

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE EVENING PROGRAM
WITH DUDLEY EDMONDSON
*IN CELEBRATION OF WILD PLACES –
CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE***

Wednesday, 8 October 2008

Carnegie Lecture Hall

Oakland, Pittsburgh, PA

**with panelists John C. Robinson, Sarah Jameela Martin, and Mario Browne
Moderator and Host: Donald L. Gibbon for the Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club**

**Co-Sponsored by the Sierra Club, Three Rivers Birding Club, Venture Outdoors,
Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, Recreational Equipment and the National Aviary
Program recorded by Matt Robusto, transcribed and lightly edited by Donald L. Gibbon**

DONALD GIBBON:

Good evening. I can't tell you how glad I am you're here. This is the culmination of a year of thinking and planning. I'm Don Gibbon. This program started with the publication of an interview with Dudley Edmondson in *Birding* magazine last October (2007). When I read it and saw how devoted Dudley was to the goal of increasing the diversity in outdoor activities, I said, "We've got to bring him to Pittsburgh." So that was the beginning of the project. I've been delighted to meet Dudley and get to know in person in the last couple of days, and the last months over the Internet and telephone.

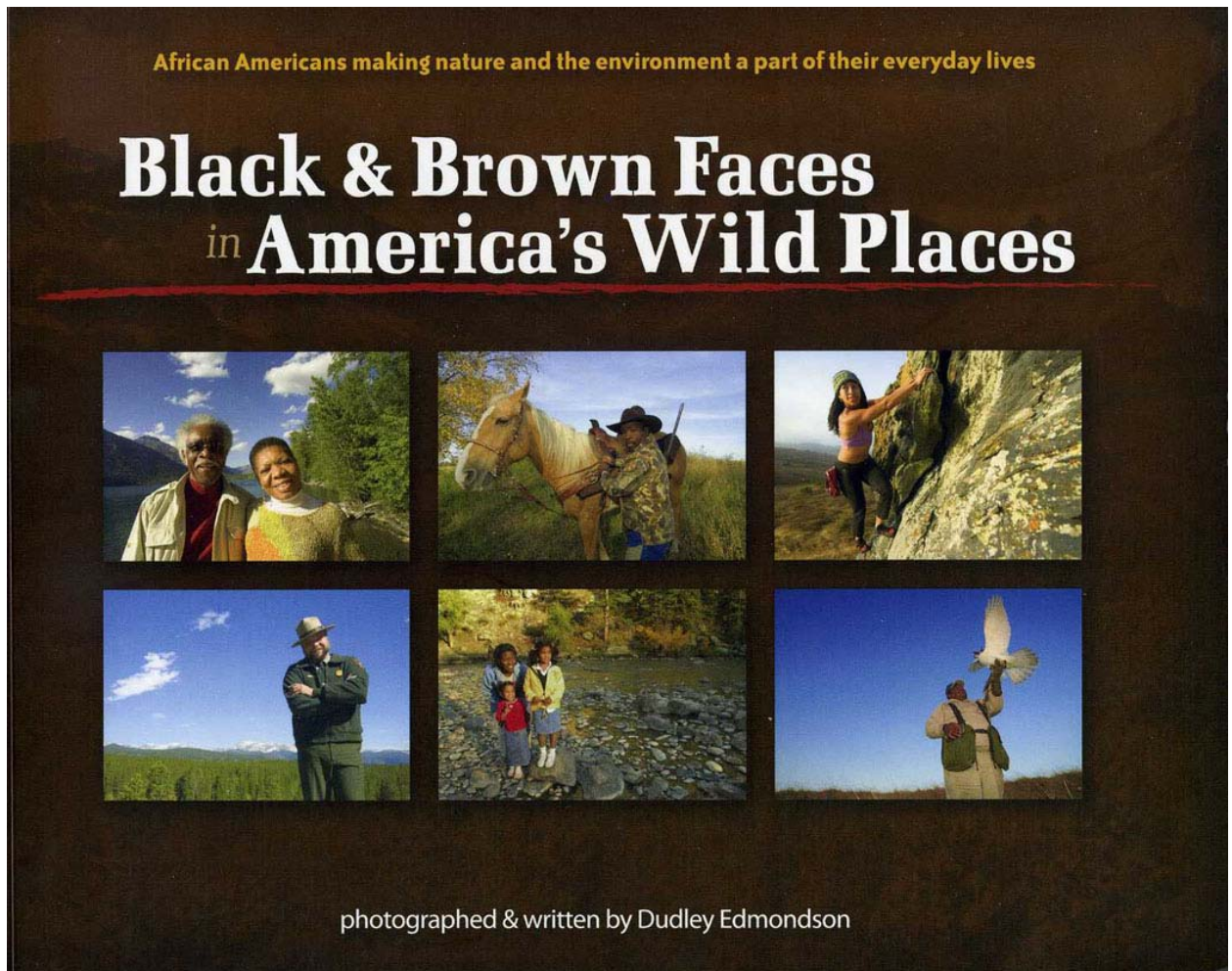
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The Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club
Venture Outdoors
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The Center for Minority Health at the University of Pittsburgh
The Manchester Craftsmen's Guild
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We're deeply grateful for all of them. They're sources of inspiration and important activity for all of us. I've been personally involved with all except the Center for Minority Health for as long as 40 years. I know and appreciate all they do for us and our community. They're all listed in the program (see Appendix) and their web addresses there allow you to contact them directly

Dudley is being quoted quite frequently on his statement. "**Without question, nature is for everyone. It knows no race, creed or gender.**" This is the premise on which we are here tonight. I presume most of you know about his book. I think you'll hear a lot more

about it tonight. It's a really great book and he will have copies up here for sale afterwards.



