

COMMUNITY ROOTS

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CASINO

Outdoors

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by public transportation.

In Seattle, the group has between 400 and 500 members on Meetup, some of whom get together at least twice a month for some form of outdoor activity, which can include rock climbing, hiking or snowboarding, Reese said.

Several of them recently hiked Hurricane Hill at Olympic National Park to mark the 150th anniversary of the Buffalo Soldiers, the segregated Black U.S. Army regiments that were the original park rangers.

"It's about helping people recognize that nature is everywhere, and you don't have to be in paradise to enjoy the outdoors," Rue said.

"We want them to appreciate connecting with their urban and natural parks, their playgrounds, the local stream for fishing," Rue continued. "It's about breaking down that separation between us and nature."

Another local group, Black People Hike, was started by some friends as they sat around chatting in a living room two years ago.

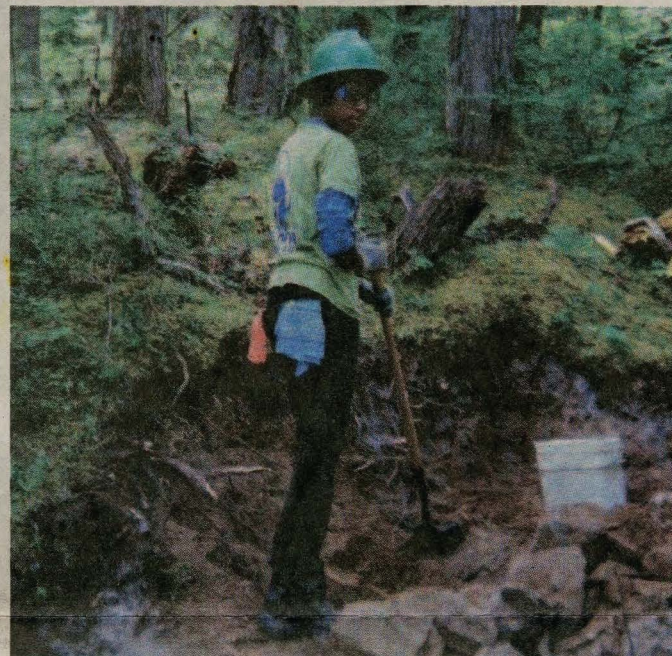
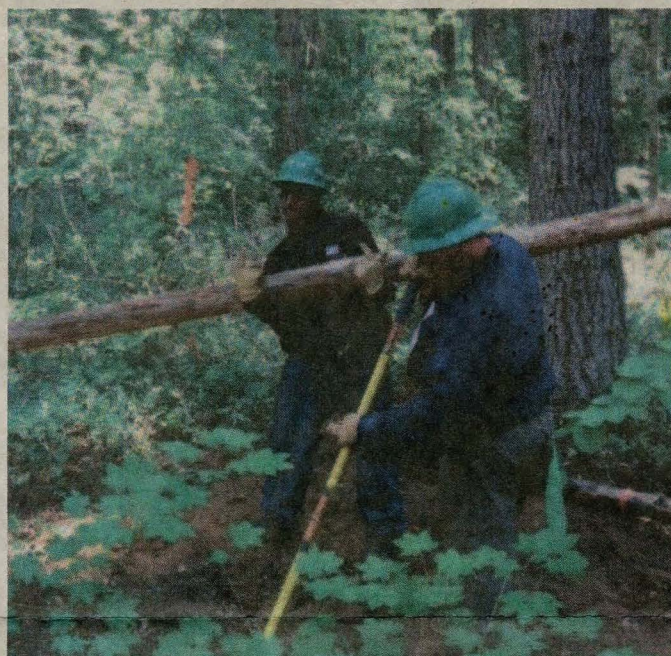
One of them, Dorian Waller, had been hiking off and on since moving to Seattle from the Midwest in 2000. When he first started he saw very few Blacks on hiking trails. In recent years, he said, that began to change.

With more than 1,000 members on its Facebook page, Black People Hike has a core of 40 to 50 people who usually hike on weekends. It's casual and informal, a way for people — of all skill levels — to come together and have fun, Waller said.

Most are young professionals and transplants, who use the outings as a way to network, socialize and connect with each other.

"For us, it's three things: seeing the beauty around us, becoming physically active and appreciating each other and culture through casual conversation," he said.

While groups like Outdoor Afro and Black People Hike provide a social outlet, the Urban Wilderness program



TOP PHOTO: Members of Black People Hike take a break on the trail to Lake Lillian/Margaret. **BOTTOM PHOTOS:** Young people, who are part of Jourdan Keith's Urban Wilderness Project summer program, work to repair trails in the North Cascades National Park.

has a more specific purpose.

It has had an ongoing partnership with North Cascades National Park for at least a decade and has worked with the U.S. Forest Service and other groups, all with the goal of ensuring that young people of color, both male and female, have access to these public

lands.

Most of the young people who participate have never had a wilderness experience, Keith said. Some are immigrants who bring with them stories of their own cultural experiences.

In addition to trail work and hiking, they also learn about the land from

different perspectives, Keith said.

"Conversations about how the land was used by indigenous people and how plants were and are used are an important part of the narrative," she said.

Royster

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Royster was in her teachings and how important the information was. In one of the sessions, Royster told the group to ask their doctor about their vitamin B-12 levels and when Holland did, his doctor was amazed. Holland's vitamin B-12 level was low, which is bad because B-12 vitamins are important for the manufacturing of red blood cells and for sustaining the nervous system. Holland wouldn't have known about this deficiency if it were not for Royster.

Another of Royster's workshop attendees, Julia P. Doyle, a 90-year old diabetic stated that her doctors were pleased with her lab results, which she claims were due to Royster's workshops. According to Doyle, even though you may not want to know the information Royster gives you, you listen because you know it will help you and help you live.

Royster is also a member, and past president, of the Greater Seattle Chapter of The Links, Inc., an international organization of African American women who are committed to organizing and supporting educational, cultural, and civic activities that enhance our community.

Dr. Liz A. Reynolds Thomas, a long-time friend and fellow member of The Links, says that Royster has done a lot in the community that many don't know about. For example, she used to teach prison inmates about health,



Dr. Juana Royster

nutrition, hygiene and self-esteem at Purdy, a women's correctional facility in Gig Harbor, WA. She has also worked with the Hope Heart Institute, the Multicultural Health Institute and many other organizations.

"She is tiny and takes big, humongous jobs," said Thomas. "She is a stickler about young people learning and how you take pride in who you are and what you put forward, because it reflects who you are."

"She uses her knowledge to teach and help others so that they can make better decisions with their life," added Thomas. "She is just a genuine person."

Dr. Mildred W. Ollee, also a member of The Links, agrees that Royster has her own unique personality and does not care what people think about her. She immerses herself in the community in a personal way.

Royster, who was recently recognized by the National Education Association for her work in the community, is currently working on a pilot program utilizing skype, launched in October of 2015, to introduce registered dietician nutritionist from around the globe to the senior center.

"Whatever information I must bring, I will do that. I think God tapped me to get food and nutrition information into our community. I believe I have done that, and I shall continue doing that," said Royster. "I love what I do."