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AW - Webinar Series

America Walks

July 8, 2020

2:00 p.m. EST

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>> Hi everyone. Welcome to today’s webinar. I am Emilie Bahar walking program manager with the America Walks and I’m here with Kelsey Card who is running the tech. I want to thank our sponsors including the Centers for Disease Control for making this event possible I want to share a note about the technology. You should see a control panel like this one somewhere on your screen and at the end of this webinar we look forward to a robust Q&A. Feel free to enter questions. I know I’m one of the many people from walking and moving about in public space has taken on a whole new meaning with COVID and the new attention brought to the differing ways that people experience public realm based on race.

We’ve got two experts who come was different experiences to talk about how their lives have been shaped by walking. While we tend to focus on walking for transportation, making the environment suitable for the mode this is going to be about walking beyond utilitarian purposes. Antonia Malchik is a writer. Her essays and articles have been published by Ellis including The Atlantic, good and high country news. She lives in Northwest Montana where she volunteers with local bike and pedestrian management committees and advocates for public lands, community engagement and education.

She also researches and writes on the importance of embodying and being in the world is a way for children and adults to understand the world and themselves. Her research into walking has explored the idea that the interaction between our bodies in the world can form our spiritual selves and our scientific understanding.
Her first book, A Walking Life, about the past and future walking is published by Hajek. After we will hear from Marianne different. She’s a volunteer organizer and a squad leader with GirlTrek, the nonprofit for African-American women and girls. Marionette has led women and girls on walking and hiking ventures. Earlier she started the Nurtured by Nature Club to help families connect manager. She says family hikes, nature play allow families to explore together.

I will turn things over to Antonia.

>>Antonia Malchik: Hi everybody. Hopefully, you can see my screen. Hi everyone. Thank you for being on the webinar. Thank you to America Walks for the invitation. It's really a privilege. I've admired the work for a long time that has been influential in my own approaches to walking and equity in particular.

So, I want to help people understand that walking is just something you do casually, it is vital for our physical and mental health in part because it's intercooler house and how we involve as a species. There's evidence that her mental health not just for depression and anxiety, but how healthy our brains are is tied to the fact that those same brains are heavily involved we take a walk.

So about what happens when you take just one step. Let's see if you can see this slide. Not a nice long hiker you feel going for walk in general, but what your body and brain do take a step forward.

You can try this right now if you can do it safely and I don't have this on a slide because I really want people to think about how your own body feels during this process.

You begin to balance your body on one foot while your opposite hip and knee act as a pendulum to swing forward. As you shift, the ball of your foot in your big toe take on the entire weight of your body. That's a tiny surface area to bear your weight and balance. Any small change in you will be able to walk at all we have to relearn to do so.

Her example, during the century when Chinese girls had their feet down, the big toe was left intact. Without that, they most likely would not have been able to relearn walking at all.

I have a friend who lost a big tone and accident data check in a year to relearn walking. Walking makes incredible demands on your cognition.

So while you were taking this step, your body is taking into account the fact that you are on a planet that is spinning in space at about a thousand miles an hour. We never think about that but our brains do have to take into account. Many of you probably know about the vestibular system in your inner ear, that your balance system, you might have noticed the effects when it fails to work like if anyone has ever gotten severe vertigo, it's the vestibular system being unable to tell your brain where up-and-down are
and how your body is meant to move in relation to them.

I had this expense many times from falls for example. The vertigo can last for hours, along with a headache that is painful. People with chronic vertigo suffer seriously when they’re trying to move to the world.

So, when you stand up, your body is relying on that communication between your brain and your inner ear to keep your body upright and propelled in the direction that you want to go. While it's also come at the same time accounting for obstacles like sidewalks, signs and other pedestrians traffic, audio signals along with the visual gauging speed and approaching cars. Also to commute, communicate with the plan. Remember the planet might seem stationary to our eyes but our bodies no it's not and has to compensate for that.

So we take that step, it's estimated that our brain makes over a billion calculations for each step.

Homo sapiens are the only remaining species that walks on two legs and that's our primary method of getting around not just sometimes. You might see a bear or other memo get up on two legs and take a few steps, but do other mammal evolved to walk on two legs all the time the way that we did. And it's not something that popped up out of the blue.