In fact we're going to have lots of things up here from a variety of sources, from the Girl Scouts, to Dudley's book, John Robinson's book, Sierra Club calendars and a variety of other things. We're hoping you'll come down afterwards, meet each other and get involved with some of these causes.

A number of years ago, Barry Lopez, the great nature writer, was in Pittsburgh and someone asked him a question that led him to make a statement. He was asked how to find nature in the city. He answered, "Look up. Look up!" Nature in the city is a powerful determinant of our lives and the sky is the source. Here are a few things I've seen in the sky recently. (What followed were about a dozen photographs of dramatic weather action in the sky, clouds, colors and finally a fledgling red-tail hawk on its first soaring flight up a thermal into cumulus clouds over the Homewood cemetery).



These were magnificent urban nature events and I commend them to you. But tonight we're mostly going to hear about non-urban nature. Don't despair if you live in the city, though: you can find nature right here.

I'd delighted to present to you Dudley Edmondson. (Applause)

DUDLEY EDMONDSON:

Thanks, Don. I appreciate all you folks coming out to participate in this event. We've got a lot of great people from the community. John has come over from Columbus to participate in the discussion we're going to have tonight. I'm going to quickly take a few minutes to introduce you to me. Going backwards a little bit. It's a quick timeline to give you an idea of who I am and where I came from. (Self-portrait in rearview mirror). That was 26 years ago, a young guy there. I was shooting Nikon gear then. I'll give you a sense of what I'm trying to do with my photography.

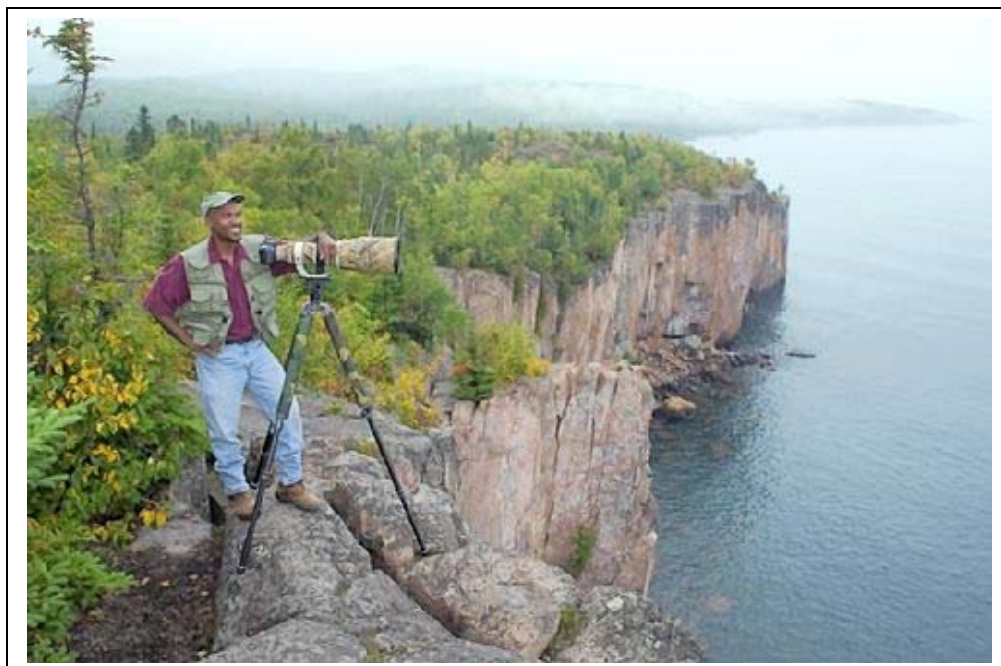
I lived in Columbus where John Robinson lives now until I was 29-30 years old. I decided I was going to move to northern Minnesota and try to take a stab at something new, something different. How I got into photography, my love for birds – I was trying to document the birds I was seeing. I've been a big bird watcher since my high school art teacher, Charles Gamble, got me into birding back in '78-'79. As became a better birder, I wanted to document and keep track of the birds I saw. I've always had a love for the outdoors anyway. I thought "What the heck, maybe some day I could become a decent nature photographer," actually get a paycheck taking pictures of wildlife. (Photos... fieldfare , vagrant European bird on shore of Lake Superior). For me, from the very beginning, nature has been about solitude and quiet spaces. (Image of Dudley from this

time). That was me. I was about peace, a meditative person in the outdoors, a space where I went to restore myself, recharge my batteries, mostly because I had a father who was an alcoholic. I didn't realize this until I started working on my book – that this was a place that I could go to sort things out. The way my father's creating all the dysfunction in the home made me feel, I could go through it in the outdoors and figure out how I was going to deal with it, how I was maybe even survive it... that was the place I went to do that kind of thing.

So from back in those days, here's an old photo just to show you some of the stuff that I used to shoot. For me a camera was a good way to document birds and those kinds of things. Also I was trying to use it as an art tool, which obviously I still do quite a bit today. I'm going to show you several images from those days. Here's an image in Cedarville, OH, a place on the Little Miami River in 1983. Here's an image, a plant study, done in Kodachrome 25, a slow fine-grained image. To me this was a really cool image. It's still not bad, but things have changes a little bit.

