

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance
Midwest Region



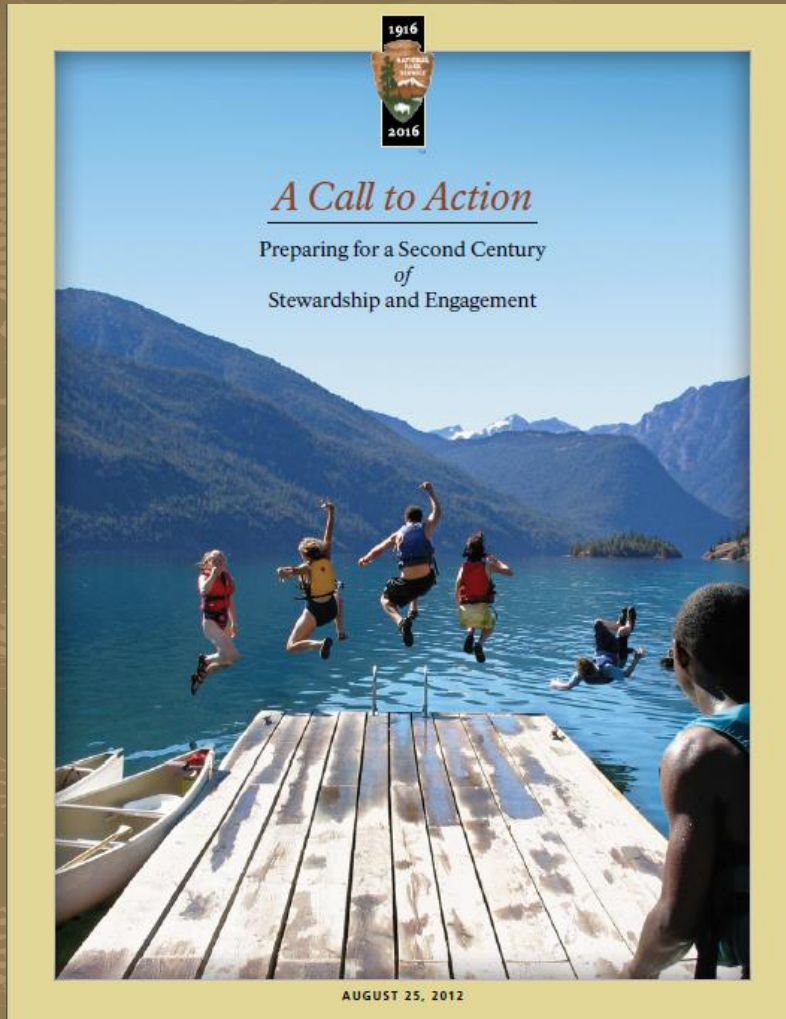
Cycling the Mississippi River

A partnership case study to promote youth engagement and integrated learning along the Mississippi River.

Outline of Presentation

- Why? How? What?
- Partners
- Missions
- Mutual Interests
- Project Highlights
- Benefits
- Best Practices
- Lessons Learned

WHY? A Call to Action



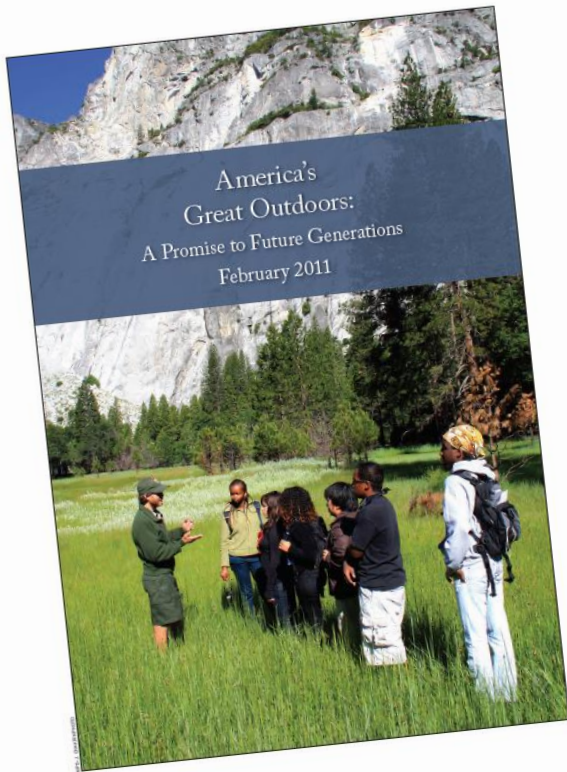
Connects People to Parks and helps communities protect what is special to them, highlight their history, and retain or rebuild their economic and environmental sustainability.

