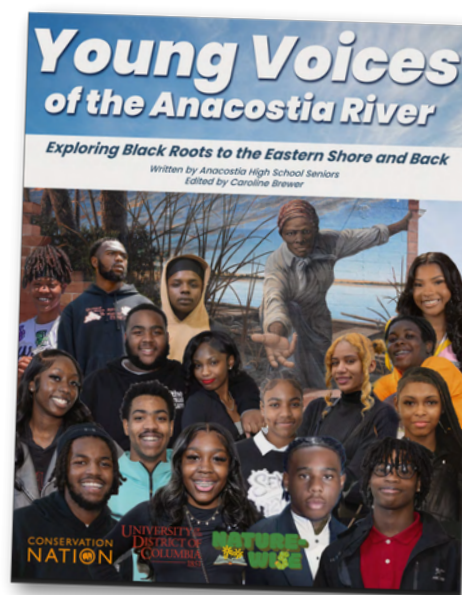
2025

TAKING NATURE BLACK 2025: YOUTH

This year's conference elevated young Black voices to share their inspiration and uplift everyone in attendance. Students and faculty from nearly 20 different universities across the United States participated in TNB2025. The conference also celebrated the work of students from DC's Anacostia High School who shared their writings and poetry.



Students from DC's Anacostia High School shared moving poetry and insights throughout the 2025 Taking Nature Black Conference. During a panel led by author Caroline Brewer and urban farmer Xavier Brown, students discussed their encounters with nature as presented in their new book *Young Voices of the Anacostia River: Exploring Black Roots to the Eastern Shore and Back*. Brewer and Brown helped the students publish the book with Conservation Nation in partnership with the University of the District of Columbia.



Anacostia High School student Ra'lon Ray presented original poetry.



(Left to right) Professor Carlton Waterhouse and our first-ever Student Climate Competition finalists/panelists Zoe Stancil, Theo Daniels, and Simone Couter. [View the students' work here!](#)

"The youth were on point with their expressions of nature..."

Conference Attendee Feedback



TAKING NATURE BLACK 2025 IMPACT: ATTENDEES

Engaged attendees representing more than 30 states participated in online presentations and networking during virtual conference sessions held March 5 and 6. Participants traveled from as far as Washington state, California, Illinois, and Florida for in person events in Silver Spring, MD and Washington, DC on March 7 and 8.



No words can express how impactful the entire conference has been.”

Conference Attendee Feedback



CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

579 VIRTUAL & IN PERSON

ATTENDEE PROFILE VIEWS

2,008

COMMUNITY BOARD

1,070 TOTAL MESSAGES

ATTENDEE INTERACTIONS

927 ONE-ON-ONE ATTENDEE MESSAGES SHARED ONLINE

STATES REPRESENTED

30 ARIZONA
ARKANSAS
CALIFORNIA
COLORADO
CONNECTICUT
DELAWARE
DC
FLORIDA
GEORGIA
ILLINOIS
KANSAS
LOUISIANA
MAINE
MARYLAND
MASSACHUSETTS
MICHIGAN
MINNESOTA
MISSISSIPPI
NEW JERSEY
NEW YORK
NORTH CAROLINA
OHIO
OREGON
PENNSYLVANIA
TENNESSEE
TEXAS
VERMONT
VIRGINIA
WASHINGTON
WISCONSIN

One attendee joined the conference remotely from UGANDA!



TAKING NATURE BLACK 2025 IMPACT: SPONSORS

During a time when some companies and organizations have backed away from efforts to empower marginalized voices, our sponsors chose to step up. Among our 2025 supporters were 35 returning sponsors, 6 new sponsors, and first-time media sponsors The Washington Informer, WPFW 89.3FM, and the Edible Activist podcast.



"It has been an honor

to be an attendee at these conferences and sponsor to provide support for the broad audience that engages at the conference and the networking opportunities in the conservation field.



Carmera Thomas-Wilhite
Chesapeake Bay Foundation

SPONSOR IMPRESSIONS

143K VIA BANNER ADS AND EXPOSURE ON OUR VIRTUAL CONFERENCE PLATFORM AND WEBSITE



VIRTUAL BOOTH VISITS

650

JOB POSTINGS

33

"cannot stop talking about

how inspiring the whole conference was... we have been interested in working with Nature Forward in the DC area ever since."

Stephanie Stair
KRoussaw Foundation



TAKING NATURE BLACK 2025 IMPACT: REACH

Robust web traffic, dynamic social media engagement, and earned media from across the DC region were highly effective in building awareness and excitement for the 2025 Taking Nature Black Conference and its presenters and sponsors. Media sponsors The Washington Informer, WPFW 89.3FM, and the Edible Activist podcast also boosted awareness of the event. Additional outreach included email marketing and our Nature Forward Quarterly (12K readership).