So, Boom! We'll jump ahead to Duluth. It is definitely a city surrounded by wilderness. I felt that it was a great sort of base camp for me to operate out of. I felt that if I were going to have any shot at being a decent published nature photographer, it seemed to me that Duluth MN was a good place to try it. (Image of Duluth in the distance). You can see our skyline there in the distance, the lift bridge, Lake Superior behind. I originally thought Duluth was quite hilly, even known as the San Francisco of the Mid West, people say, until I saw Pittsburgh today on a tour with Don Gibbon. Holy crap, do you guys have hills (laughter). I can't believe the hills here. I'm thinking, Yeah, I don't know if I want to ride my bike on these hills. I thought, "Oh, it's no big deal." But no, you guys have incredible hills.

So here's another shot of the Lake Superior shoreline, very rugged. This was my outdoor church, the place I would go when I wanted some peace and tranquility to sort out things, maybe an election didn't go the way I wanted. I'd just sit in this spot and contemplate what ever needed to be thought through, to calm down about things. It's called Palisade Head, about an hour north of Duluth. For the first two or three years I lived there I spent a lot of time at this spot.



There was a nesting pair of peregrine falcons, one of the first ones to come back to Lake Superior, and they nested in this little cove here. I did some work with the University of Minnesota St. Paul Raptor Center on their Midwest Peregrine Falcon project, keeping track of the birds, what they were eating, if I saw them make a kill and so forth. It was almost like journaling, and I was in that space anyway, so I might as well do something beyond just contemplating things.

One of the first things I did when I got to Northern Minnesota was to say to myself, “OK, this is your new home. You’re going to try this photography thing, right? So let’s see what you’ve got?” So I gave myself a kind of photo assignment. My mission was to capture images of eagles, ravens and wolves surviving in the brutal Minnesota winters. I don’t know if you know how cold it can be there, if you’ve talked to friends and so forth. If you don’t like winter, you have no business living in Northern Minnesota. (laughter) and/or Duluth, because the winters are very long and they’re very cold. So I knew that to try to document some of this stuff would be a real challenge. I wanted to test my skills as a photographer and see if I really did have the patience to do the job. Because all of those things are key to being able to successfully take a stab at being a photographer.

Part One of that was that a buddy and I built a photography blind... over a six pack! We built it in his garage on a Friday night, disassembled it, and then we drove it north about an hour to North of Silver Bay, MN, and reassembled it. This was my self-imposed solitary confinement. I spent most of my weekends in the winter in this thing from dawn to dusk trying to get images of eagles, ravens, wolves, any scavenger that came into the area. I had no idea what I was doing. I was out there, I knew what I wanted to do, I had a sense that it was possible. It’s not as if I was an “expert” or anything like that. So, reading, figuring things out put this whole thing together. You’ve got to get up pretty early in the morning to go unnoticed by predatory animals. Dawn is way too late. If you’re not under cover by sunrise, you’re not going to catch a predator. You’ve got to be in your blind before sun-up and you can’t leave until sun down. It’s tough (Photos of blind in winter, covered in dried dead plants and snow)

There were only two holes in the whole thing: a very small door on the side, plus the tiny hole through which I shot the images. I would sit in there from before sunup and not come out until sun down. My wife, bless her heart, would drive me up there. The blind is in a maintenance yard for the Minnesota Dept of Transportation where they would leave road-killed deer in the field. Predators and scavengers in the area would come around and feed. I figured out that all I had to do was to be there and I could get images. In the wee hours of the morning I would drag these giant frozen deer carcasses to get them in position to get images without them being gory. My wife would illuminate the scene with the car headlights. A full frozen dead deer carcass is one of the heaviest things you’ll ever move! Predators are crepuscular – most active at dawn and dusk. You have to be in position long before they appear.

Almost every day there would be a “raven roll call.” Ravens and other corvids (including blue jays, crows) are extremely smart birds, probably the most intelligent birds, period. (What followed was a series of exceptional images of ravens and bald eagles, including one spectacular one where a raven was pulling on the tail feathers of an eagle!) It was a great learning experience, including seeing things I never imagined possible. I didn’t know ravens could do this!”(fluffing out their leg feathers). The ravens and crows tended to be the first animals on the scene, coming down together to feed before the eagles would. The eagles would sit back and wait. I could hear all sorts of sound from the eagles for an hour or so. Then they would go in and eat. Adults and young, juveniles watching the white heads to find food. I would see six eagles at once. I was a very green photographer, but I got images of behavior that may have never even been seen before. There was frequent aggressive behavior between eagles, but they didn’t seem to end up hurting each other. Ravens lurked around the edges, seeming to actually tease the eagles. “messing with a big ogre.”

Here was Thanksgiving dinner – five adult bald eagles at the table, the most I ever got in one frame. So, I thought I had passed the test. So I said to myself, “Let’s see what else you’ve got, Nature.” I stuck with birds of prey for a while. That’s why I call my business “Raptor Works Photography.” (Images of juvenile bald eagles, gyre falcon in Alaska, adult goshawk (see photo below) , rough-legged hawk in Minnesota, Swainson’s hawk with a ground squirrel).



