



POST CONFERENCE REPORT

# Belonging:

## Engaged & Empowered

VIRTUAL March 8 and 9, 2023

IN PERSON March 10 and 11, 2023

[natureforward.org/conferences](https://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.



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# TAKING NATURE BLACK 2023:

## THEME & PRESENTERS

Themed “Belonging: Engaged and Empowered,” the 2023 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. The conference continued the celebration of inclusion in nature highlighted in 2022's *Belonging: The Black Americans in Nature Photography Project*. The beautiful ebook is a joint project of the United States Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Program and Nature Forward.



Use the QR code to download "Belonging"



**BLACK** **nature forward** **U.S.**  
A Taking Nature Black/U.S. Forest Service Photo eBook

## VIRTUAL PANEL DISCUSSIONS

### ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN DC & BEYOND



Brenda Lee Richardson

Queen Zakia Shabazz

Absalom Jordan, Jr.

Jamoni Overby

### BLACK TO EARTH: OUR CONNECTIONS TO THE LAND



Jaren Hill Lockridge

Xavier Brown

Ashley Drakeford

Melissa L. Jones

"Thank you for organizing this event. You did a good job!"

**Angie Orr**  
GirlTrek



"This is amazing! I'm looking forward to further connections with everyone!"

**Jacqueline Ellison**  
DC Department of Parks and Recreation



### BLACK TO THE FUTURE: NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATIONS



Dr. Rose Brusaferro

Curtis Bennett

T'Noya Thompson

Manny Almonte

### BIGGER & BOLDER: BUILDING BLACK ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



Chancee Lundy Russell

Larry Glover

Victoria Owens

Tamara Rasberry Harris



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## KEYNOTE PRESENTERS



**Rue Mapp**  
Outdoor Afro  
Presented by  




**Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome**  
White House Council  
on Environmental  
Quality



**Alan Spears**  
National Parks  
Conservation  
Association



**Tamara Toles O'Laughlin**  
Climate  
Critical Earth



**Caroline Brewer**  
Author



**Dr. Mamie Parker**  
M.A. Parker &  
Associates



**LaTreice V. Branson, MFA**  
Radical  
Adventures in  
Wellness

## IN PERSON PANEL DISCUSSIONS

**BELONGING: WHAT HEALING & WHOLENESS MIGHT LOOK LIKE (SESSIONS I & II)**



**Caroline Brewer**



**Beatra Wilson, MPA, CDE**



**Dr. Mustafa Santiago Ali**



**Dr. Sacoby Wilson**



**Dr. Karen Wilson-Ama'Echefu**



**Frederick Tutman**



**Cheriss May**



**Ronnie Webb**



**Alfie Chambers**



**Tykee James**

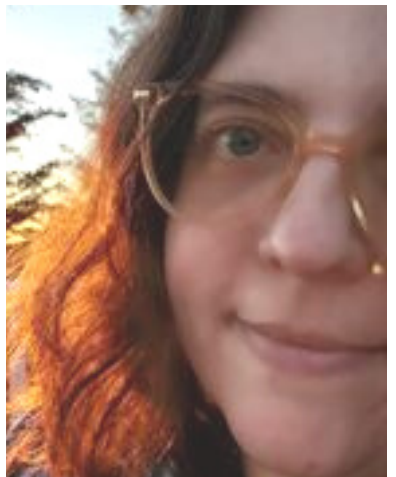


**Lydia Lawrence**



**Alex Smith**

"Thank you!  
This is really  
incredible!"



**Sam Messersmith**  
Association of Nature and Forest Therapy



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# TAKING NATURE BLACK 2023 IMPACTS: ATTENDEES

A diverse and enthusiastic audience representing more than 30 states participated in online presentations and networking during virtual conference sessions held March 8 and 9. Attendees traveled from as far as New Mexico, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Florida for in person events in Chevy Chase, MD and Washington, DC on March 10 and 11.

## CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

**551** VIRTUAL & IN PERSON

## COMMUNITY BOARD

**2,801** TOTAL MESSAGES

## ATTENDEE INTERACTIONS

**1,067** 1-ON-1 MESSAGES

## PHOTOS SHARED

**228** 466 LIKES FOR ALL PHOTOS

## STATES REPRESENTED

**33** TOP LOCATIONS

|          |              |
|----------|--------------|
| MARYLAND | PENNSYLVANIA |
| DC       | OHIO         |
| VIRGINIA | GEORGIA      |

*“Nature doesn’t care if we are Black or White, rich or poor, straight or gay. She invites us to sip from her raindrops, bathe in her sunlight & get lost in her moonbeams. In Nature, all things are possible.”*

**Dr. Mustafa Santiago Ali**  
Conference Panelist



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# THANK YOU, TAKING NATURE BLACK. 2023 SPONSORS!