Advances the Education Mission by strengthening the NPS role as an educational force based on core American values, historical and scientific scholarship, and unbiased translation of the complexities of the American experience.

Preserves America's Special Places and is a leader in extending the benefits of conservation across physical, social, political, and international boundaries in partnership with others.

Enhances Professional and Organizational Excellence by adapting to the changing needs of visitors, communities, and partners; encouraging organizational innovation; and giving employees the chance to reach their full potential.

let's move **outside**



4. Engage Young People in Conservation and the Great Outdoors

Youth participation in AGO had a tremendous impact on the themes of this report and influenced its recommendations. At 21 youth-specific listening sessions across the nation, government officials met with hundreds of young people, each of whom had a personal perspective on—and experiences with—the outdoors. From a uniformed perspective corps in Missoula, to a room of high school kids in Orlando, to Native American youth in two BIE schools, these voices were diverse, passionate, and thoughtful. As we look to protect America's great outdoors for current and future generations, it is imperative that we continue to engage, empower, and learn from our young people. They are our future farmers, ranchers, hunters, anglers, conservationists, scientists, teachers, business leaders, and elected officials who will inherit and carry on the stewardship of our nation's outdoor legacy.

GOAL A Build stewardship values and engage youth in conservation and recreation.

America's young people are our nation's future. We have an obligation to ensure that America's great natural legacy is preserved for their enjoyment, welfare, and livelihoods. To honor and capture the youth voice, a separate pullout report, "Youth and America's Great Outdoors," was prepared by a team of young and committed federal employees.

Recommendation 4.1 Engage young people in the implementation of AGO.

Thousands of young people joined in the AGO process through the listening sessions, the AGO Facebook page, and the website. Many of our youth are already participating in the protection and enhancement of our

HOW? Collaborative Partnership

- Triangle Bikeworks Spoke 'n Revolutions
- Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA)
- Underground Railroad Network to Freedom (UGRR NTF)



Rivers, Trails &
Conservation Assistance



NATIONAL
UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
NETWORK TO FREEDOM

Engaging existing relationships

- National Parks – Midwest/Southeast Regions
- UGRR Network to Freedom Sites
- State and Local Parks and Municipalities
- Non-profit Organizations
- Regional Volunteer Coordinator
- Regional Communications Officer