Raptors are so fast, they can turn on a dime, you have to make a couple of frames and pray. If you get to spend time in one spot and get to watch individual birds, you get to know that each has its own personality. They're not all the same, by any means. Birds of prey spend most of their time sitting on a branch, waiting for a grouse to show itself. While I was camouflaged because you can't let the bird see anything such as an appendage that suggests human – I'm fairly sure this bird saw me. That's their job, after all – but look at this bird's eye. They have to see anything that moves – it could be friend, foe or food! While I'm not in any danger, a rabbit or a squirrel would be. This image shows the typical personality of a raptor. They do what they have to do and they're very good at it, most of 'em.

So once again, things are working pretty well, let's step up the degree of difficulty. Working with wild grizzly bears – that certainly is not easy. So, mammals, predatory mammals, are not easy to work with (bear photos, moose in Grand Teton, coyotes). Bird photography was bread-and-butter. I was working on flora and fauna field guides for every state in the Union – identification photos for all birds for publication. This kept me busy – avocets, northern hawk owl - in prairies, desert, rain forest, mountains – I was everywhere – It gives you a chance to learn about the different habitats animals are found in. You have to have a certain amount of information before you get there, and once you get there you get a whole lot more by simply in the place and interacting with the landscape and the animals.

Obviously I did quite a bit of landscape work too. You need habitat shots as well as species shots (images followed).

These days I spend a lot of time photographing insects, after spending fifteen years working with birds. I'm working with dragon flies, butterflies, whatever I could find. They present a different set of challenges because their behavior is very weather-dependent: particularly if it's raining you're not going to find butterflies out. If it's cloudy or cold you're not going to find dragon flies and butterflies doing things. The other cool thing is these guys get up pretty late! (Laughter) You don't have to get up before day-break, sit in a blind and freeze your butt off! You can go out at 11 o'clock in the morning and say, "Hey, Mr Butterfly! What's up, Dude?" You can work with those subjects between 11AM and 2:30-3PM. And of those insects that need the heat to be active, another bonus of working with insects (photos of butterflies). The more I get out and work with things I've never worked with before, the more fascinating it is.

Kind of a sea change for me. In the beginning I'm all solitude, want to go to the wilderness by myself. Then I decided it wouldn't be bad to have some company. So – my new challenge: get people outdoors. I want to try to figure out ways to get particularly people of color into the outdoors and participating in outdoor activities. Nature had helped me overcome some of the issues I had with my father and the family home. And I feel as if what it provided for me, it can provide for others. You don't have to have the same issues that I have, but if you have things going on that you need to sort out, nature is an excellent place to go and do it. You don't have to go to Yellowstone National Park, just to the local park near your house, just spending time out there is very helpful. It

doesn't matter how much money you have, what color you are or where you live: the restorative powers of nature are out there for every one.

How do I plan to do get people of color outside? Photography, of course. A no-brainer! Images that allow people to see themselves outdoors, to see themselves interacting with nature. Powerful portraits (A man in western hat came into the hall at this moment) We just had a cowboy walk into the room! Hey there! Come on in! (This was Dr. Steve Thomas, director of the Center for Minority Health). To me images like that that have some power to them - (image of black cowboy on horseback with rifle in sheath) – This guy lives in Minnesota, he has 200 acres of land, three horses, rides and ropes and is a big-game hunter. Has a bit of the same mission I do, but his is from a hunting-fishing perspective. Super nice guy. People doing simple things – here's a friend of mine with his grand daughter, out in a local park near their house, learning about nature. It's about getting images such as these before the general public, so that people understand they have a place in the outdoors. Families: here's one teaching their children about trees. When you can get a family doing stuff together, that activity become more sustainable, because everybody got into at the same time – Mom and Dad want to go do it again, so of course the kids want to go do it again, so you get together as a family and go out to do what ever you have fun doing. Creating these images, showing people of color that they have a place outdoors can be helpful in trying to bridge that gap.

(MONTAGE of lovely nature photographs with music)

APPLAUSE.

DLG:

So, do you believe? (Silence, then applause). That's the message we wanted you to hear. This has been a life of joy and learning and richness and dedication and hard work. Dudley has a wonderful wife of 17 years named Nancy, who he calls every day on the phone in his travels. He is a heck of a guy! (Applause). I'm proud to know him.

Now, what we'd like to do is have Mario Browne, John C. Robinson and Sarah Martin, come up and sit here with Dudley and talk about a few things. We have some things to learn. The first thing we want to hear about from all but Dudley, since he's answered this first question, in two or three minutes, is "What's your relationship to the outdoors and why is this so important to you?" Sarah, since you're sitting next to Dudley, why don't you just start? (These people's bio statements are in the program so we'll just proceed as if you know them).

SARAH MARTIN:

Good evening. My name is Sarah Jameela Martin. I play a lot. I hike a lot. I used to work for the Board of Education as the Supervisor for Health and Phys Ed. I still do that in a

volunteer capacity. I do a lot of hiking and climbing and cycling, white water. That's what I do.

DLG

Why is that so important to you?

SARAH

Actually it comes very natural to me. As a child my mother thought, "Sarah's going to be a teacher." My dad raised pulp wood in South Carolina. He had this great big truck. During special seasons they would harvest trees and he would always make sure they weren't cutting them down before time or whatever. And after the trees were harvested (chuckle) he would lay back on the lake and fish and drink corn liquor. (Laughter) I loved riding around in this big truck with him in the woods. My mother had this vision of my being a school teacher and all I could think about was being in the woods with my dad.

So Phys Ed came very natural to me. I was blessed to run into Bob Christy, who actually taught me all that I needed to know about "wildernessing" with children. Perhaps we'll talk about that later. But it's important to know that I think the wilderness is the best socializer and equalizer for children on the planet. Leadership rises and seeks its own level in the wilderness. That's why I do that. It's the piece that keeps us human and keeps us humble. The wilderness is very important for our humanity and our planet.

DLG

So, thank you very much. We'll get back to that in a minute. John, tell us about what you do in the out doors.

JOHN C. ROBINSON:

My primary activities in the outdoors are bird-watching, hiking and the study of nature.

This is important to me because, Number One, it keeps me healthy; Number Two, it keeps me connected with this earth and that's extremely important to me. For a lot of people spring is a date on the calendar. For me it's when the robins come back. Number Three: I have an unending thirst for education about the natural history of this planet. Every day when I get up I look forward to learning something more about this planet, about us, about where we came from. So this is another reason I like to be in the outdoors. It sustains my appreciation for the world's natural wonders. There are so many places we can go on this planet, so many places we can see. My own journey has led me to lead natural history tours to South Africa, where I was literally four feet away from two male African lions. It's an experience I'll never forget... "Keep your arms in the safari vehicle please!" And I know that if what I do is replicated enough times, we can create a vocal majority of people who will want to conserve our natural resources. In less than 50 years, the various minorities in the U.S. will make up the majority of the

population, and that will be a voting majority. I believe that if I can get others to do what I do, a lot of these places that we take for granted, such as Yosemite and Yellowstone, they'll still be here fifty years from now.

DLG:

John, that's beautiful. Mario, you have a different point of view. You come from a different place.

MARIO BROWNE: Yes, absolutely. Thanks, Donald and thanks to the panel. I guess I would consider myself amongst this group here the most recent convert. What I do... The way I got...why I'm sitting at this table I'm not sure...

DLG. I know why!

MARIO: I'm a public health professional. So I come at this from a perspective of how we can get people more physically active. I come at it from wanting to address racial and ethnic health disparities. And that is not just about disease state, but it is about a way of life. It is about those things that determine the health of individuals and of communities and populations.

DLG: So how does the outdoors help determine YOUR health?

MARIO: Well, how it's helping over the past few years,..

DLG Yeah...

MARIO: ...is through cycling. I was happy to see the image up there (an Edmondson photo of a cyclist in a turn on a velodrome) . That's what I strive fore, though I don't know if I'll ever look that good in Spandex! (laughter). I have a goal, a mission.

DLG: Say a little bit about that cycling.

MARIO: That cowboy that walked in the door, that's actually my boss, Steve Thomas. How're you doing, Dr. T? Actually it's his fault that I do what I do because he called me in his office one day and said, "Some people want to partner with us and develop a bicycle route, a 2200 mile bicycle route, what ended up being called the Under Ground Railroad Bicycle Route. Within our Center for Minority Health we use a technique called "cultural tailoring," by which we take health promotion messages and make them relevant to the context of people's lives, not unlike your mission, the mission you're on now. And so...

DLG: When you bring that up... That's exactly what we're about here tonight...

MARIO: Absolutely...

DLG: We want to know how to do that better. And we want organizations that are represented here to learn that and take it home and do it.

MARIO: Let me cut to the chase then on that, because what we know is that we can't do it alone. It takes partnership, it takes everyone across disciplines, across racial boundaries, even most importantly across economic and social boundaries. I think out of the whole cycling and public health thing we've been doing here in Pittsburgh, the thing I'm most proud of to date... and Dudley and John and Sarah, I know that you'll be happy to hear this... is that for the past two years, we've taken a group of intermediate-school-aged children from one of our urban schools (Helen Faisson School) on three day two night biking and camping trips. And these are children who basically live in what we call the concrete jungle. Many of them have not been outside of the neighborhood, much less outside of the city and into the wilderness. They've experienced riding our great bike trails, experienced nature on the trails, taking pictures and just being free. They are our next generation of environmental stewards, advocates and they're taking that message back home to their parents, which is great.

So, I'll just stop there. I do it from a context of knowing that we have a new epidemic in our country. We're seeing more of our youth suffering from what used to be called Adult Onset Diabetes from sedentary lifestyles and obesity. Trying to get kids to do what we used to do: get outside and play! A message to all parents: Tell your kids to get out the house! Like my parents used to tell me.

DLG: Keep the mike, Mario.

So I want to say to things here. One, John's book is called, "*Birding is for Everyone.*" Is that right, John? And he's going to have that for sale down here in just a little bit. The other thing is that, while Dudley is obviously a major self-starter, for those of you who are not quite that industrious and motivated, **Venture Outdoors, the Sierra Club, Three Rivers Birding Club, the Aviary**, all these outfits are in business to help you. And we would love to have you come and ask us how to do all this stuff. So for those of you who want to spread your wings, as it were, we would like you to take advantage of the organizations.

Now, one more thing, I would like to ask the panelists basically what they think would be most helpful to change the situation as it is right now. What do we need to do? You want to start, Mario?