The oldest known evidence is about six million years old. And various other -- it shows the evolution and species like -- if you've ever heard of the famous fossils like Lucy or Turkana boy, and species like that, there are longer thigh bones to indicate a long stride. The knee -- development of a big toe evolved to take the weight of the body as it steps forward. Those shows species moving closer to walking instead of just occasionally.

Nobody knows by this occurred. None of them have definitive evidence.

The complexity walking shows that we are reliant on this planet and its gravity for something as simple as being able to move in a complex way without thinking about every step.

Increasing research links human health, both physical and mental, and exposure to nature makes this relationship more profound.

This is important for children. This is a picture of my son in the background and my nephew in the foreground. And they are just goofing off during a family hike and people, children know and have a natural need to move their bodies around. My son and his cousin spent this family hike not just walking by jumping up on rocks, climbing over logs, playing with bushes. Children's bodies crave movements. And that movement is vital for their Hippocampus development which leads later into reading ability and mathematical ability like spatial relations like learning arithmetic and
geometry. Walking is part of that development for children.

So, I really do believe that developing a practice of walking can reconnect us with our humanity in part by reconnecting us both with nature and with our own bodies. As many of you are probably aware there's been many studies that have found walking just 30 minutes a day, five days a week has been noticeable impact on depression and anxiety and can lower the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's.

Their practice of forced bathing that has become popular, which is spending time among trees. There's nothing magic about it. You don't even have to necessarily go for walk. It's just being among the trees. It's been studied for years and in Japan and Germany and it lowers blood pressure and cortisol levels. Even a few hours in the woods can lower blood pressure be an effective stress relief. A week into the wood has been shown to lower blood pressure and cortisol levels for up to a month. So, it's not surprising to me that walking place a really vital role in our mental well-being because our brains do play a complex and vital role in our walking.

It's really a practice that reconnects us with our humanity. And I can tell you a little bit of my own experience with walking practice writing my book took about two years and over that two years I developed a walking practice almost an inch intentionally. I found it was necessary for my life.

I went through some bouts of depression during that time and forcing myself to walk into the mailbox kept the darkness from what I called gelling, that's the way I think about getting a full body grid.

The depression did not go away but as long as I could walk, it did not rule my life.

And also that time and recently my community suffered significant traumas as many communities do and are doing right now. And I noticed that when something bad happens, people often asked to just go for a walk with a friend.

Just last week a good friend reached out and she said that she needed to walk with someone because a major trauma had hit her family. Literally, she texted that she needed to move her body with her).

It's also something I heard over and over and I was researching my book. People's stories of taking up walking after suffering a loss or trauma. Many people told me about walking -- it was usually after a loss in the family or after a divorce.

I suspected this kind of movement has always happened personally only noticed it when I started to pay attention to the role that walking plays in our lives.

So the poem here on this last slide is permanent disgorgement from the 1600s named Thomas Traherne. The poem called walking, is long. I like it because it reflects the reality that walking is a full body experience.
Like in this stanza, to walk is by a thought to go.

I think that is true for all of us what we are moving to the world. The more awareness we give to that connection, the richer and more connected our lives become.

And with that, I will pass it on over to Marionette.

>>Marionette Audifferen: Hello. Can everyone hear me?

>> Yes. We can.

>>Marionette Audifferen: Hello. And welcome -- welcome to this webinar. Thank you for taking time out of your day for doing so. And also, thank you to America Walks. I am actually subbing for someone I am glad for this opportunity to share what walking as a practice means to me.

I probably need to get rid of this -- oh. Sorry guys. Let's see. Walking for me as a revolutionary active self-care. That's one of the things that we say a GirlTrek and it's become a real part of my life. Particularly because, as a black woman -- even though you cannot see me. I am a black woman. And that demographic has been prone to cardiovascular disease and for black women, is particularly high. If you look in the graph, in the right corner, you will see how glad -- bad it is for black women. Four and five are overweight. One into our over obese. Some of this can be mitigated by lifestyle changes because we have risk factors such as high pressure, cholesterol and diabetes as well as cultural stresses which during these times we are experiencing. Finances, depression, career and work issues and having to work at home in dealing with kids.

In family dynamics. Some people at home are in abusive situations. So let that stress can have a role in our cardiovascular health.

And so for me, I discovered GirlTrek. And that walking that I have been taking with GirlTrek for over four years now has really been beneficial. GirlTrek encourages black women to walk is a practical first step to inspire women not only in their lives but in the lives of their family and their community.

Walking with GirlTrek is provided the motivation, supporting accountability that I needed and it's just fun sharing black girl joy with so many women.