WEBPAGE VIEWS

natureforward.org/tnb2025

15,678 UNIQUE VIEWS
DEC. 1 – MAR. 9



AGENDA WEBPAGE VIEWS

12,395



SPEAKER WEBPAGE VIEWS

10,772



SOCIAL MEDIA



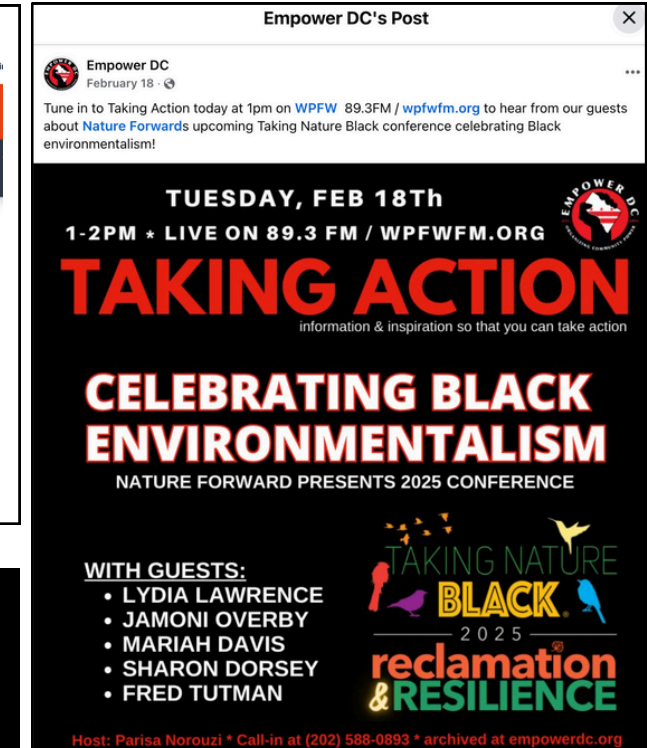
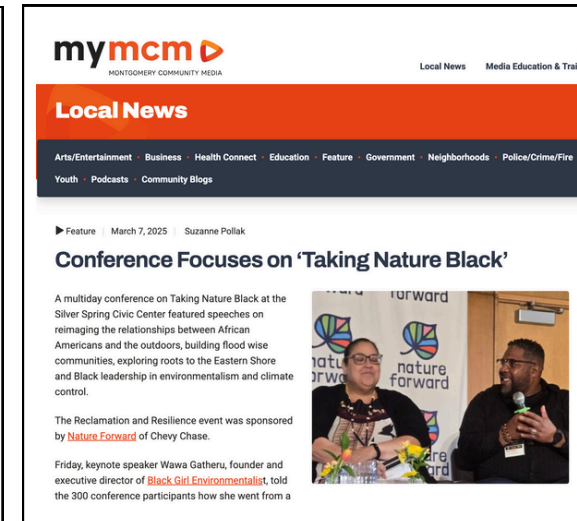
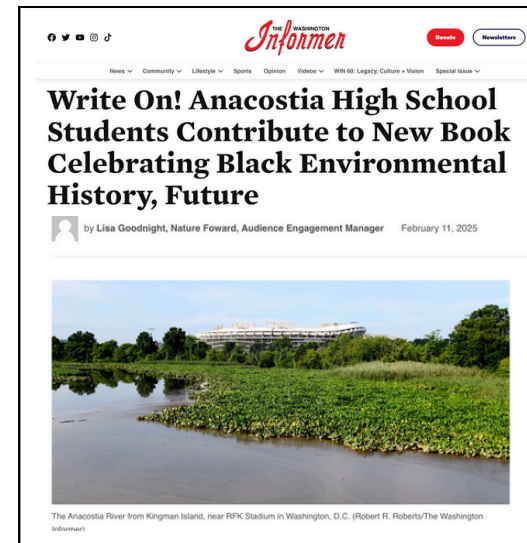
COMBINED IMPACT ACROSS FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, LINKEDIN, YOUTUBE and BLUESKY

305,208
IMPRESSIONS

106,746
REACH

6,039
ENGAGEMENT

EARNED MEDIA COVERAGE



2025

THANK YOU, 2025 SPONSORS!



Your support of this event changed lives at a time when so many felt defeated and discouraged. Critical spaces like Nature Forward's Taking Nature Black and Naturally Latinos Conferences are not possible without your consistent belief in and support of spaces that uplift everyone. Thank you!



MEDIA SPONSORS



IN-KIND SPONSORS

Your support of the Taking Nature Black Conference as a sponsor, attendee, volunteer, or supporter helps Nature Forward:



Educate tens of thousands of children about the natural world and foster a lifelong love of nature



Raise awareness about climate change threats and help build climate resilience in our community



Advocate for green energy and green infrastructure policies across the DC region



Protect and restore biodiversity and habitats for wildlife and ensure access to nature for all people

Thank You!



2025



THANK YOU, DC Bird Alliance, SoulTrak Outdoors in DC, Outdoor Afro, and SafeandSeen for leading a variety of amazing outdoor and virtual nature experiences on Saturday, March 8th.



COMING 2026



RETURNS 2027

Information about sponsorship opportunities for both events is at natureforward.org/conferences

Nature Forward earns top ratings from independent non-profit evaluators for accountability, transparency, and financial best practices.



Donations to Nature Forward are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.