MARIO BROWNE:

I'd love to start. I think in listening to the panel, you asked the question: Who was your biggest influence? One of our colleagues, our associate director – one of her favorite lines and one of mine as well – is the Gandhi line, "*Be the change you want to see.*" (DLG: Right.) I think more of the influence is the pioneering spirit (DLG: Wow!) I know I went out on one of those night rock-climbing adventures by invitation of my sister, Sarah,

here, and it was an experience! God, it was an experience! A little scary, but what motivated me was that I saw Sarah tying knots and climbing across ravines and scaling down rocks, and I said “OK. I have to do this! There’s no way that this little woman here is going to do this and I can’t do this.” So, whatever motivates you. But even with the bike riding, we also talk about thinking globally but acting locally. I remember once we got into developing bike trails, Dr. T and I looked at each other and said, “I guess we’d better start riding bikes!” (laughter). But we need some social support. And so that’s how we started Pittsburgh’s Major Taylor Cycle Club.

DLG

Tell me more about the Major Taylor Cycle Club. What is it?

MARIO BROWNE:

We learned about Major Taylor, Marshall Major Taylor, a man from the late 1890’s, African American male, who set and broke all kinds of world cycling records. He was the second recognized African American world champion, after a boxer whose name I can’t recall right this minute – not Joe Lewis. The Lance Armstrongs of the world know him, he’s an icon. He overcame lots of obstacles, primarily racism, to do what he did. So it was just natural for us to learn about and adopt him, before we even learned that there were Major Taylor Cycle Clubs across the country! An amazing thing happened once we started this. The same people that you mentioned – REI, Venture outdoors, Friends of the Riverfront – they showed up at our door, literally, at the University of Pittsburgh, and said, “We want to be a part of this, we want to help you any way we can. We’ve been trying to get more African-Americans and minorities to come out and enjoy the outdoors.” So we’ve been partnering ever since. They’ve been a great support.

What I had to do was to be willing to come out of my comfort zone and get on a bicycle, didn’t know anything about riding a bike. Let me tell you a funny story: I did that first bike ride, that long-distance ride. I think the most I had ridden to that point was maybe 15 miles, and I thought I was doing something. I got on this bike ride and the first 20 miles on the C&O was wonderful. “This is great, look at the beauty! Wow!” and then I was ready to stop. Well, little did I know we had 35 more miles to go to camp. So I literally fell off my bike in the mud, because it rained, and then they told me I had to pitch my tent! “You mean you’re not going to put my tent up?” (laughter)

And, you know, but when I finished that I was thrilled that when we started the bike club, people began to show up in droves. People said, “well, I’ve had a bike in my basement for years. I need to blow the dust off it.” Or people would show up and say, “I want to ride but I don’t have a bike.” We started the club not to put people in Lycra and ride really fast. We wanted to get ordinary, chubby middle-aged men and women like myself to just get on a bike and enjoy the outdoors, ride one mile, however many you want to ride. The Bike Club has really taken off. We just did the Seagull Ride in

Maryland recently. However our primary focus is still in riding, so if there's anybody out there who's interested in riding, please see us.

But what I'm am doing now is trying to get my urban cyclists who like to ride on the streets to venture out. Actually do overnight tours, weekend rides, move to a week long or two week ride, so we can camp out and see what's out there, outside of the urban landscape.

DLG:

So, John, what about you? What are the most important things we could do change the present status?

JOHN C. ROBINSON:

I talk a lot about this in my book. It's really based around a five-point strategy.

I believe that the entire community that exists to study nature, including the Sierra Club, National Audubon Society, American Birding Association, all the merchants that are out there, such as the Wild Bird Centers, There is a great responsibility for them to begin to come together with many of the people who are in this audience, main-stream bird watchers and students of nature, and put together a message, a message that has to be delivered incessantly... in three places: the home, the school and the community, because that's where our children are. It starts in the home, with an awareness in the parents. We have to give them a message that this is something valuable that I can teach to my child. We then have to go through the schools to tell the teachers that this is a message that's important that I can teach to my students. And then we have to go to the community, because if the child is not at home or at school, they're somewhere at large in the community. We have to give the community leaders that same message: this is something important to teach to the youth in the neighborhoods.

The message we create has to be delivered using methods and language that our target audiences can really respond and relate to.

Finally on a parallel track, we need role models and mentors, because when we really look at this, look at what Dudley's doing, he's creating images of minorities in nature. And if you look at Ebony Magazine (started back in the 40s and 50s) ... Ebony really pioneered in this field. It was promoting images of African-Americans doing things that many people in the United States thought African-Americans didn't do... shopping at malls, buying cars. Supposedly the Editor at Ebony actually sent a representative to Detroit, trying to get the automotive industry to advertise. They said, "Why would me want to do that? African-Americans don't buy cars!" But, in the end, they finally agreed to do it.

We have to create an image of inner city and minority people enjoying nature, so that it becomes "main stream."

That's the five-point strategy.

DLG:

Thank you very much. Sarah, what's your recommendation?