Within a year of joining GirlTrek, I had lost 30 pounds walking, just walking. And as I walked faster, and longer, I found that I needed a bigger challenge. And so that's where hiking entered my life. Now, this is a picture of me on my first elevation hike.

As you can see, I'm beaming from ear to ear because this wasn't a strenuous hike.
When I looked back down at the bottom because this is an overlook -- there was over thousand -- that may not seem like a lot but for a first-time hiker, that was a lot for me. And from this moment forward I was hooked on hiking.

But what is hiking? Hiking is simply a long walk. And it's nothing more nothing less. It's a walk on a footpath or trail, usually a countryside or wooded area. And we have typical places I would like to hike. We might go to a state or national Park. A footpath like the Appalachian Trail, which is over 2000 miles, starting point could be in Georgia and you go to Maine or Maine to Georgia.

In the or nature preserves and wilderness managers -- management areas. And there are several types of hikes. There is a day hike which can last several hours. A through hike which would last several weeks or months like the Appalachian Trail. You can break it up into a section hike. And just not do it all at one time. And there are some age hikes, which are like Mount Everest.

Now, why do I hike? And this is it. I go to nature to be soothed and healed and to have my senses put together.

Hiking in nature has improved my sense of well-being, my mind, my body and my spirits. For my body, my blood pressure is lowered when I hike. I increase my endurance and I also lose weight which is something that I really enjoy since the doctors told me I needed to lose weight.

But when I am solo hiking, again clearly because I'm able to recalibrate my thoughts and gain clarity on life issues. Hiking is like life, twists and turns in peaks and valleys paired when I reach my destination, mountaintops or waterfall, I think about it as just how I need to move in life and I use those same determinations on skills that I have used on this hike to navigate my own life.

And also, when I'm hiking unable to engage in mindfulness activities like prayer and meditation. And if I bring my journal alone, I can Journal as well. But most importantly to me, hiking is me basking in the glory of God. I look at his creation, the mountains, the trees, the birds, the colors and it’s all on display. And I think he created this? And He created me as well. And that gives me joy and it lifts my spirits.

But we can't just get out there. We must be prepared. And I'm thankful for the training that GirlTrek gave us with the Sierra Club because we learned a lot about preparing. We need to have a hike plan. We need to know what we are doing and we need to research the trail. It is a well marked? Are there -- does it give you a guide on where to go? Is it an easy or more strenuous hike? Is the terrain flat or hilly? Is it going to be something that you need to prepare for physically? Do you need to do cardio or strength training before the hike? Breathing exercises if it's going to be an --

Most importantly, what is your plan if there is an emergency? Will you have a signal to call 911? Do you have everything you need to get through that hike? Finally, a big
part of the preparation is just letting someone know where you are. What time you will return. So that if something happens, they know where to find you were to begin looking.

But you need several things in the 10 essentials of hiking's are the things that I take on every hike no matter how short or long the hike is. These things will be invaluable should something happen. Or just to be prepared.

Navigation, have a map or a compass. A headlamp if you happen to get caught up there longer than you expect. A first-aid kit, you know, to bandage up the boo-boos of the trail. Also, some protection. A knife and I also have fire. Meaning I have matches and I have something to start kindling. I carry around dryer lint. Extra food is something you might need and shelter is another big one. Something that you can wrap yourself and against the elements so someone can help you. Also water. Make sure you have enough water. I take a purification system with me so that if I run out of water, drink water from a creek. And then extra clothing in case your clothing gets wet.

Other things you need to consider are what you are wearing, long pants? That's part of your gear. Long pants helps against tics. Moisture within clothing. But another item of clothing that I think is important that no one talks about is to have a bandanna. A bandanna will come in handy for several reasons. One is a bit gross but it is AP red. If you see anyone on a hike trail with a bandanna it's used for the restroom facilities so to speak in nature. It's a tourniquet because if moisture and clothing would help if you need to really find yourself up so the blood won't stop flowing.

It is also good to filter water through and just to wipe the sweat.

Other things are tracking polls, which are optional. If you are young and you are! You may not need them but I need them to help me with stability going up and down mountains. The other thing is hiking principles.

The first thing is leave no trace. That means whatever you taken take it out. We do not need littering on the trail. Respect the environment and those that come behind us.

Stay on the trail. Do not create short cuts. We disturb animal life and destroy flowers that way.