Triangle Bikeworks

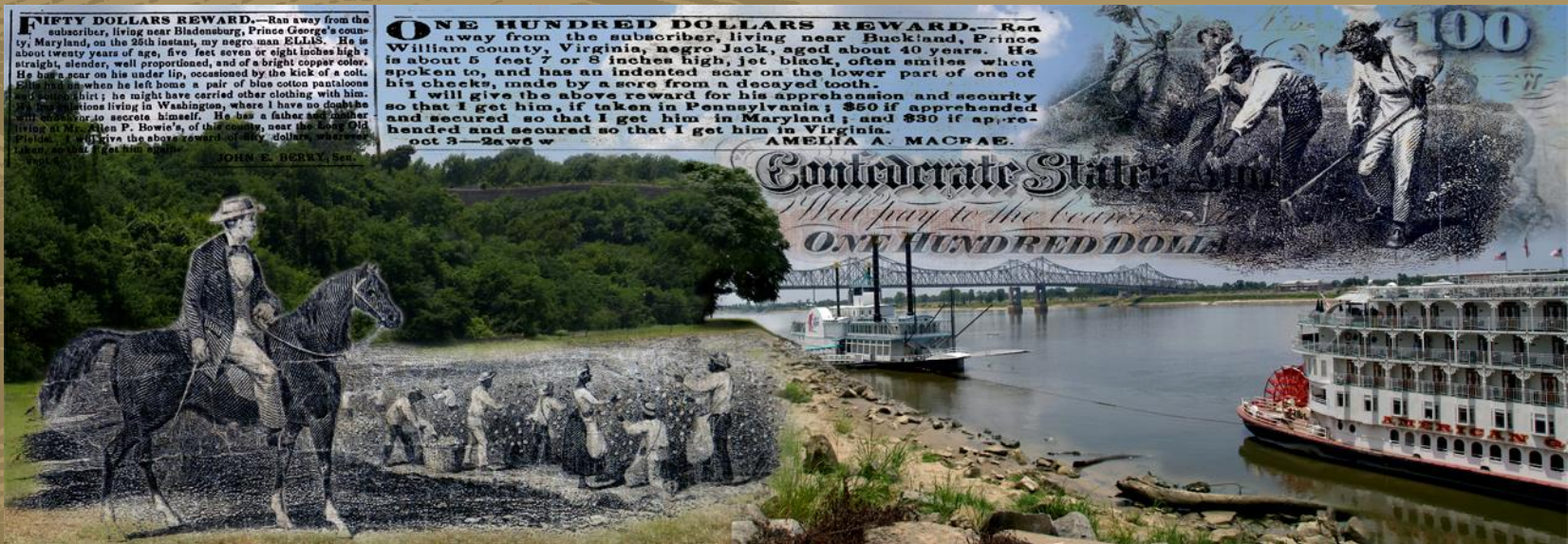
Spoke 'n Revolutions Youth Cycling

Transforming lives, once revolution at a time.

- Established in 2010, the mission of the Spoke 'n Revolutions program is to **inspire** high potential youth with few resources to pursue **personal successes** and to serve as role models for others.
- This is accomplished through a four-year intensive **leadership** program, involving year-round cycling activities, **community service** projects, and preparation for continuing **education** and **career development**.
- We mentor and provide youth **opportunities** to learn more about themselves and the surrounding environment while interacting with adults in professional and casual settings. We use the **challenges** of distance cycling and other outdoor activities as a **catalyst** for **confidence building**, **self-reliance**, and as a building block for greater **accomplishments** in their future.

UGRR – Network to Freedom

Recognizing that all human beings embrace the right to self-determination and freedom from oppression, the historical Underground Railroad (UGRR) sought to address the injustices of slavery and make freedom a reality in the United States. The National Park Service, through shared leadership with local, state, and federal entities, as well as interested individuals and organizations, will: **promote** programs and partnerships to commemorate, **preserve** sites and other resources associated with, and **educate** the public about the historical significance of the UGRR.



RTCA

- The National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program extends and expands the benefits of the National Park Service throughout the nation. We help **connect** all Americans to their parks, trails, rivers, and other special places.

Special Emphasis Areas

- Engaging Youth
- Healthy Recreation
- Connecting Communities to Parks
- Water Trails
- Large Landscape Conservation

Mutual Interests

- Youth development through meaningful connections to the outdoors.
- Demonstrate the role that people of color have played in the development of our country through experiential learning opportunities.



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

WHAT? A Cycling Adventure

- To promote physical and intellectual development through exploration of the nation's diverse natural and cultural environments along the Mississippi River during a month-long cycling adventure.
- To foster the ideas of stewardship and enjoyment, which are essential to the mission of the NPS as reflected in the agency's Call to Action and America's Great Outdoors (AGO).



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

America's Best Idea

“The America's Best Idea program gives people – particularly youth – incredible opportunities to connect to our national parks through unique and innovative ways. From experiences that center on history, the environment and even adventure, we are able to capture the imagination of a new generation of park-goers in ways that benefit their lives and the future of the parks.”

Neil Mulholland, President and CEO of the National Park Foundation

National Park Foundation

– L.L. Bean, Anschutz Family Foundation, The Ahmanson Foundation



GUIDING AGREEMENTS:

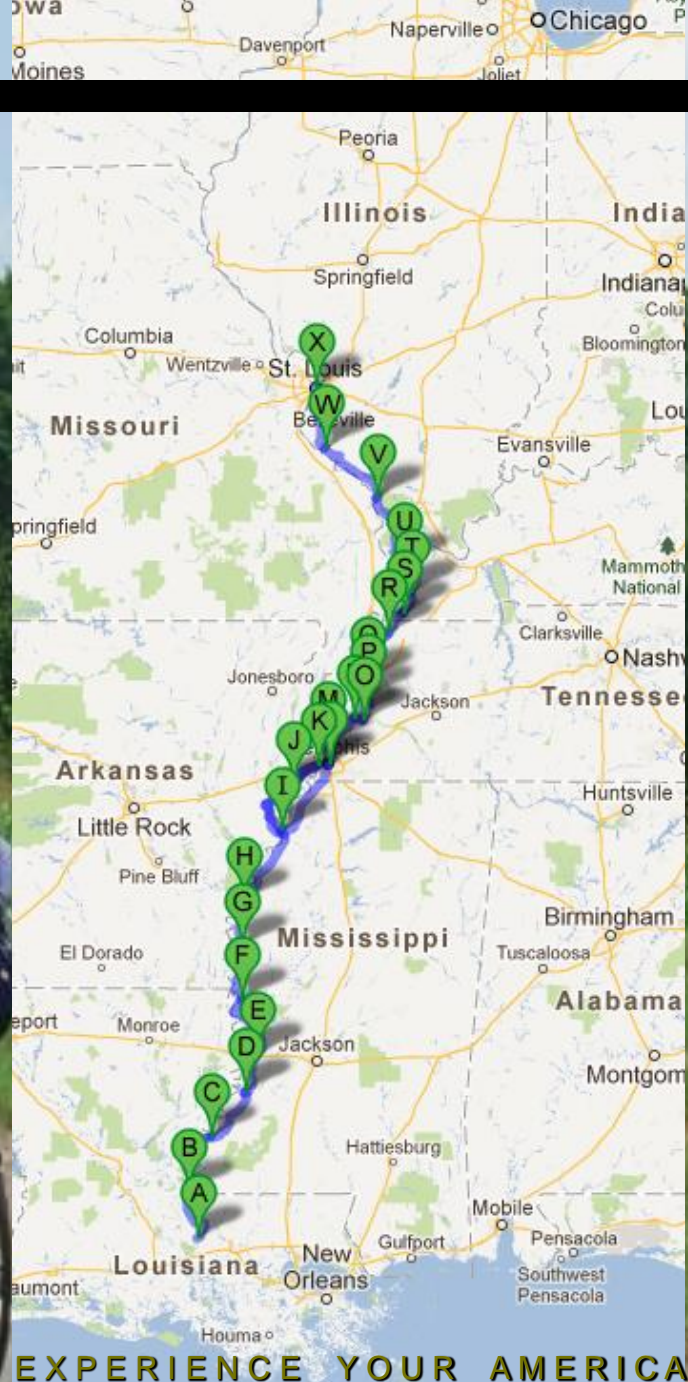
NPF/RTCA/TBW grant agreement

UGRR/TBW volunteer agreement

On the Road

■ New Orleans, LA to St. Louis, MO

- National Parks & NTF Sites
- Civil War to Civil Rights
- Jazz & Blues History



National Parks



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

National UGRR Conference



Helena, AR

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Jazz and Blues History



What we play is life.

Louis Armstrong



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Shared Experience from Student Blogs

"We were on our bikes, the feeling was amazing. The open road with nothing but the beauty of nature surrounding us all around. The feeling of being in nature that I had never paid attention to before. I felt like I had been cheated on all other travels because when I rode by in the car I paid little to no attention to the surroundings and I never really stopped and look to appreciate the scenery. Its a Life changing moment when you realize that the smallest things can make a difference or in this case the huge things you ignore on the road."

—Jose

"I was doing good until we reached a hill which I named Mount Everest 2. It was crazy steep! I almost got off my bike. I stayed on. Just went on granny mode and peddled so slowly. I kept my eyes straight down and never looked up because if I did I would have probably given up."

—Joanna

Shared Experience from Student Blogs

"We then unzipped the rain fly, and the first thing my eyes notice was the most beautiful, most Vibrant stars I had ever seen. Their twinkle brought joy to my heart, and amazement to my eyes. I honestly couldn't believe it! It was so pretty! The sky was full of them. When we came back from the restroom I couldn't keep my head down. That was one of the most amazing nights of my life, just because of that."

–Ali

"As it was getting dark I joined the rest of the group to watch the fireworks display. I have never seen something that great before. I was watching fireworks underneath the Arch of St. Louis!"