SARAH MARTIN:

As I think about what is possible, I think one approach we might take is "the fitness and recreational approach to wilderness." We know the status of health in America, and in particular with our children. We can look at wilderness not only as a way to maintain fitness, but also a way to "re-create." Those would be the points I would express to the people in charge of Pittsburgh's Public Schools. We need to re-examine physical education and understand that as thinking people, we need to incorporate life-long activities in our physical education, to embrace the environment that is natural, that is here, and we need to collaborate with people already working in these fields. This is not starting from scratch. Venture Outdoors has worked with Pittsburgh Public Schools to develop our kayaking program that I understand is literally sinking. Sierra Club is willing to help out with getting kids out into the woods. We need to embrace the people that have these values so that our students understand that this is their world, they have a part in it, and that they can re-create as well as become fit by using the environment, not even to mention all the other things they can get from it. So for me, it's those two things in particular: fitness and recreation for Pittsburgh. I mean, my God, we have three rivers, a utopian place for wilderness exploration and we need to collaborate with people already doing good work here.

DLG

So, what I hear is that we need to be advocates for wilderness and outdoor activities with the Public Schools. Any of you who can help to do that, that's enormously important. If you're looking for ways to do public service, that's a way to do it. Talk to your school boards.

Thank you panelists. I think what we're going to do is invite you all down front in a few minutes to look at the materials being set up here. But before that, we have an epilogue from Dudley Edmondson (a five-minute photo montage set to music followed here to take the program out on a note of beauty and harmony). Thank you, panelists (Applause)

Further applause.

Dudley Edmondson: Thank you

DLG: We have materials down here. Come on down and talk. But first a last question from Mario Browne. Mario?

MARIO BROWNE:

There's been a lot of information shared and we've heard about these visions. There are probably people wondering: what can we do next? How can we take what we've learned tonight and move forward? Dudley, you say your mission is to get more African-Americans, more youth, to join you in these activities. My question is: How can we use the synergies and energies we have in the room right now? I just told John that next year's Youth Sojourn that the focus is going to be on "Let's identify some birds." How can we come together? What can we do at this point?

DLG

I think the next step has to come from you. We've reached as far as we can reach tonight. You reach back. Take one of the post cards with Dudley's magnificent image of a great gray owl, write your name, contact information and interest on it and give to one of us. That's a way to get in personal touch. You can also e-mail us. In the programs there's a whole bunch of e-mail addresses you can use. My e-mail is there. And I think that all of us who have any organizational connection need to be pushing this within their organization. For example, let me give you an idea. I haven't talked to Jack Solomon or any of the other Three Rivers Birding Club people but I think we ought to hold bird walks that start in the Homewood library. And we ought to do it a lot! And just see what we can do.

Let me give you a terrifying vision that Jim Valimont, the president of TRBC, gave to me when I brought this up to him. He said: "How far do you think a young black man, say 18 years old, would get walking down the streets of Squirrel Hill with a pair of binoculars?" We've got some cultural problems we've got to deal with. And I think that involves the white community going to the black community. I think we've got to reach out and do it ourselves. We've got to push into this bad scene.

So, think about that and give us some ideas. Help us. Reach out to these organizations. Step forward in your organizations. We've asked you to be leaders in your organizations. Do it! Take these thoughts. Implement them. The minority members here tonight: we welcome your participation. We seek it in all these organizations. Help us to design the organizations so that they are more responsive to what we have heard expressed here as the needs of the community.

How's that? Is that an answer?

This was the end of the formal program but it was followed by 45 minutes of intense interchange on the stage among audience and panelists.

APPENDIX

1

PROGRAM

I. IN CELEBRATION OF WILD PLACES: CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE

A show of the stunning nature photography of Dudley Edmondson

The program will be followed by a panel discussion of the challenges and benefits for the minority community of expanding participation in outdoor activities of all kinds.

II. PANEL DISCUSSION

The panelists will answer a series of three questions, with a 2-3 minute time limit on each answer. After all five have completed their first answers, we'll go around again with the second and then the third questions. We'll follow that with questions of each other and finally audience questions.

- A. First, what their own principle outdoor activity is and why this is important to them ... how they feel about having this activity in their life.
- B. What they think were the primary influences on them that gave them the confidence to participate in this activity. Do/did other minorities participate with them? Is/was this a mixed or segregated activity?
- C. What they think the most important one or two things are that need to be done to change the level of minority participation in their types of activities.
- D. Finally, questions from the panelists of each other and from the audience.

III. EPILOGUE

The audience is invited onto the stage down front to ask questions, look at displays and socialize with one another

2



THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

Dudley Edmondson Honored For 17 Years of Photographing Nature, Wildlife
Wilderness Society Award Honors Important
Contributions to Land Conservation

28 Sept 2008

Washington, D.C.—In recognition of his groundbreaking work encouraging other African Americans to discover the beauty and solitude of the natural world through his photography and writing, Dudley Edmondson of Duluth, MN, has been recognized with the Wilderness Society's National Faces of Conservation award. His photograph and bio now adorn a wall in the nonprofit's Washington headquarters set aside for this purpose.

"Nature knows no race, creed, or gender and is cheaper than any therapist you could ever hire," Edmondson said. "I'm proud that my work has brought this therapy to many new people, and I'm honored to be receiving this award."

Edmondson has spent 17 years traveling the United States photographing subjects as diverse as rain forest and desert habitats, with all kinds of subjects from the grizzly bears of Yellowstone to delicate gossamer-winged butterflies in the boreal bogs of the North. Many of his images have graced the pages of natural history publications in the United States and Europe. He spent four years traveling and photographing African Americans in America's wild places in order to compile his book *Black and Brown Faces in Americas Wild Places*. It is very important to Edmondson that People of color begin to feel a sense of ownership towards the nation's wilderness areas as he feels that this is key to their participation in conservation work. He also wants them to understand that America's Natural Heritage is part of the package of being an American.