And the last thing is bring along good vibes.

Now, have you ever heard the saying that, black people don't hike? I have (Laughing). And if you ever think about why that is, there are lots of reasons here. One is because of the lack of representation on the trails in participating in your kitty's the National Park Service has had a terrible time, of attracting minorities to their parks. In the past 20 years, they try to attract minorities to the parks and diversified workforce as you can see in the left corner here, that everything is majority white. The park visitation as well as the employment.
In 2013 they created office of relevancy and inclusion to tackle this problem. But it’s not made much headway. The head of the office said for me, it’s about the culture of the judgment we just haven’t become relevant. And the reason it hasn't become relevant, I feel is because there is a lack of representation. What if you gone to a national Park or a state park and someone is there that is black or person of color? There a few times. I’ve only seen it once actually.

And also, the national parks dealt with years of discrimination and the erasure of the contributions of black indigenous people have made to early public land preservation. How many young children know about the Buffalo soldiers? The first superintendent of a park in lucidity in Sequoia which was the first safe parks created for blocks. We don't hear about that. These things play a role in why black people do not hide. They don't see themselves.

Another reason is the outdoor industry. While the park services have been grappling with this for 20 years, the outdoor industry says just now they're focusing on outer representation in their marketing, in their employment, and in their publication that's predominately white. And so it black people or minorities do not see themselves represented in that way, they are less likely to participate.

Other reasons, after emancipation and during Jim Crow the woods were a terrible place for black people to be. There they were terrorized and chased and even lynched. In today's racism looks like micro aggressions, slide comments are looks at make minorities unwelcome or that they don't belong.

In one journalist that I watched a video for said that when she and her family go camping, particularly in the South, her husband actually wears a Confederate hat to signal that they are not threatening. So these incidences of racism discourage participation of minorities in outdoor activities and hiking.

Another reason for the lack of representation is black people don't hike is that the income gap. The wage gap between black and white workers has grown significantly since the year 2000. Studies have shown that affluent American are three times more likely to visit parks compared to poor families. That's black or white. There’s less disposable income. For them to buy gear or pay park fees or travel to some of these destinations that you see, the Grand Canyon, the arches, there just isn't money. And if there is a money, they are not even get a think about it.

The other thing, too, is also if the activities don't enforce the ethnic groups -- if they view hiking or mountain climbing or kayaking or camping as white activities, they are less likely to participate.

But despite all of this, I'm excited and am encouraged by the number of minority led
groups that I see in social media, outdoor Afro and black women hiking are just too that are creating safe spaces for black people to meet with nature.

The Latina outdoors and native women’s wilderness groups are also reaching out to their respective communities to encourage them to get outdoors. And the people are responding.

There was just black -- week, black people hiking me, all of these things go to show minorities in general that the outdoors is for all.

And that's just one of the reasons why I created the Nurtured by Nature Club because I wanted to see black families get outdoors because if you can get the kids involved, they will drag their parents along -- kicking and screaming may be, but they will do it as a family. And hopefully, they will build a legacy of walking and hiking and being in nature, which I find just so invigorating. And I think that that is something that I think that family should do. If we don't start in the family, we cannot always rely on these groups to do it.

I believe all these efforts will help increase minority representation in the outdoor spaces and in the activities and hopefully, pique the interest of young people to look at careers in the forest industry. With that, I am closing and happy hiking everyone! And connecting with nature.

>> Thanks so much ladies. Can everybody hear me? Kelsey, am I back on?

>>Kelsey Card: Yes.

>> Great. I want to say thank you so much. You both have been wanting -- have me wanting to run off to the woods. I will know to bring my bandanna.

>> Emilie Bahr: If you would not mind making your -- or turning on your web cameras so that our audience can see your faces and we will have our Q and A.

We've got a lot of great questions. I'm going to open it up with one that came in from an attendee. She echoed that it's very true that we are sort of burst out of colonialism and is the salient points. So how do you think we can make further changes in re-boot and use of parks and also, I was said to extend that question on an individual level for walking advocates the on some of the ways that you identify how we tackle that.

What are some individual ways we can be doing this as well.

>> Marionette Audifferen: I mean, beyond me, personally, getting involved with the Park service may be collaborating. I think some of it has to trickle down into the educational process as well. You know, some of these afterschool programs, bringing Park service and Park Rangers in to the school setting, I think that something -- I've been approached a couple of times for an afternoon program where I would share getting
outdoors and walking into nature. It's not going to happen in COVID at this point, but I think starting at the level of educating our children just the importance of nature and being outside. And then letting them see what a park ranger looks like. A minority Park Ranger. I think that would be helpful as well.