–MT

Best Practices

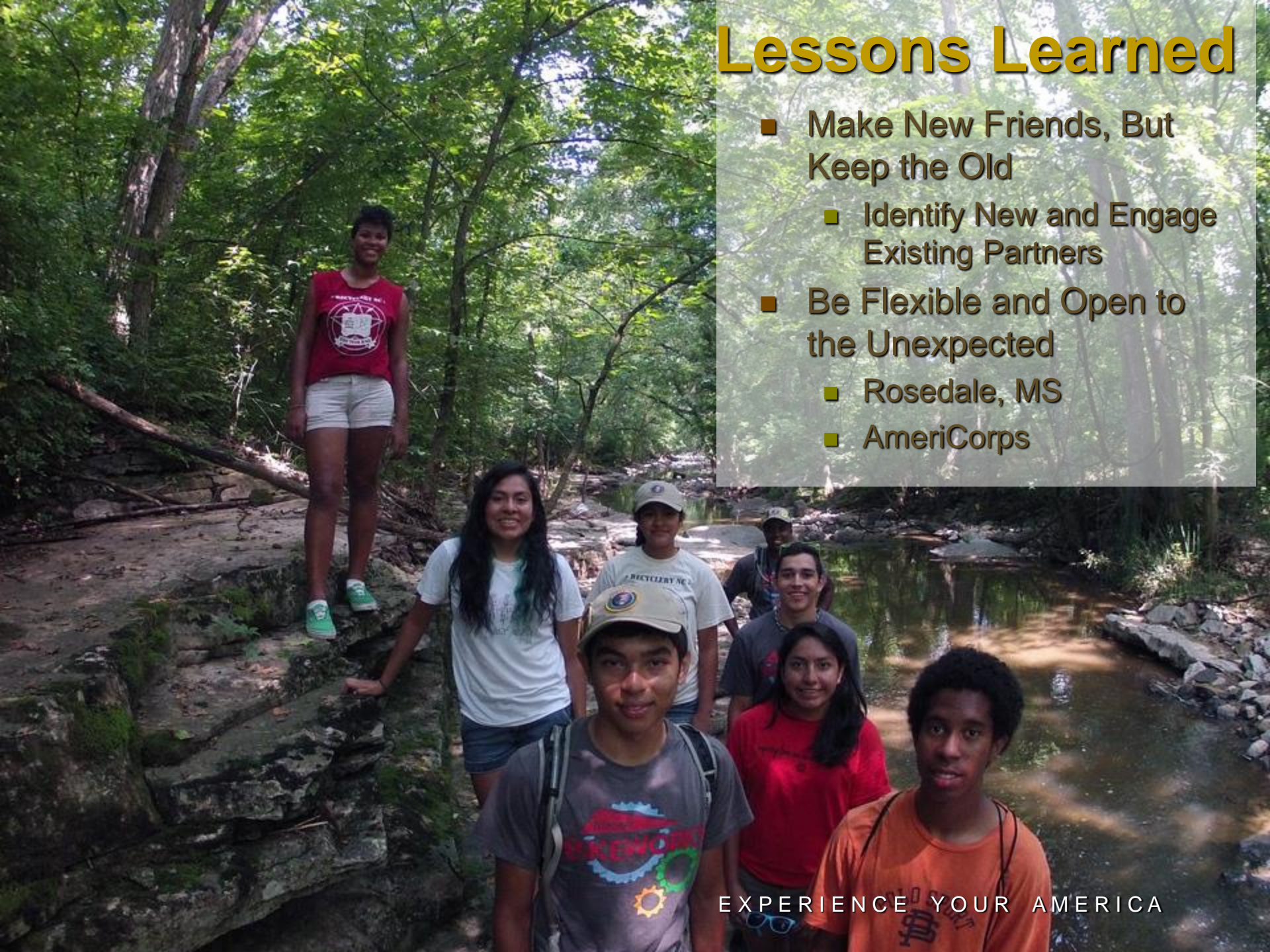
- Vision, Shared Purpose and Goals
- Creativity, Skills and Resources
- Flexibility, Trust and Mutual Respect



EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Lessons Learned

- Make New Friends, But Keep the Old
 - Identify New and Engage Existing Partners
- Be Flexible and Open to the Unexpected
 - Rosedale, MS
 - AmeriCorps



In Their Words...

"Lastly, I would like to talk about the people of Rosedale, MS. These people were amazing. They let us stay on the golf course and we got to eat at the country club and we got a police escort. These people were not so rich but they offered us all they had and I would like to thank Mayor Estes of Rosedale and also officer Hunter for all their help getting us around town and finding us a comfortable place to sleep."

–MT

"I've come to realize how much I need my family and friends and also how much they matter to me. I think that's what this trip has taught me."

– Ali

In Their Words...

"Riding the first couple of days were physically challenging but I think the mental part of it was the most difficult part of riding."

–Fernando

"I think that after giving up on myself the first day it really impacted me so I pushed myself real hard."

–Joanna

"I never saw it in the beginning, but now I do see how I have changed."

–Jazmine

"I learned that even on a bike I have some pretty awesome dance moves."

–Jeimy

And lastly...

HAVE FUN!



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRaZPdJqQ3Q>

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

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www.nps.gov/rtca

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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA