

AUTOETHNOGRAPHY, FEMINISMS AND THE OUTDOOR INDUSTRY:  
A THEORETICAL APPROACH TO PRACTICE

A Dissertation  
by  
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## **Abstract**

### **AUTOETHNOGRAPHY, FEMINISMS AND THE OUTDOOR INDUSTRY: A THEORETICAL APPROACH TO PRACTICE**

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Women are underrepresented in the outdoors from participants to top-level executives. In addition, there is a divide between feminism (theory) and the outdoor industry (practice). Seeking to bridge this gap, female life experiences in the outdoors will be situated using autoethnography within a poststructural feminist lens. These experiences will be analyzed through the writings of Michel Foucault, power and poststructural feminism; Gayatri Spivak, marginality and postcolonialism; and Sara Ahmed, materiality and material feminism. This work will seek to elevate the personal experience, serving as a starting point for continued discussions of feminist theory and application to everyday lived experiences of women in the outdoor industry.

The second portion of this research project moves from the perspective of a female working in the outdoor industry to the male-identifying perspective and position. There are men in the outdoor industry who are disinterested in the gender gap; however, some are interested, have been left out of inclusion discussions, and are fearful about implementing strategies for

change. A survey was constructed and administered that asked male practitioners what they viewed as the challenges women faced in the outdoors, what inclusive strategies they utilized, where they learned such strategies, and what areas they needed more help, support, and assistance with in regards to inclusion. An analysis of the survey data and a literature review, which sought inclusion strategies and ideas from other industries, resulted in the outlining of specific and practical strategies for men who wish to make the outdoor industry more inclusive. Finally, a tangible field guide was created for male practitioners working in the outdoors seeking to close the gender gap in the industry, combining a feminist perspective with the survey data. This pocket-size guide will bring the sometimes hard-to-access academic information into a format that can be utilized every day, packed in a backpack or stuffed in a first aid kit.

*Keywords: Feminism, feminist theory, Foucault, Spivak, Ahmed, outdoor industry, gender disparity, and inclusion strategies*

## **Acknowledgments**

As my research has revealed, women often attribute their professional achievements to luck, so although tempting, I will refrain and reframe. My hard work, dedication, and perseverance are what have allowed me to get to this point – the finish line. It was, however, not without a huge support system.

My dissertation chair, Dr. Audrey Dentith has provided one-on-one guidance and support in a way that fit my learning style and encouraged me to push beyond my perceived academic and scholarly limits. She allowed me the creative freedom that my dissertation needed and thrived upon. Dr. Dentith was the first person in my academic career to tell me to stand up and speak out, as that is now part of my job as an academic – a true motivating factor that kept me pushing forward, without fear.

Dr. Tonia Gray is a true legend in outdoor education and one of the very few women in academia writing and speaking on women's issues. I am in awe of her work, her influence, and mostly her dedication to young professionals in the outdoor industry. I am astonished and thankful that she took the time to mentor and sponsor me and to serve on my committee. Dr. Gray is a visionary, and her feedback, advice, and guidance have made an immeasurable impact on my career as a young academic.

From the first time I met Dr. Diane Waryold, she has supported my professional career in higher education, even writing my letter of recommendation for entry into the doctoral program. When all the others said “no,” they were too busy, or they did not understand my topic or its value, or they felt that outdoors and feminism were too separate, she said yes! Her

commitment to my career as a young academic has been substantial. Dr. Waryold's passion for student affairs, social justice, and her love of the outdoors have been a valuable addition to my committee.

Additionally, Mary Neal Meador's guidance in my writing and her understanding and perspective of feminism, as well as the outdoors, helped me more holistically and effectively evaluate my work. Melissa Ball-Martin's creative expertise put my data in a format that is beautiful, professional, and enticing. Her work made my efforts truly reader-friendly and accessible to practitioners working in the field.

## **Dedication**

I read an article a few years back noting that children have few memories before they turn three, so I decided if I was able to finish my dissertation before my daughter's third birthday, she might not remember all the times I was not able to play because, "mommy is working." Well, I did it... Laney, you turn three in a few weeks and my defense is scheduled the day before your birthday. Learning more about feminism and feminist theory has taught me valuable parenting advice about how to raise you into a brave, confident, smart, happy, and free woman (and feminist, of course). I am so thankful and blessed for this education and knowledge that has provided me unexpected and inspiring advice on being a mother.

My hard-working and supportive husband Corey Wall, afforded me dedicated time for writing, allowed me to prioritize my dissertation, and encouraged me from the day I put in my application to the doctoral program. His support and encouragement of my education and career are invaluable and a true expression of his love. As I watch him play with Laney as I write now, I am so grateful for all he has done and continues to do for our family.

My mom, Dinah Miller, has been my biggest fan throughout this journey. If I could have compiled all her encouraging words, emails, and texts into one document, they could have easily surpassed the length of a dissertation. When times got tough and I was feeling low, she was always there to pick me up and pass on inspiring and thoughtful insights. I am grateful that she role modeled for me what a brilliant and caring working mother looks like.

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## **Introduction**

As a woman working in the outdoor industry for over a decade, I have had a wide variety of experiences, some good, and some not so good. I am offering a unique perspective on the outdoor industry, as both a practitioner and an academic whose research interests surround feminism. Gender disparity and inequality are an ever-present issue in the outdoors. The outdoor industry has been and continues to be dominated by white, cisgender, able-bodied, heterosexual males. Not only are women strikingly absent at all levels of the outdoor industry, but also inclusion, education, and solutions are inadequate.

My newly discovered interest in feminism, obtained through my doctoral program, my years of working with a majority of males in the outdoors, and my recent transition from a role as a practitioner to an academic have all contributed to both the idea and the structure of this dissertation. I believe that both feminism and the outdoors along with the roles of academics (theory) and practitioners (practice) are all too separate, and things need to change. This gap needs to shrink. This dissertation seeks to bring feminism and the outdoors along with theory and practice closer together, making them more accessible for all.

The purpose of this dissertation is two-fold. First, I recount how I learned to apply feminism to my personal experiences working in the outdoors. As I began to learn more about feminism and feminist theory, I was intrigued by the often unfamiliar and challenging language and concepts it presented. If I cared so much about women's inclusion in the outdoor industry, I felt it was a necessity to have a fundamental understanding of feminist concepts and be able to share those with others in the field. In my personal experience, theory and practice have felt distant and unrelated; I wanted to bridge this gap and felt this dissertation was the platform in which to do so. I connect the hard-to-understand feminist

theory to the everyday work taking place in the outdoor industry. This application of feminist theory to lived experiences helps to close the gap between feminism and the outdoors as well as to bridge the divide between theory and practice.