>>Emilie Bahr: Antonia, Jeff anything you'd like to add to that?

>>Antonia Malchik: A couple of things. The type of work that Marionette does is important. Getting families out is key because you get kids excited about nature and are going to have that for the rest of their lives.

I just read today about another woman, Atia Wells in Baltimore. She's the founder of that care base camp. She's got a focus of getting the family out there.

I do think that equity in the outdoors is important. There is a guy named Gabe Vasquez in New Mexico, he does a lot of work on conservation. He was also -- a legislative aide to Senator Heinrich for a long time. During that time he helped draft equity in the outdoors legislation for New Mexico. And that is about -- is not just about getting equipment to people, although that is part of it, but also just about making people aware of the kinds of nature they have in their own backyards.

And part of that is, I think, it is important to remember it's not just national parks.

I live close to glacier national Park which I love. But there are millions of acres of wilderness and national forest land and most Americans in general just don't know that those are accessible, that you can go there and you can hiking camp. It's crowded. There are just many bathrooms, but (Laughing) like Marionette said that's not so much in the time of COVID.

But helping people learn about these things is important. And so I think devoting resources to raising awareness and education and helping people get out because it is not just about buying hiking boots or tents for people or even having -- is helping them see what is they are, just looking at a map, look at your own back door and take people out and show them what they can do. It makes a huge difference.

>>Emilie Bahr: Thank you both for that. Along sorted the lines of education as well and I think maybe you can both speak to this in different ways, but Marionette, your research for your work really is about getting families out on hikes and getting the intergenerational hiking going.

So what are some of the particular challenges is a facilitating and families? Any particular challenges? And families of color?

>>Marionette Audifferen: The main challenge is to convince them that they will have fun. (Laughing). You know, just -- when I mention it sometimes to people let's go on a family hi, they are like okay. But I've got a three-year-old.
I just get family out a couple of weeks ago and the youngest two were three and five. And they were a handful. And so, you just have to lower your expectations. We -- you know, we ought to kind of let them -- if they're getting antsy, kind them let them guide you as you coming along because you want to get through it. The kind of point out some things.

I think age is a big part of it and making sure that you have age-appropriate things that you want to do. And that is what I try and do. Just make sure that if I'm doing young toddlers, that I'm doing something with them and am having maybe a craft or an activity.

One time I did a large group of elementary kids and we did a scavenger hunt. And that was great. And also, having something for them to look forward to. Like a scavenger hunt. Find these things. When a prize.

Or maybe you are doing a destination hike that we are going to end up at a waterfall and have plenty of snacks. Snacks. (Laughing) Bribe them with food. (Laughing).

>>Emilie Bahr: Those are great tips.

Antonio, Jeff anything to add?  

>>Antonia Malchik: I'll reiterate snacks and candy. It was a long time that I would training my kids to hike. Kids will wine a lot as I am sure that Marionette nosing have to be committed to doing it because in the end they will appreciate it. We definitely did use light to his lawyers for a long time. It was a bribery to get through things.

I think just being persistent is really important. Like Marionette said making it age-appropriate. You do not want to go on a six mile hike with a three-year-old and a five-year-old generally, unless it's a particular kind of hike around a lake or something. But kids will get so excited about nature. The matter -- no matter how much they are whiny, they are getting a ton of it. Part of it is parenting. This is beneficial to you and when you are grown up, you will think me.

The very last slide of my presentation is a picture from the back of me and my son. He was I think 10 at the time it was the end of hike in Utah. It looks really idyllic but it was the most miserable thing. It was a horrible hike (Laughing). We made bad parenting decisions. There was a freezing river that went on for a long time. It was just -- bad.

But I think when they're in their 30s, they will have the stories to tell and they'll still have that connection to nature no matter how much they complain about it now.

>>Marionette Audifferen: Also bringing up the history of the areas good as well. You know, a lot of this judgment will all of it was Indian land. What was the truck that was there? So I try to bring that into it as well. And then I also talk about maybe the Civil War if I'm in Atlanta and that was a big part of it. How did this mail get here? You
know, well this rock formation was a shelter for the Indians. So I talk about that in the trail of tears and what animals we like to see?