Find out more about Edmondson's work at <http://www.raptorworks.com/index.htm>.

The Faces of Conservation award honors those who have made important contributions to land conservation, are passionate about their conservation work, have overcome significant obstacles or taken risks in support of wildland protection, have developed creative ways to protect the land and/or strengthen the conservation movement by inspiring others, and are held in high esteem by their peers within the conservation community.

PANELISTS –

Dudley Edmondson – See page 2, above for a summary of Dudley’s accomplishments.

Sarah Jameela Martin: Sarah Jameela Martin, married, has four children, retired administrator from Pittsburgh Public Schools. Has a M.ED in Supervision and Administration from the University of Pittsburgh. Did undergraduate work at Central State University. Conducted wilderness training for the PPS district. Enjoys meeting new people, studying spiritual and African American history books, hiking, biking, rock climbing and traveling, especially to Africa. Continues to take students to local underground railroad sites.

John Robinson: John is a professional ornithologist and wildlife biologist. He graduated from Taylor-Alderdice High School. He leads American Birding Association-endorsed tours to places as diverse as Argentina, Africa and Arizona. He’s published a fine book, “Birding For Everyone,” available after the program at the tables in front. He now lives in Marysville, OH and recently is working in California.
<http://www.onmymountain.com>

Mario Browne – Mario was hired at the Center for Minority Health (CMH), in September 2002, as a Project Director and Community Health Coordinator. He has coordinated a project titled the Underground Railroad Bicycle route and formed the Pittsburgh MajorTaylor Cycling club. Both projects use cultural tailoring to encourage AfricanAmerican’s to use cycling as a means to get physically active. Mario, a Pittsburgh, PA native holds a BS in Biology and in Medical Technology from Salem International University and an MPH from the University Of Pittsburgh.

Donald L. Gibbon – Moderator. Don Gibbon invited Dudley to Pittsburgh after reading an interview with him in the October, 2007, Birding Magazine. Don shares Dudley’s dedication to a more inclusive commitment to the natural world for healthy living and a healthy planet. Don is a life member of the Sierra Club and a photographer himself. He is program and environmental education chair for the Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club.

PROGRAM SPONSORS AND RESOURCES FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

All of these organizations welcome minority participation and will provide instruction to any novices and challenges to those already knowledgeable .

- [Sierra Club, Allegheny Group](#) – The Sierra Club is the nation’s largest grass-roots membership outdoor organization. Started in 1892 to save the Sierra Nevada mountain range’s scenic wonders, it has expanded its work and membership to “preserving and protecting the planet.” Outings a major feature of its activities, locally and nationwide. 5000+ local members. Free monthly meetings, Second Wednesdays every month on local natural history, environmental issues and outdoor, people-powered activities. Check www.alleghenysc.org

- [Venture Outdoors](http://www.ventureoutdoors.org/Index.aspx) - <http://www.ventureoutdoors.org/Index.aspx>. An organization devoted to getting you outdoors in all sorts of activities,, from kayaking at the Point to riding your bike around town or even to (or from) Washington DC! Tremendous source of information on local and regional activities for everyone. <http://www.ventureoutdoors.org/Index.aspx>
- [Manchester Craftsmen's Guild](http://www.bidwell-training.org/) –The Guild's nationally recognized after-school programs for high school students are designed to educate and inspire any young person who has an interest in the arts and creative self-expression, offering great opportunities for skill development, critical thinking, experiential learning and preparation for careers and higher education. The Guild's partner institution, the Bidwell Training Center offers a unique Horticultural Technology program gets young people outside and in touch with the earth. <http://www.bidwell-training.org/>
- [Center for Minority Health, University of Pittsburgh](http://www.cmh.pitt.edu/history.asp). Established in 1994, the Center for Minority Health (CMH) is committed to translating evidence-based research into community-based interventions and innovative outreach practices. The CMH provides the infrastructure, among the University of Pittsburgh Schools of Health Sciences, for addressing health issues among ethnic and racial minorities and other vulnerable and underserved populations. Outdoor activities are an integral part of healthy living. <http://www.cmh.pitt.edu/history.asp>
- [Three Rivers Birding Club](http://www.3rbc.org) – Devoted entirely to seeing birds and sharing that joy and learning opportunity. Many outings, great free public meetings on first Wednesdays, every other month. www.3rbc.org
- [Recreational Equipment, Inc](http://www.rei.com/stores/101) a national outdoor equipment co-op. The Pittsburgh store is located 423 S. 27th St in the Southside Works. They have gear and a climbing wall in their store and they sponsor and organize outings of many kinds. <http://www.rei.com/stores/101>
- [National Aviary](http://www.aviary.org) – a place to see and learn about birds, both North American and of the world. Special shows with live birds given frequently. Located in West Park, near Allegheny Center and the Children's Museum. www.aviary.org

REFERENCES

Perhaps the best combined source of information on how families can work together to get children outdoors is found at www.childreandnature.org. Check it out and do it!!

You can hear an excellent description of this work in an interview of Richard Louv, author of “Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder,” on WDUQ at <http://wduq.org/news/newsaudio2.html> and click on “No Child Left Inside” at the top of the list of programs in the archive.