The first portion strives to provide outdoor practitioners with a basic understanding of feminist theory, concepts, and language in the hopes that a feminist perspective can be accessible and easily applied. Better understanding of my own position and perspective as a woman in the industry was a crucial foundation I needed to explore in order to conduct additional research. Second, I shifted my focus from my own perspective as a woman in the outdoors and looked outward to the men in the field. Gender equality is not a women-only issue – men need to be included in both the conversations and the solutions. Women can not improve their positions in the outdoor industry without the support of men. To find out the views that men had about gender, inclusion, and the gender gap, I had to ask them. Surprisingly, little to none of this type of work has been done. I developed and administrated a qualitative survey asking men their perspectives on gender disparity, seeking to better understand the needs, concerns, and successes male practitioners have experienced regarding the inclusion of women in the outdoors.

The themes that emerged were combined with a literature review on inclusion strategies, resulting in implications for practice that male practitioners in the outdoor industry can apply. Finally, I created a tangible resource focusing on the ways in which male practitioners can better recruit, retain, and empower women in the outdoor industry. Bridging the gap between theory and practice, I sought to create a user-friendly and realistic resource (it is waterproof and durable) that can be used in the outdoors. The content consists of inclusion strategies framed within a feminist perspective. I was realistic in my thinking

that many practitioners would not read a lengthy academic article, nor would they have access or subscriptions to the journals it could be published in. In order to make these strategies effective, they need to begin taking place on a daily basis and in the workplace. Without a user-friendly reminder it could be easy to de-prioritize: out of sight, out of mind.

Working in the outdoor industry and seeing the inequality, hearing other women's stories, and wanting to make a difference was the driving force that helped shape my research interests. Once I learned more about feminism, opened my eyes to the perspectives it could bring, and rid my head of the negative stereotypes "feminism" can be known for, I was unable to see the world in the same way. Once I began thinking and viewing the world through a feminist lens, I was able to better situate some of the not-so-good experiences that had taken place in my time working in the outdoors. It was cathartic and heartbreaking all at the same time. Having an understanding of feminism has allowed me to view my work in the outdoors in different ways, allowing me to better understand my own experiences. Having this knowledge and the ability to analyze personal experiences feels like having the newest piece of outdoor gear stowed in my backpack – when the time is right, I know I will have the gear needed, I am prepared, and I am ready to use it.

## **Viewing Outdoor Education Through a Feminist Lens – An Introduction to Feminist Concepts, Part I**

### **Introduction: Context of the Issue**

I can remember the jokes, “Are you sure you can get us down this river? We are big, heavy guys – are we too much for you? Where’s the real guide? Oh, aren’t you cute?” There have been countless times when students, participants, or clients have questioned and/or challenged my skills and knowledge throughout my outdoor career. I can recollect as early as my first internship in the outdoors working as a raft guide for military recreation during undergrad how my technical skills, strength, and femininity were challenged on a regular basis. For day trips on the Arkansas River, our set up and prep for each trip would consist of the raft guides arriving at the put-in early and prepping our boats. A bus driver would drive all the clients to the river and drop them off at the put-in. The trip leader for that day would give an introductory safety talk and review the logistics with the clients, and then would tell them to go and find a raft and a guide. It felt like middle school dodgeball, waiting to see who would be picked first. I do not remember a time when I was picked first that entire season and, honestly, I felt like I was regularly one of the last guides chosen. Once the clients were settled with their boats and guides, we would do another introduction and safety review and hop on the water to practice some paddle strokes. Here is where the comments and jokes began. I was usually able to block these out, make a joke, crack a smile, laugh a bit, and move on with my day. This neutralizing of comments and insults was something that I had become very accustomed to, even as an entry level professional to the outdoor industry at this point.

In one memorable example, a specific set of men pushed me past my breaking point. Their comments seemed more aggressive and their attitudes pushier. Very early on in

our trip I became fed up and felt like I had to prove myself worthy and show them I had the technical skills required – it felt like the only way in which I could get them to stop commenting. I intentionally steered the raft into a large rock, knowing that I would catch them off guard, hoping to pop a few of them off their seats and into the water. When one of the men fell into the water, I was so pleased with the look of shock on his face that I probably left him in the water hanging onto the raft a little too long. I put my paddle down, reached for his PFD, and pulled him in. I did not say a word the entire time. When everyone on the boat settled down, it was as if I completely switched gears, my tone of voice and body language changed dramatically. I began telling them the details of the next rapid, to pay attention, look downstream, and to paddle. All I wanted to do was to slap a big smile on my face as an indication that I was strong enough, I could handle captaining the raft, and that I did have the skills. Of course, no smiles were allowed, and I kept on paddling.

It was not until recently when I began my doctoral program and learned more about feminism that I was able to connect this experience and others to anything outside of the outdoor industry. My “feminist gut” (and I would not dare use the “F” word until very recently) sensed something was amiss in the outdoor industry in my days as an undergraduate student in the early 2000s (Ahmed, 2017; Gray, 2016). Just as Ahmed (2017) experienced, “there was a sensation in the back of my mind; an uneasiness,” and “this discomfort took years to wrap my head around and only now am I beginning to put the pieces together” (Wall, 2017, p. 46). Ahmed (2017) posed the question, “Where did you find feminism, or where did feminism find you?” (p. 6). I think feminism found me, and only very recently: not in my childhood, not in my work life as a young professional, but through my doctoral education. Once I found feminism, my worldview was split wide open. “Feminism becomes

a drip, drip and then a flood” (Ahmed, 2017, p. 30). I could no longer view my daily life in the same way; I began questioning everything.

### **Theory and Practice**

I have always (and still do) consider myself a practitioner, and only until recently have I been able to dip my toes into the academic world and do a little exploring. There is a disconnect between theory and practice: the academic and the practitioner. Practitioners can quickly turn their backs on theory, ignoring its relevance to practice, while academics can easily dismiss practical and personal experience, viewing it as less academic. Ahmed (2017) realized that many women are not at home in the academy, so often, academic language and theory discussions can feel alienating. Even as a practitioner who had been working in the field for over a decade, when I began my doctoral program, I occasionally felt overwhelmed and unprepared for some of the academic lingo, assignments, and discussions. The work I was doing in the field was viewed, referred to, and analyzed differently in the academic world. It was as if I had to begin learning a new language in order to take part in the conversations. Ahmed (2017) strives to make feminist theory accessible and attainable by showing “how feminist theory is what we do when we live our lives in a feminist way” (p. 12). In this same vein, I hope to connect the sometimes hard to understand feminist theory to the everyday work taking place in the outdoor industry. “For a theoretical perspective to be politically useful to feminists...it should not deny subjective experience, since the ways in which people make sense of their lives is a necessary starting point for understanding how power relations structure society” (Weedon, 1987, p. 8). Highlighting personal experience as a practitioner and connecting, it academically, to theory in order to make meaning and create a better understanding of feminism and feminist theory is the aim of this research project.