So mixing things of interest that will maybe pique their interest to continue on with this later on in life would be good.

>>Antonia Malchik: I love that idea. I think including history is important especially more talk about public lands because it's so easy to idealize them, but they are there because they were taken and people were evicted from that space.

On a lighter note, I was thinking geocaching along the lines of a scavenger hunt. My kids don't like geocaching much but almost other friends do. There really into it. You just look up GPS coordinates and you can go and find a geocache. You don't even get a reward for it but they find it satisfying.

>>Emilie Bahr: Thank you so much. Those are very helpful.

We have had a couple of comments and questions come in about some barriers. I'm going to lump them together and maybe you too can talk about those a little bit.

Someone did mention how do I maintain a walking practice when the heat index is over 100 degrees or the air quality is poor? Another person asked about you know, what is different now with your practices due to COVID-19 while you are out there? And in general, people are saying there is an area of anxiousness out there. Were about walking in isolated places given the context of the times.

If you want to speak to those barriers and any others that you see that would be helpful in overcoming them. That would be great.

>>Marionette Audifferen: For me, COVID has just significantly impacted my getting out there. I did go on a hike with several ladies -- I think there were 11 of us -- only three of us were wearing masks and we are taking shuttles from one space to another to get to the trailhead. And the three of us that have a masks were black women. Everyone else was white. And this was an organized thing.

And so, that let me know right there that maybe I needed to hang back -- came back on that a little bit. Let them go ahead and I hung back. So those are the things that may be a smaller group of ladies, not anything like 10 or 12 people anymore.

In terms of the heats, I was not a person who hiked in heat up until about two years ago. And I had to challenge myself. That was one of the reasons why did the 52 hike challenge. I don't know if any of the attendees have heard of that, but that forced me to get out there heater no heat. You just have to pick your battles in terms of the heat. Start early in the morning. Stay close to home if possible or maybe go later in the evening.
And in terms of being out there on my own, I actually carry a knife (Laughing). And it's something that every -- at least women -- think about. Some family members think you're crazy if you're out there by yourself. I find it okay but I only go in areas where I know I can access help quickly with a phone call. I'm not going to be on a mountaintop I myself will have no access -- no reception. Because it can be dangerous out there.

I do not know if you all have heard in the news lately, and this was within the past couple of days, a black man who had gone to watch a lunar eclipse or something and he was in the woods and they had to be wandered onto some property that they did not know was private and basically, was attacked by several white people. So is a very real thing in these current times.

And I know I was reading a post the other day where people are really getting anxious out there. And I think that we have to really be careful as black people and minorities about our surroundings and making sure that we are safe. I mean, it is safer to stay close to home, do that. Because hike is not worth your life. It is in.

Inasmuch as I need nature to get out there and really, just for my well-being, it is not worth my life and risking it because someone wants to, you know, say oh, okay. You don't belong here. Okay. I don't. Bye-bye. (Laughing). So.

>>Emilie Bahr: Thank you for that, Marionette.

Antonia is there anything you wanted to add?

>>Antonia Malchik: It's interesting. It's such a multilayered thing and so much of it is structural. Whether it's structural racism, structural sexism, and infrastructure. That is something that I trip up on all the time.

When you are talking about heat and air pollution, for example, that go straight to the heart of what we've invested our money and as a society infrastructure wise.

He and David -- I live in a town of 7000 people and I even noticed when we were on lockdown, I did not go downtown because there was no reason to go downtown. Unlike weight. Those roads are -- well, two or three blocks, they are empty because there is no one going to those shops. And there are no cars on them.

Why do we give all that space to cars? And that contributes to air pollution a lot. And heat. He does something that we all struggle with. I am not a he person. I hate being hot. And so, I seek out actively places with shade, which comes back to investment again. Does the community invest in planting public trees? Most communities don't these days. Some are starting tomorrow. But if you're going to invest in widening the road, but you're not going to invest in sidewalks that are wheelchair accessible, by the way, in places that have shade, people are going to walk a lot less.
And something I keep coming back to his problems that this is going to take generation
to fix. It took generations to mess it up. And I wish I could fix it all tomorrow. I would
like to. But just because it's maybe I won't see it for 30 years doesn't mean I don't start trying to do that. And so I advocate for sidewalks and pedestrian use and open streets
and trees everywhere.