*Many of our sponsors committed for two years to support our Naturally Latinos Conference in 2022 or 2024.*

*We welcome you back to support Naturally Latinos 2024 and Taking Nature Black 2025!*







## TAKING NATURE BLACK 2023 IMPACTS: SPONSORS

In addition to traditional display tables at the in-person conference day on March 10 at the Silver Spring Civic Center in downtown Silver Spring, MD, exhibiting sponsors enjoyed access to a variety of online engagement tools during the remote conference days on March 8 and 9. Virtual exhibitor resources included online meet-ups, discussion groups, videos, job postings, and more.



### CONFERENCE EXHIBITORS

**29** EXHIBITING SPONSORS

### LEADS GENERATED

**316** BY VIRTUAL EXHIBITORS

### CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

**72** JOB POSTINGS SHARED

### SPONSOR VIRTUAL BOOTH VISITS

**1,562**

*"Amazing conference, community, and learning. I am grateful for the opportunity to participate and be a part of this inspiring community."*



**Patricia Greenberg**  
Fairfax County Park Authority  
Taking Nature Black Sponsor Organization



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# TAKING NATURE BLACK 2023 IMPACTS: 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 2023 Taking Nature Black Conference and its presenters and sponsors. Outreach also included email marketing and our Naturalist Quarterly publication, which has a readership of approximately 12,000.

## WEBPAGE VIEWS

natureforward.org/taking-nature-black

7,149 UNIQUE VIEWS  
DEC. 1 – MAR. 11



## SPONSOR WEBPAGE VIEWS

6,440

## SPEAKER WEBPAGE VIEWS

6,680

## SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

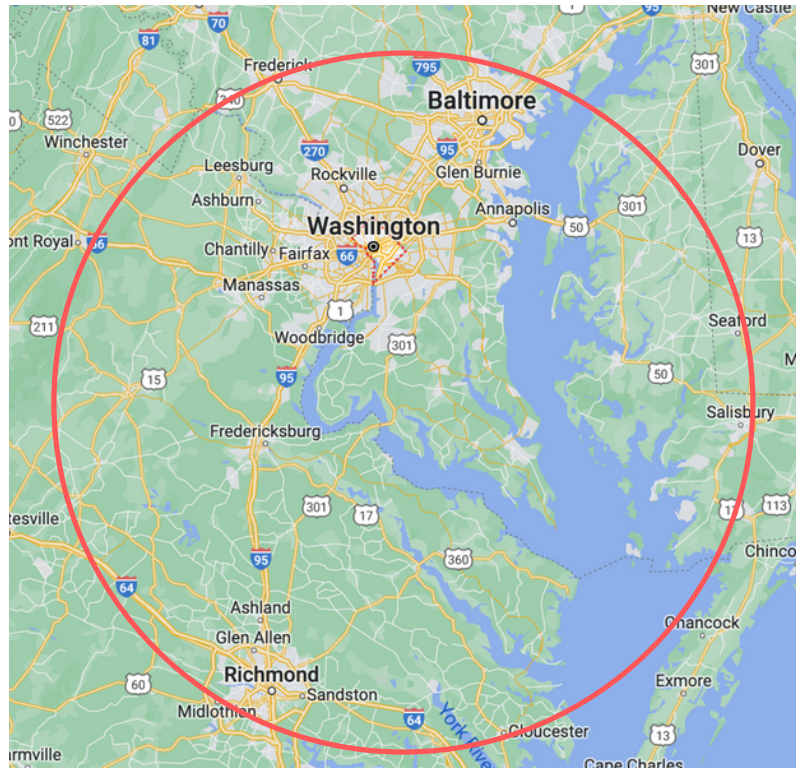
DEC. 1 – MAR. 11

20,636 FACEBOOK

62,941 TWITTER

9,211 INSTAGRAM

## EARNED MEDIA COVERAGE



## Nature Forward Shows Off Stunning Photography Project at Annual 'Taking Nature Black' Conference



Dr. Samuel Ramsey at Ward 7's Kingman & Heritage Islands (Benjamin Israel/Taking Nature Black & U.S. Forest Service)

In an expansive and high-ceilinged auditorium in the Silver Spring Civic Center, a small collection of images hung unobtrusively on the wall in a front corner of the room.



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Expert birder Tykee James led a March 11 birdwalk in DC's Anacostia Park as part of a free Taking Nature Black nature outing.



COMING JANUARY 2024



RETURNS 2025

Sponsorship opportunities for both events are at  
[natureforward.org/conferences](https://natureforward.org/conferences)