## **Feminism – The Theoretical Framework**

Feminist research is inherently a political project that specializes in issues of difference, social justice, power, equity, and oppression. It takes a critical and emancipatory stance that seeks to challenge and expose the hierarchical systems of patriarchy (Hesse-Biber & Yaiser, 2004; Nagel-Docekal, 2004; Somekh & Lewis, 2011). Highlighting and examining the voices of women is an essential concept to feminism. In the outdoor industry where women are virtually invisible, illuminating women’s voices, stories, and experiences are paramount.

The goal of feminism, in general, is to seek out the gendered power relationships and pressures that exist within our world, focusing on finding and understanding the world through a lens of oppression (Stanley & Wise, 2002). Equity and inclusion should exist in the outdoor industry as women are underrepresented in research, conversations, and leadership positions, leaving them marginalized and voiceless (Gray, 2016; Gray, Allen-Craig, S., & Carpenter, 2017; Henderson, 1996; Loeffler, 1996b; Mitten, Gray, Allen-Craig, Loeffler, Carpenter, 2018; Wright & Gray, 2013). Feminism can problematize the outdoor industry and illuminate new ways of understanding and improve the industry as a whole. I believe that feminism can provide a critique of the industry’s culture, challenge its norms, and push to emancipate and empower women.

Feminism focuses on several concepts including patriarchy, gender, social construction, power relations, and their interconnectedness. Weedon (1987) believed, “political questions should be the motivating force behind feminist theory which must always be answerable to the needs of women in our struggle to transform patriarchy” (p. 2). The term “patriarchy” is defined by Weedon (1987) as a reference “to power relations in which

women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men" (p. 2). These power relations can take many forms and can be seen in both our personal and professional lives.

There is much focus on poststructural feminism in this article. For poststructuralists, meanings are socially constructed and can vary from place to place and culture to culture. Words and word meanings have no essential or structural connection (Beasley, 2002; Nealon & Giroux, 2012). Ideas develop meaning through social construction, which we then learn and reproduce. Meanings of gender given to men and women are socially constructed; this is the basis for patriarchal power. Women in Western cultures are socially constructed to be less powerful than men. What it means to be male and what it means to be female are norms that have been created within our society to define "normal."

Patriarchy is widespread and infused in institutions worldwide. In institutions such as the academy, the church, the workplace, and the family, men can "justify and reinforce women's subordination to men, resulting in most women's internalization of a sense of inferiority to men" (Tong, 2016, p. 54). In the institution of the outdoor industry, this justification and reinforcement of women's subordination are present and thriving.

"Socially constructed" does not, however, mean easy to change. On the contrary, many of our social customs and norms are deeply rooted and ingrained. It would take more than the action of a few people to change the socially constructed beliefs surrounding women and gender in a patriarchal system (Nealon & Giroux, 2012). The power of poststructuralism is its ability to illuminate and identify the existing power relations that can have detrimental effects on women in the outdoor industry.

Our socially constructed society, with its operating norms, enables certain subject positions to exert more power over others. Those with more power experience more freedom

(Jackson, 2013; Nealon & Giroux, 2012). In our Western society and the outdoor industry, men hold more power than women. “Foucault did not believe that nothing could be done about power; he thought that ‘doing’ something about power belonged to those who are ‘enmeshed’ in power relations” (Jackson, 2013, p. 845). The enmeshed people in the outdoor industry are those working in the thick of things – those within. I am within and working in the thick of things – I am positioned well to do something.

Viewing feminism as politics directed at existing power relations helps us to better visualize these power structures that exist within our everyday lives. Power represses, and in our society it suppresses women. Women in the outdoors experience a highly gendered terrain where unequal pay, sexual harassment, and decreased professional opportunities all exist (Bell, 1996; Gray, 2016; Henderson, 1996). A feminist analysis should be applied to spark conversation and create change within the industry.

### **Feminism in the Outdoors**

The divide between feminism and outdoor education is vast. Gray (2016) argued that the lack of feminist application is the cause of many of the gender disparity problems in the industry. “An urgent culture shift is needed,” Gray (2016) advised, but “outdoor education has not undergone a thorough, radical feminist critique or reform” (p. 29). The major challenge is that feminism is considered the “F” word in the outdoor industry (Gray, 2016) and that there is an “omnipresent concern for women of the conundrum of feminist backlash” (Gray & Mitten, 2018). When I knew that my dissertation work would focus on feminism, I was initially hesitant to tell my colleagues in the outdoor industry – what would they think or say? Would they treat me differently I wondered? As Bell, Cosgriff, Lynch, and Zink (2018) discussed, “the risk of speaking out and becoming ‘one of them,’ or the feminist

voice, is of taking on the problem [of gender becoming a girls' or women's problem] that is not ours" (p. 211). These women, as well as others, have expressed that feminism in the outdoor industry has failed them; gender inequality is still present, and feminist reform has not done much for women in the industry.

I do not believe that giving up on feminism is the right answer but instead, argue that digging in and learning more about feminism is the best approach. An application of various feminist concepts would add such depth to this little-researched area in the industry. A feminist application seeks to "critique historical and structural conditions of oppression and seeks transformation of those conditions" (Glesne, 2006, p. 7). I believe that a feminist analysis of the outdoor industry can begin to create a culture change that is much needed and long overdue.

### **Methodology**

Utilizing a framework similar to Jackson and Mazzei's (2012), *Thinking with Theory*, I will utilize my personal experience working in the outdoors and will investigate it, "plugging in" different feminist concepts. In plugging in, my experiences (the data) are viewed across several theorists and concepts. The focus is not on theoretical frameworks (postcolonialism, poststructuralism, or materiality) but on theoretical concepts. This methodology refuses to code and theme data, which focuses too strictly on the macro rather than seeking to create new meaning. "By refusing a closed system for fixed meaning (transferable patterns and themes generated from coding data with reductive language), we engage the threshold as a site of transformation" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 7). A threshold within this methodology can be defined as a passageway that is only given meaning once it is attached to something that is different from itself. On their own, my experiences in

the outdoors and feminist theory have little connection. It is only when a threshold is placed between the two that function, purpose, and meaning are created. In thinking with theory, a set of analytical questions informed by key concepts is created to connect and transform both the theory and the data/experience (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012).

The theories will be introduced in chronological order. Concepts will be introduced first, followed by theorist biographies, and finally the theoretical framework. This structure is intentional. Introducing concepts before the theorist and theoretical framework, allows the reader to more easily connect to the concepts' ideas and themes. This can better connect theory to one's' every day life, making it more approachable and attainable.