And I get frustrated sometimes with a lot of walking literature because it doesn't address
disability and have two members of my family who are in wheelchairs. I think it's
important to include people with various disabilities in these conversations because
what access looks like two people in wheelchairs or with prosthetics isn't necessarily
what I think access might look like. So that is really important.

And you know, as for dangers, I carry bear spray and I have since I was a teenager
because we have bears. And I'm not -- I'm not actually that scared of bears really but I
am terrified of floodlights and we have a lot of mountain lions. And they coming to
town. My kids wander around downtown by themselves and sometimes there are
human risks as well and bear sprays are a good option for a lot of people. And I find it
nice to be carrying it around. I carried on hikes by purse. I like knowing that I have
that option if I need to use it no matter what comes up. And fixing the other structures,
walking in nature should be accessible to everybody. There should never be anything
that makes people scared to go out and do that. As a society, again, that is something
that we really have to work on. I think individual communities, advocacy groups, nature
is so important to all of us for being human, for feeling healthy and whole and being able
to walk in it is vital. And I think it's incumbent on all of us to make sure that everyone
has access to it. Even with bears.

>>Marionette Audifferen: (Laughing) Mountain lions and coyotes.

>>Emilie Bahr: Thank you so much. That was great. We have a number of questions
that I want to remind everyone that whatever we do not get to today we will be putting
into a document later for a panel to keep answering because these are great questions.

One thing that we have gotten here is a few questions around some of the best ways to
find local hiking groups. If you know of any other seriously focused hiking groups that
offer may be different chapters in different states.

>>Marionette Audifferen: I'm going to tell you, when I first got into hiking, I had to just
Google. I don't even know how I -- I joined GirlTrek, but then the hiking peas was a
different aspect. I could not find -- there was -- I just couldn't find any black people who
were hiking. So I latched onto a group called girls at hike. They just recently
disbanded but there are tons -- if you just put in hiking groups and look on Facebook,
there are tons of groups that are out there.

The spiritual ones come by -- mainly. I cannot name one right now. But there are a lot
of women hiking groups and coed. You can look on Facebook. A lot of them are on
Facebook. Hiking groups and you will find something there. In terms of trails, I use an
app called all trails. And that will allow me to find hiking trails pretty much anywhere in the country. You can put in Alabama or Birmingham and it will bring in -- bring up a lot of trails that are in that area and they are rated and people -- you can actually download the map of that particular hike that that person didn't follow along. It will do that for you while you are hiking. That's what I primarily use. And I use that to gauge the safety as well. In terms of environment. If it's something that says so, I couldn't -- I got lost. I get turned around -- I'm not going. It needs to be marked and it needs to be something that I can easily follow. And then, you'll get a lot of recommendations within the hiking groups. Backpacking groups are another one to join. Not just if you want to go backpacking, but they have a lot of tips as well. So that's how I find my hikes. And then I asked for recommendations within the hiking groups that I'm a part of. And there's probably about three or four that I am a part of.

>>Emilie Bahr: Awesome. Thank you Marionette.

Antonia, do you have anything to add.

>>Antonia Malchik: All trails is a good resource. I tend to stay close to home. I'm pretty familiar with what is in the territory that I Roman.

But I do reference all trails a lot like Marionette said to assess the difficulty level. I don't like rock climbing or rock scrambles. That's a no go territory for me. And I often have to look on there and see, is there a portion that is big enough that I don't want to do. There's a group in Denver call walked to connect. I wish there were more groups like this in other cities if anyone wants to get in touch with them and start one in their own area. I think it's amazing. They run like 70 to 100 guided walks every week. They can be like to our regular group box or they can be 17 mile hikes. They really vary. They have different themes, different leaders. But it's run by a guy -- it was originally started by a guy who walked across the country for eight months and just had a come to Jesus moment with walking. He was like this is the center of everything we are as a species. He's a great guy. And he's got quite a spiritual bent to his writing but is not with that group right now. But I'm sure they have walks that are themed in that way maybe you can connect with them. Other people might know of similar groups in other cities. But I just -- I love the way they run it and I love their focus on walking plus community, which is similar to why a love GirlTrek because it's about health and walking and bucking against institutional racism and institutional barriers and it's about helping to build community and stronger families. All these things.

And walked to connect this in exactly the same but it has that community aspect that I like because I think if you want to walk the whole world you have to get a whole community involved in that. So I would like to see chapters of that pop up everywhere. I think that would be really cool. And then that would be a way to form hiking groups.

>>Emilie Bahr: Totally agree about GirlTrek and walked to connecting great resources for that. And if anyone else on the call knows of any -- we been getting really great tips from attendees in the chat. Keep that up. Will put that into our resource documents.
But I want to just stand with a lighthearted question and find out what is the funnest, coolest, most billable I give ever been on and where and why? I'm curious if there's been any hiking's Marionette?

>>Marionette Audifferen: I think -- there are so many. I think actually, I think the best hike that I have been on the most arduous one that I had -- it was the most dramatic when (Laughing) actually -- you kick my butt. It was Ford Mountain. If anyone knows me and format we call this Trilby Guddi kicked my booty. And I'm determined to tackle that trail one more time is nine miles. And it wasn't particularly scenic, but I feel like I need to conquer that trail rather than have it conquer me.

-- But what was the next question? I'm sorry.

>>Emilie Bahr: Just curious if you had done any through hiking if any of that was a part of that?

>> No. I have done section hiking. I don't know if I would ever do a through hike. I would more than likely break it up. I don't know where I would have the time to take several months on the ATV trail. And I certainly would not want to go by myself. I would have to have other people with me. I've done the -- I've done several sections of the ATV. In Georgia. I have not gone out of Georgia yes. The Peyote Trail. But that involves backpacking. And that is something that you really need to prepare for. And you need to be able to carry 15 to 20 -- and it can be expensive. You have to have lightweight -- nobody wants to carry 30 pounds on her back where they carried 30 or 50 pounds on their back and you know, that is not me.

I will section hike.

>>Emilie Bahr: All right. Thank you.

Antonia?

>>Antonia Malchik: I've never done a through hike. It's not my thing. I'm a process person. Unlike the process of doing things. My husband goes out hiking with friends of ours and they hike up to these big mountains and that does not look like fun to me. I will hike to the path and then I can stop and that's okay. I have no need to summit. So I like hiking and turning around. I've done a few that I really love. Just last year I went on this one E. glacier Park with friends. It's 19 miles. It was a day hike but it was a porch. It was the outer limit of what I could do in a day and maybe a bit further than I can do.

But it had snowed that morning. It was mid August. It snowed on the mountain. It was like four inches. We got snowed on while we were up there but it was -- I was with good friends that I have been friends with for over 20 years and we saw Wolverine tracks it was just so beautiful and there were tons of huckleberries and it was one of those days -- I'm sure, Marionette, you had this is how I want to live my life all the time.
And not is why through hiking isn't that attractive to me. Again with walking and hiking as part of that I wanted to be my life. I don't just wanted to be something I check off a list. My husband and I lived in Australia for a couple of years and we hiked in the red center. We did a two week trip there and it was completely different, such a different world and beautiful and very hot.

We had to start our hikes at four in the morning so that we finished before got too brutal. But it was so beautiful and dry and ancient. They said the big rock that you seen the big famous pictures is called the heirs wrong average people call it a LuLaRoe’s.

They said it looked like it does now when the grand canyon was just a trickle in the ground. I love deep time. I would love to do the Ice Age trail in Wisconsin sometime because that sounds interesting and along my interests.

I did live in the Northeast for a long time and have to say the tics really put me off (Laughing).

>>Emilie Bahr: We've had a few comments about the tax and how we can be dealing with that as well.

Oh thank you both so much for your great insight and your great presentation. And like I said, we will keep this conversation going with all the great questions that our attendees ask. I'm going to toss it back to Emily now to wrap this up.

>>Emilie Bahr: And my back?

>> Your back.

>> Great.

>>Emilie Bahr: I want to thank our sponsors once again and thank our panelists. Those are tremendous discussions -- UNC my screen. Here you go. Now you should be seeing my screen. I loved everything that both of you had to say and I think we will all now be turned onto the advantages of carrying bug spray and bandannas will we had out on a hike. So thanks for that bit of wisdom, too. If you enjoyed today’s discussion, as I certainly did, I want to ask all of you that you consider playing a part in keeping more content coming your way by making a small donation. Even five dollars goes a long way to improve our work. You'll find a donation link in the chat box and follow-up emails when we send around the recording of today’s program. I want to remind you that our next webinar will be on July 22 at 2 PM Eastern and it will be called the major effects, why nature makes us happier, healthier and more creative. Generally aligning with the conversation that we had today. And with that, thank you so very much and see you all soon.

Concluded: 2:58 PM