



Media Release

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Environmental Advocates Highlight Black Contributions to National Parks Ahead of 2024 Election

Washington, D.C., October 28, 2024 — As the nation heads toward the 2024 election, environmental advocate Audrey Peterman is on a mission to spotlight the vital role national parks play in preserving America’s natural beauty and rich, diverse history. After a recent tour of the Grand Canyon, Peterman and her team flew to Washington, D.C., where they visited numerous park units that tell the often-overlooked stories of Black contributions to America’s heritage.

The team’s visit to Washington, D.C. is a key highlight of the Transformational Tours Campaign. They toured historic sites including the Benjamin Banneker Boundary Stone of the District of Columbia, and touched the surveyor’s boundary marker stone laid down by the Black genius to mark the borders of the Capitol in 1792.

They visited the Frederick Douglass (Home) National Historic Site, touring even his bedroom, and learned from the low bed that he liked to sleep sitting up. From the library of the great abolitionist to his family’s bedrooms, their kitchen and his “growlery” out back, they imbibed his memory and his injunction, “Agitate!” affirming there is no change without agitation.

The Tour also highlighted the stories of President Abraham Lincoln and Mary McLeod Bethune in Lincoln Park; the historic home of the Father of Black History, Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site; the 200,000 African American Civil War soldiers and sailors commemorated at the Memorial Museum named for them, and strained to see the White House in Presidents’ Park behind the scaffolding being built for inauguration.

“National parks are not just landscapes—they are living places where the stories of our ancestors come to life. As we visit these historic places, we are reminded of the enduring impact of Black Americans in shaping the nation. By sharing these stories, we hope to inspire a deeper connection between the public and our parks,” said Audrey Peterman, co-founder of the Transformational Tours campaign and a long-time advocate for diversity in the outdoors,

The educational campaign aims to engage millions of Americans through social media content created by six influencers who accompanied Peterman to the Grand Canyon. They are now sharing their experiences on social media, inspiring a new generation of visitors to discover the parks and engage with their history and conservation efforts. The campaign is made possible

with support from the National Wildlife Federation through its Environmental Justice program, The National Parks Conservation Association and the Edaren Foundation.

Peterman also emphasizes that this is a crucial time to focus on the upcoming election, where voters everywhere have the chance to make their voice heard on a wide range of issues, ranging from the future of national park policies and environmental conservation, to jobs and the economy. “With the 2024 election on the horizon, it’s important everyone exercises their right to vote,” Peterman noted.

About Audrey Peterman

Audrey Peterman is a leading environmental advocate, author, and co-founder of the Transformational Tours campaign. She has spent decades championing diversity in public lands and working to ensure that all Americans—regardless of background—have the opportunity to engage with the country’s natural and historical treasures.