Foucault helps us to think about our relationship with power and how people negotiate power relations in unfamiliar territory. This concept of power relations will also look at how my power might disrupt historical truths and struggles with (or even evade) others' (students, administrators) practices of power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980; Taylor, 2011). The analytical question of power is: *How do power relations circulate within and among myself and my practices?*

Spivak's marginality situates the teaching machine (the university) as a vehicle of power/knowledge that seeks to locate and define who inhabits the center and who inhabits the margins (Spivak, 2008). The concept of marginality articulates how the center (the academy) positions and defines what the margins look like while deconstructing both the center and the margins. The analytical question for marginality is: *How am I outside/in the teaching machine?*

Ahmed (2012, 2017) focuses on how power is secured and challenged in the everyday and in institutional cultures. Her ontological perspective is viewed as a "material turn" in

feminist theory. This materialism concept assumes there are material consequences helping to break down the division between the natural and cultural (Ahmed, 2017; Alaimo & Hekman, 2008). The analytical question for materiality is: *What walls exist for me in the outdoor industry?*

### **Autoethnography**

The method of autoethnography will be utilized as a narrative of self and self-reflection, to investigate feminist concepts. As Stuart (2018) articulated, “the process of reflecting on my experiences of leading in the outdoors has created learning and action for me” (p. 235). Reflecting on my experiences can provide a powerful platform for critical analysis of self, others, and our relationship with the world (Wigglesworth, 2018). Autoethnography is a meaningful way to story tell as it creates a space for “(re)imagining our relationships with one another” as well as a “way of nourishing inter and intragenerational conversations that work to challenge, rather than simply affirm, the hegemonic discourse of the time” (Christie, 2018, p. 259).

Autoethnographic research is “reader-friendly in that the personally engaging writing style tends to appeal to readers more than conventional scholarly writing” (Chang, 2008, p. 52). As I seek to bridge the gap between theory and practice in this research project, applying a methodology that is personal will be key for engaging practitioners. In seeking to critique, autoethnography makes it possible for “critical theories to emerge and take hold in research and academia” (Stuart, 2018, p. 236).

Autoethnography is a “political choice” as “it turns the lens onto the researcher’s self and, thus, does so without *othering* research subjects” while decreasing the distance “between the everyday life of others and ourselves” (Wigglesworth, 2018, p.

792). Additionally qualitative research, especially the ethnographic participant-observation and in-depth interviewing methods, is rooted in anthropology, which is linked to colonialism. Colonialism has a tradition in white, upper middle class masculinity that has both historical and political contexts (Glesne, 2006). Therefore, as a female researcher I chose to utilize an autoethnographic approach that affords me the opportunity to make a political statement and to correct for historical biases stemming from the roots of qualitative research.

Although this autoethnographic project will include only my voice, it is a starting point and a foundation for others to build upon. I hope that this project sparks a conversation. As Christie (2018) stated, “by sharing experiences we may come to see ourselves within others’ narratives and, in doing so, recognize that the lone voice is not so quiet when it is heard as a collective” (p. 260). It is important that I tell my story and that my voice is heard – women in the outdoors are often voiceless. “Often the narrative of the female outdoor educator is not the dominant discourse. We are not common in the field. We don’t always fit the gender script, and so our voice, whilst strong, is not heard above, or equal to, the male storyline” (Christie, 2018, p. 270). Telling my story puts me at the center, bringing me out of the margins. I need to stand up, speak out, and be heard.

In sharing my stories, I chose to include both experiences that happened outdoors and indoors, as a career in the outdoors can require both. Additionally, I chose to tell stories that happened at different times in my career. The work of an outdoor professional can vary greatly from the tasks, to the environment, to the activity. Our workplaces can be miles from civilization or can be set within a traditional office setting all depending on the day. Gender disparity does not take a break once your trip has finished and you are back in the office.

**My background.** This backstory is to be viewed as a chronological overview of childhood, education, and entry into the professional world. Included in the backstory are pieces of my life that I deemed relevant to my present positioning in my outdoor career. Understand that my background provided in this article is “partial, incomplete, and is always being re-told and re-membered” since my experiences have already been “filtered, processed, and already interpreted” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 3). None are pure, as I have already made meaning of most experiences.

I was born in the southern United States in the mid-1980s, an only child raised mostly by my single working mother. My parents divorced when I was in middle school, and my relationship with my father was strained. Both my mother and father were well educated, and I was provided with excellent education and extracurricular activity opportunities. In middle school, I was involved mostly with traditional sports and art activities while participating in several residential camp programs ranging from leadership, science, dance, and the outdoors during the summers. In high school I became more involved in outdoor activities including climbing, hiking, and rafting with friends while taking experiential outdoor trips with my school – this is where I fell in love with all things outdoorsy. I attended a private liberal arts college for my undergraduate education where I would pursue a degree in Leisure and Sports Management while working for the college’s outdoor program as a trip leader and program manager. Also, I spent a semester in the Western United States with an outdoor leadership program that solidified my passion for the outdoors, expedition travel, and outdoor leadership. Summers during college, I began working in the outdoor industry guiding teen adventure trips nationally and internationally as well as working in military recreation. I attended a large, public southern university immediately following

undergrad, where I worked as a graduate assistant for the university's outdoor programs while pursuing my MA in Higher Education. In between and after grad school, I worked with an outdoor education school guiding rafting and hiking trips in the Southwestern United States. For the next ten years after graduate school, I worked on the student affairs side of higher education working at two large, public universities' outdoor programs. Throughout this time I also began teaching wilderness medicine. In the last five years, I began pursuing my doctoral degree part-time and have recently transitioned from student affairs to academics and now serve as a program coordinator and assistant professor teaching outdoor recreation management at a small, liberal arts college. Sharing background information assists in situating my understanding and perspective as a female-identifying woman working in the outdoor industry.

## **Theoretical Concepts**

### **Power Concept**

*How do power relations circulate within and among myself and my practices?* Most Monday mornings, outside my office my male outdoor colleagues would gather and discuss all their weekend adventures, which I jokingly referred to as the “Weekend Bro Update.” Only the most epic and adventurous activities were discussed. On my first day, the weekend update conversation began, and despite the men physically standing outside and in front of my office (almost blocking my door), I was not invited to participate in the conversation. The power concept as articulated by Foucault (1990) states that power is intentional and that power relations are “imbued, through and through, with calculation” (p. 95). No power is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. What were my

colleagues' aims and objectives for these conversations? If these conversations were calculated, what were their intentions?

Over the next few weeks, I actively inserted myself into the conversations, struggling against the power and trying to break into the boys' club – but it took some time. The power concept would ask, what was my strategy for inserting myself into the conversation? I played along, what some women in the industry refer to as “male masking,” even trying to make some of the more mundane things like a day hike, mountain bike ride, or an afternoon gardening sound epic and impressive enough for this verbal, macho, show and tell. If my weekend activity offered up did not meet their standard of technical enough, tough enough, remote enough, or extreme, enough their eye contact diminished, their body language changed, and their conversations refocused back to each other and away from me.

The concept of power would argue that there is no single source of power in this situation, that the power relations exhibited were intentional, and that there was resistance coming from all parties (myself and my colleagues). What was my resistance? What was their resistance? Foucault's power concept says that people's actions, responses, struggles, and resistances are local and are temporarily affected by specific and ever-shifting relations of power. Therefore, a power analysis would begin at the micro level, analyzing both my behaviors and my interactions, and those of my colleagues, including the mutual relationships we have with one another. This microanalysis would take place before moving into a macro approach, which would analyze the culture of my workplace (Foucault, 1980; Foucault, 2000).

Foucault's theory of power can be seen through a variety of gender issues including (1) men have different forms of power over women within different institutions – these male

colleagues had forms of power existing over me as a female; (2) masculine power feeds off each other to gain strength – this storytelling consisted of sharing, who had a more epic weekend? And then, seeing who could one-up another's story. And (3) masculine power only persists because women participate in reproducing it – and reproducing it was precisely what I did for the first few months when I played along with this game. In summary, gender is a central dynamic through which power is articulated (Foucault, 1980; Segal, 1999; Stone, 2007).

After a few months, I got tired and fed up with this power relation, so when the conversations continued every Monday morning I politely exited and went to my desk to begin my work. Foucault's concept visualized power as a net-like organization where people circulate between its threads. People can find themselves wrapped in multiple power relations and social discourses – I found myself wrapped in a power relation between my male colleagues and myself. The power concept also believes that power positions are always shifting (Foucault, 1980). The power shifted when I exited the conversation and decided to no longer participate – I was no longer a player in the game. Could I insert myself into the Weekend Bro Update again and change the power relations once more? What other actions or resistances could I have taken to change the ever-shifting power relations in my workplace? The weekend update continued, as did their masculine power, feeding off each other to gain strength. As I sat in my office, getting my work done, the power continued to swirl around, outside my door, just feet away.

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) was a French philosopher and social theorist whose theories primarily addressed power and knowledge and how they are used as a form of social control within institutions. Foucault is considered a poststructural theorist, and many

researchers would argue that his work bridges nicely into poststructural feminism, a branch of feminism that focuses on social construction.

Poststructural feminism helps us to understand why women tolerate social relations that subordinate, marginalize, and oppress them. Poststructuralism exposes how concepts such as power, marginality, and desire work within and between individuals, who are socially constructed by various structures and systems (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Tong, 2016; Weedon, 1984). This specific area of feminism can be highly impactful to the outdoor industry, as it allows researchers the ability to analyze and examine factors that contribute to the social construction of language, relationships, beliefs, values, and practices (Beasley, 2002).

### **Marginality Concept**

*How am I outside/in the “teaching machine”?* At a previous institution, the recreation department, which housed my outdoor program, needed another professional staff member for their sports day camp. The male recreation director assigned me to work this camp all summer long despite the fact that this was not part of my job description and the fact that I was unfamiliar with traditional sports. Keep in mind that the other two professionals working in outdoor programs (both males) were not asked to work the summer camp, nor were they even considered as an option for this role. My supervisor told me that because I was female, I would know how to work at a kids’ camp. Despite articulating my frustration and concern about how my normal outdoor job responsibilities would be affected, I was instructed that I had no option and that I was to work the summer sports camp. I struggled with how to handle this inequitable treatment. Do I keep fighting, say no, and risk punishment, or do I give in, say yes, and hope that this would somehow prove beneficial? I

chose not to resist, and as my male colleagues' summer work responsibilities decreased, my responsibilities increased.

Although there are many problematic issues with this scenario, we will focus on the concept of marginality. In my experience in the outdoor industry, women are placed on the outside, in the margins. Spivak looks at marginality a bit differently. In fact, she situates women on both the inside and the outside (the margins). As a postcolonial theorist, Spivak mostly uses theory to describe the experiences of marginalized (both for their race and their gender) people who are affected by the post-colonial reality; therefore, utilizing her work to critique the outdoor industry is novel. Spivak's (2008) concept of marginality is set within college and university settings, or the "teaching machine." Spivak (1993) thinks of herself as an insider, believing she can better critique and analyze her institution because she understands it intimately. This position allows her to consistently critique and deconstruct the places she inhabits, believing that theorists do their work from within. This concept would suggest that as a woman working in the outdoor industry, I am an insider and am positioned well to critique and analyze. Being an insider and being accepted into the boys' club is an accomplishment in itself in the outdoor industry; therefore, I was initially reluctant to adopt Spivak's idea of critiquing from the inside. It took time, perseverance, and grit to break into the boys' club, so why would I want to critique it and risk losing my position inside?

Spivak has an insider view and understanding, but her true position and permanent placement is on the outside (in the margins). Spivak cannot claim permanent residency within the center of her institution, as it is inhabited by the male academic elite. The center in the outdoor industry is not one of the academic elite, but one of the "outdoors boys' club"

where masculinity, strength, and ego are highly valued. Spivak's gender, race, and ethnicity push and/or force her into the margins where she is viewed as "Other" (Spivak, 1993). I am both pushed and/or forced into the margins because I am a female, I identify as she/her/hers, and I display feminine characteristics and behaviors associated with my identification as a woman. For example, I have noticed throughout my career that the more feminine characteristics I display, the further from the center I am pushed. The center, the boys' club, would prefer that I wear no makeup, no heels into the office, and no purple jackets in the field. For a long time, I was cautious and self-conscious about how my attire and appearance would reflect upon my "outdoorsy-ness" and ability to be accepted; however, I do not experience the double bind of race/ethnicity and gender as Spivak does – I am caucasian.

When Spivak is needed for either her gender, race, ethnicity, or her academic achievements/prestige, she is allowed access to the center, but only temporarily. When I am needed, I have access to the center due to my upper middle class, female-identifying, white, able-bodied, heterosexual, partnered status, along with my level of education, level of certifications, time in the industry, and industry affiliations. My position, either in the center or in the margins, is situationally dependent upon what is needed of my gender. For example, if there is a need for a feminine figure to talk to prospective parents or a need for a female voice on a committee, then I am needed, and I am inside. I have been the token female on the committee, in the meeting, or on the panel more times than I can count. In the eyes of my supervisor, I was needed to assist with camp because women are better at working with kids; therefore, I was pushed into the center because of my gender. For that moment, and only that moment (during camp) I was allowed inside.

Spivak understands that women need time in the center, as the center is the path to professional success – the center holds the key to professional advancement. Spivak (1988) insisted, “the university is an important apparatus of upward class mobility” (p. 331). The center is full of academic elites who hold the key to Spivak’s professional success; and the elite outdoor boys’ club holds the key to my professional success in the outdoor industry. When I am allowed access to the center or even pushed there, should I not be thankful and grateful for the time I can spend there? Having to play the game can be a struggle, but if success lives in the center, what other choice do women have? Although I had resentful and conflicted feelings, I felt I had no other choice. When the camp was over, and I was no longer needed, I was pushed to the outside and the margins once again – back to my permanent place.

Does Spivak fully inhabit the margins? Spivak believes that she does not fully inhabit the margins, nor does she fully occupy the center. Completely abandoning the margins would mean abandoning a part of who she is as a woman of Indian descent, but abandoning the center could be detrimental to her professional career. Because of this incomplete ability to inhabit each space, she is positioned to better participate in the deconstruction of both, sitting in a place Spivak calls “outside in.” The challenge becomes that Spivak is critiquing the teaching machine from a place in which she is an insider, a place that she knows better than most people (1993). This insider view that she gains from time spent in the center, enables Spivak to better critique and analyze. She walks a thin line – too much criticism and she could be pushed to the margins permanently and reduce her opportunity for career advancement.

Professionally speaking this puts her in a tricky position, moving back and forth from the margins to the center, hoping not to abandon either space permanently. This marginality concept of “outside in” is so deeply entangled with the poststructuralist concepts of power and patriarchy it is no wonder that many people feel pulled down by the structures in which we work and live (Spivak, 1993). I wonder how women, myself included, inhabit the institutions of the outdoor industry. As a woman in the outdoor industry, I will never fully inhabit the center, but knowing that the center is the avenue for professional success and upward mobility, I must learn how to navigate this “gray line” if I want to be successful and have a long career. I find myself feeling grateful and lucky when I am given access to the center (which is problematic), and once I am there I work to prove myself worthy to be in the center (again, problematic). Despite fighting for a place in the center, the space is only temporary for me.

Spivak (1942-present) is a self-proclaimed feminist, deconstructionist, post-Marxist, and postcolonialist. Spivak focuses on the “theoretical blind spots” that “stabilize conventional notions of truth and reality” (Morton, 2003, p. 4). Spivak’s work in postcolonialism is not just about re-righting wrongs, but “in good poststructuralist fashion” is about affecting the entire system and structure (Nealon & Giroux, 2012, p. 160). She utilizes postcolonial feminism to help give a voice to the marginalized and disempowered groups that have “already been damaged by dominant systems of knowledge and representation” (Morton, 2003, p. 34). Postcolonialism may seem like an outdated concept, yet Spivak argues that the remnants of postcolonialism are in fact still alive and real. She works to uncover what society does not see and she exposes it.

Spivak's marginality concept can provide a framework for understanding the outdoor industry and allows for the opportunity to ask new, different, and challenging questions about the culture. Applying postcolonialism to outdoor education is a novel idea. The emphasis on within-ness that Spivak discusses is a valuable research perspective to inhabit as a woman in outdoor education. The marginality concept focuses on social justice that allows us as an industry to call into question the cultural norms and behaviors that are in existence. This concept can provide a space for shifting and new perspectives that can change the patriarchal, hypermasculine, gender disparity that is taking place in the outdoor industry today.

### **Materiality Concept**

*What walls exist for me in the outdoor industry?* At a previous workplace, my male supervisor was treating me differently from my male colleagues, and I was at my breaking point. I worked straight through my nine-month pregnancy waiting until the last possible moment to leave work, determined to protect my professional status and prove that I could do it all. I was having trouble with my sciatic nerve in the last three months of my pregnancy, so I began seeing a chiropractor once a week for a quick appointment. I would schedule these appointments during my lunch hour and would come back to eat lunch in my office while working. On one particular day, I was walking out of the office, visibly pregnant, and my supervisor stopped me and asked where I was going. Mind you, he had posted a blackboard in our office so that we could indicate where we were going and when we would return if we were out of the office – like a combination of an elementary attendance board and a micro-managers' dream come true. He walked past that board before he stopped me, and knowing that keeping track of this board was one of his favorite things, I can assure you he saw that I had written “appointment” on the board. I did not think much of the interaction

until my monthly timesheet was delivered, and I saw that he had taken out sick leave for that appointment (yes, that is illegal under the Fair Labor Standards Act). From my knowledge, my male colleagues' medical appointments (personal or for family members) and even haircuts were never challenged, nor had their timesheets been adjusted without their notification.

I wondered, was he treating me differently because of my gender or because he did not like me? Lipman (2018) reminds us that, "Even women who don't experience overt harassment are familiar with the subtle digs and lack of respect that are part of our daily life. These incidents are wearying, difficult to right, and the steady drumbeat of them can be debilitating" (p. 112). Understanding these subtle digs and actions by my supervisor, I will assume that I was treated differently because I am female.

After months of continued incidents and much frustration, I decided to approach our Equity, Diversity, and Compliance Office (EDC) with a list of my concerns. This office was the place to go before attempting to deal with Human Resources (HR). Obtaining a confirmation from the EDC staff member in this office that my concerns were valid, that I had a strong case to take to HR, that I was not overreacting, and that I had in fact been mistreated felt like a weight had been taken off my shoulders. Next, she began to walk me through the process that would take place if I did follow through with an official complaint through HR, but the walls began to come up and come up quickly.

The materiality concept says that these brick walls are not just a metaphor for obstacles; materiality would argue that these walls are structures that are real, causing real consequences, blocking movement, and stopping history. "Those hardening of histories into barriers in the present: barriers that we experience as physical; barriers that are physical"

(Ahmed, 2017, pg. 136). For Ahmed (2017), a wall can come up to defend something from someone, serving as a defense mechanism, and a wall can become necessary because the wrong bodies could pass through. In my case, walls came up to defend me from passing through and from saying anything.

Materiality looks at the connections between bodies and worlds. “Materiality is about what is real; it is something real that blocks movement, which stops a progression” (Ahmed, 2017, p. 142). Sexual harassment is also material and another brick wall. “It is a network that stops information from getting out. It is a set of alliances that come alive to stop something; that enable a complaint to be held up or to become confidential so that it never comes into the public domain” (Ahmed, 2017, pg. 140). One woman who experienced sexual harassment in her outdoor work setting stated, “You don’t cry in front of guys, you don’t show weakness in front of them. And you don’t file [a sexual harassment complaint]. You just don’t file. You suck up and deal” (Joyce, 2016, p. 17).

Here is the brief synopsis of what would happen if I filed a complaint. An official, anonymous, written complaint would be given to my supervisor allowing him the chance to rebut and give his side of the story. My complaints surrounded my gender; do you think my supervisor would not know it was me? Anonymous, yeah right. Next, both written statements would be given to his administrator, who would make the final decision regarding not only whom to side with but if there would be any consequences or punishment. Thankfully, the EDC staff member informed that me of the few complaints that had been sent to this administrator, none were decided in favor of the victim, despite the victims’ strong cases.

Hearing the process and procedure that was required to file an official complaint, I wondered: What's the point? Is the system set up for the victim? What would this solve? So let us assume that I went through with my complaint and that the decision would side with my supervisor and that there were no ramifications. How do you think this supervisor would have treated me after I had put an official complaint on his employment record? The EDC staff member was up front and honest letting me know that my supervisor would most likely make my life a "living hell" until I decided to quit or until he found a way to fire me. She said I had two choices if I did not want to "commit professional suicide," (1) I should think very strongly about whether making the complaint was the right decision and in my best interest, and (2) I could wait until I found another job and whistle blow when I left. Walls are metaphors, some say, but if that did not feel like a giant, physical wall put in my way, then I do not know what would be.

As a woman in the outdoor industry, I had only recently begun to see these brick walls. Ahmed (2016) would say this is because it is "only the practical effort to bring about transformation that *allows the wall to be apparent.*" Once I began to dive into feminism and became more aware of the male-dominated culture that persists, I was better able to visualize the walls that surround me. For women, the challenges we face with the walls that surround us are not challenges that men have to face; therefore, few men see these walls. And, "if we are the little objects, and we shatter from throwing ourselves against a wall, but the wall does not appear to others, it might appear as if we are shattering ourselves" (Ahmed, 2016, p. x). It is crucial that we expose these walls and illuminate them for people who cannot see their existence. I had no idea what filing a complaint with the HR department would look like and was shocked at how ineffective, disappointing, and disheartening this was. Yet, I

could not discuss or explain this to my colleagues: they would not understand. For many women in outdoor education, our journeys are what Ahmed (2016) would call a “story of walls”:

A story of being worn down, of coming up against the same thing. To those who do not come up against it, the wall does not appear: the institution is experienced as “yes,” as open, committed and diverse, as happy as its mission statement, as willing as its equality statement. (para 19)

On one of my last days, I had a candid conversation with my male colleagues about the final struggles I had been dealing with and my interactions with the EDC office. Although I had shared some of my inequity concerns with them throughout my time at this job, they seemed shocked. I was surprised at their reactions until I learned more about the materiality concept. Most often, we only come to know these walls when we are faced with them. “Materiality: if we are hit by something, we become conscious of something” (Ahmed, 2017, p. 138). Ahmed suggests that since these men do not often come up against walls, they do not see them – my colleagues never saw my walls.

I decided I would not file a complaint. I was too afraid of what it would do to my professional career and my work environment. I was silenced and left to continue to deal with my inequitable work environment, continuing to hit my head against a brick wall. Within a year and a half, I found a new position within the outdoor industry and left this job. I considered filing a complaint on my way out and whistleblowing but decided against it. I know the outdoor industry can be small, feeling like everyone knows everyone – again, I was fearful of how this could impact my professional reputation and my new job. Do I regret this? Mostly, yes. “Walls come up when we talk about walls.... When you

notice a restriction, you cause a restriction” (Ahmed, 2017, pg. 149). Would I always be considered a restriction to future employers? I still wonder what types of walls would have been built if I had filed the complaint?

Sara Ahmed (1969–present) is a British-Australian scholar who considers herself a post-institutional feminist with research interests in feminist, queer, and race studies.

Ahmed’s work in material feminism is an extension of poststructural thinking and focuses on how power is secured and challenged in everyday and institutional cultures. She advocates for a new ontology that brings the material back into the discussion of social reality and breaks down the division between the natural and the cultural (Alaimo & Hekman, 2008).

To a material feminist, “matter is material-semiotic, inter-corporeal, performative, agential, even literate,” and these feminists are “open to models of extension, interconnection, exchange, and unraveling” (Alaimo, 2008, pg. 244). Material feminism is about examining the material conditions in which women live and work. Many women in the outdoor industry have been “hit” by the challenges of working in a male-dominated culture; therefore, we become much more conscious of the walls that surround us.

## **Conclusion**

Even as I conclude this article, I still wrestle with its implications. "Would my female colleagues agree with my experience? Would they appreciate me highlighting the bias we face or do they just want to continue doing their jobs without raising a 'fuss'? And my male colleagues, would they accuse me of complaining or playing the victim?" (Lipman, 2018, p. 113). Feminism is not easy, nor is it an easy platform to stand on in the outdoor industry. I continually reflect upon a statement my committee chair made early on in my dissertation work, “Now as an academic, you can speak up, you can tell your story, you can

call for change. Isn't the job of a faculty member to search for new ways of understanding and knowing – pushing the limits?" It was not until that moment that someone in my field told me that it was okay to take a stand different from many others; it was okay to speak up and speak up loudly. In the words of Christine Norton (cited by Chambers, 2015; Gray & Mitten, 2018), "Voice is both a privilege and a responsibility... silence is simply not an option." I believe wholeheartedly in the power of feminism and its ability to create a culture change in the outdoor industry.

Ahmed (2012) believes "you have to become insistent to go against the flow, and you are judged to be going against the flow because you are insistent" (p. 186). Throughout my outdoor career there have been times when my insistence was delayed, as I was fearful of the career consequences. Now, working on the academic side of the outdoor industry, I feel a bit more protected and empowered to speak out. Perhaps this article series and my feminist research in the outdoors is my way of making up for staying silent, not filing a complaint, and for taking time to be insistent. Ahmed (2012) encourages this insistence and its importance:

Things might appear fluid if you are going the way things are flowing. When you are not going that way, you experience a flow *as* solidity, as what you come up against. In turn, those who are not going the way things are flowing are experienced *as* obstructing the flow. We might need to be the cause of the obstruction. We might need to get in the way if we are to go anywhere. We might need to become the blockage points by pointing out the blockage points... *Don't look over it, if you can't get over it.* (p. 187)

I have shared with the reader some personal experiences related to my gender, and thus by applying Spivak, Foucault, and Ahmed to my story, I have been able to make meaning of living a feminist life in the outdoor industry.

## **Everyday Feminist Guide for Outdoor Industry Male Practitioners, An Inclusion Handbook: A Review of the Survey Data**

### **Topic**

At a recent conference, I had the pleasure of finally meeting Dr. Tonia Gray. She was the keynote speaker at this conference and talked about women's equality in the outdoor industry. In discussions with her, I came to realize that we both had experienced male colleagues asking for advice and guidance regarding the inclusion, recruitment, and retention, of women in the industry. Together with Dr. Denise Mitten over coffee, we hypothesized that men's participation and involvement in closing the gender gap within the industry will be a large part of the solution. I wanted to learn more about what men thought about the challenges women face, about whether they even saw the gender disparity, and what successes they had achieved working with inclusion strategies and initiatives.

The purpose of this research project is to provide a tangible resource aimed at male-identifying practitioners, filled with strategies for inclusion of women in the outdoor industry. It is now time to include men in the conversation. "We're told to speak up, to be more confident, to demand to be paid what we're worth. We talk endlessly among ourselves about all of this. What we don't do is talk to men about it" (Lipman, 2018, p. x). Moreover, as so eloquently spoken by a male survey participant, "Because I consider myself a feminist, I want a world where women have the same opportunities in the outdoors as I do." For all the men in the outdoor industry who call themselves feminists and for those considering it, this is for you!

### **Note about Gender**

Gender is socially constructed and can be defined as the way people feel about their gender – it is not necessarily the biological sex assigned at birth. In Western societies, it is

common to see gender as binary, consisting of males and females, yet in reality, gender is a spectrum that can be viewed with multiple axes (Martin, et al., 2018). We should be utilizing gender differences as the starting point for our research and not our conclusion (Henderson, Winn & Roberts, 1996). “Since gender is so powerful in an individual’s identity and their ability to relate authentically with other people, it seems problematic that the dominant paradigm only offers two options” (Martin et al., 2018, p. 294).

Much current research, including this research project, only speaks in binaries (male/female; he/she). The language utilized in this research’s survey was “male-identifying.” As one participant indicated, “I think it is important to understand the role of intersectionality here and somehow look at the role that other factors (race or sexual identity) play in further preventing women from participating. A conversation around non-binary gender identities could also be important when discussing this topic.” There is little room for individuals identifying other than binary (in the outdoor industry, as well as this survey) as articulated by a survey participant, “I even notice gravitation towards a gender binary system... we are alienating the transgender community as well.” Moving forward beyond binaries is essential for this research project as well as many others in the outdoor industry.

Henderson et al., (1996) warned, “Although researching gender differences gives some clues regarding how outdoor experiences may be different based on biological sex, we must be careful not to essentialize those differences and suggest that all women or all men experience the outdoors in the same way” (p. 16). There are times in this research where the characteristics, behaviors, and beliefs of a specific, binary gender will be described, and it is important to note that when discussing these gender role stereotypes that these are not inclusive of all women or men but are tendencies for most.

## **Context of the Issue**

Gender disparity in the outdoor industry is present, vast, and continuous (Gray, 2016; Gray & Mitten, 2018; Gray, Mitten, Loeffler, Allen-Craig, & Carpenter, 2017; Henderson, 1996; Loeffler, 1996b; McNeil, 2012; Wright & Gray, 2013). The data gathered in this research project was from male-identifying individuals only. As one male survey participant noted, “Gender inequality is a long and deeply entrenched problem in the outdoor industry.” The outdoors is not just a designated physical area, “but spaces which are created by individuals... often these are designed by men, for men” (Straker, 2018, p. 103). Women are one of the marginalized and underrepresented populations in the outdoors and have been for decades. As another survey participant indicated, “I don’t feel like this ratio [of gender inequality] creates a sense of community in our profession where everyone feels supported in what they do.”

Women comprise 46% of the total individuals recreating outdoors in the United States in 2018, with the most popular activities including running, jogging, and trail running; freshwater, saltwater, and fly fishing; road biking, mountain biking, and BMX; hiking; and car, backyard, backpacking, and RV camping (Outdoor Foundation, 2018). Looking beyond participation, women’s representation is also disproportionately low among practitioner and academic leaders working in the outdoor industry (Garvey & Gass, 1999; Gray, et al., 2016; Loeffler, 1996b). Women are also underrepresented in the academic arena in the areas of “career prestige, academic footprint, leadership roles, and appreciation of contributions” (Gray, 2016, p. 25), and they only account for 25% of the academic authorship (Martin, Maney & Mitten, 2018).

“They [women] love being outdoors, but dominant discourses mean they understate their expertise despite being highly competent” (Straker, 2018, p. 103). Survey participants indicated, “This [gender inequality] is a disservice to females hoping to enter the industry and to clients who cannot see themselves represented,” and this “lack of diversity dulls awareness and creates exclusivity.” Only 10% of mountain guides are women, 22% of ski patrollers are women, and only 37% of superintendents for the Parks Service are women (Gleich, 2018; Gilpin, 2016; Moye, 2017). As a survey participant noted, “When I received the Rock Instructor Certification through the AMGA, there were 10 females and 110 males with the cert. That was in 2016. The numbers speak for themselves.”

The outdoor industry has been and continues to be dominated by white, cisgender, able-bodied, heterosexual males. “Outdoor education seems to be caught in a circular argument – social justice issues are not taught so masculine perspectives remain; masculine perspectives remain so there is no push to change and include social justice issues” (Dubreuil Karpa, 2018, p. 357). Research-informed statistics surrounding career women are almost completely absent, making informed and research-backed arguments impossible (Gray, 2016; Vink, 2015; Wright & Gray, 2013). “The higher up one looks in the industry, the more the gender gap widens. From what I’ve seen gender is closer to split at entry level positions, yet as people advance and get higher roles and obtain more certifications the gender gap widens,” stated a survey participant. Christie (2018) noted:

I offer a cautionary note here that we shouldn’t simply look to *count more women in* as a marker of redistributive justice or the gender equity end goal. What we need to address is the more complex structural discrimination – existing within such systems – that devalues women’s capital and marginalizes their career progression, often

going beyond the glass ceiling analogy and reducing women to incarceration in an identity cage. (p. 265)

The source of gender disparity in the outdoor industry is complicated. Utilizing the stories and voices of women, Gray (2016) argued that women in the outdoors seldom face apparent resistance or overt prejudice, but instead face invisible obstacles and hidden bias, making it harder to pinpoint. “Our exclusion is subtle and pervasive in mysterious ways, and women need to keep their ‘gender radar’ highly attuned to these inconsistencies” (Gray, 2018, p. 42). These obstacles, which create our “invisibility cloak,” can be attributed to the hidden curriculum found in outdoor education that values physical skills over intellectual, social, emotional, and moral development (Mitten, Warren, Lotz, & D’Amore, 2012; Mitten, Gray, Allen-Craig, Loeffler, Carpenter, 2018). Without specific instances or visible obstacles, women become tired of trying to bring women’s issues up again and again, “with no societal change or progress”; therefore, a “feminist fatigue” sets in (Gray, 2016, p. 26).

A recent Pew study indicated that a majority of men still believe obstacles to women’s success are largely gone, while the majority of women believe significant obstacles are still in the way (Fingerhut, 2016). There is a huge disconnect. One participant, when asked when they began noticing gender disparity in the outdoor industry, said, “I suppose not until this survey.” If men are blind to the gender gap in the outdoors, how can we expect them to care, let alone partner with women to help close the gap? There is still much work to be done. One survey participant indicated that one of the biggest challenges facing women are those “who don’t think gender bias is present. That means we have a very long way to go to help support women and other underrepresented communities in our industry.”

As Lipman (2018) articulates, “Something systematic is holding women back,” and women are not the only ones who notice this (pg. 65). When asked, a male participant surveyed stated, “Women face challenges in the outdoor industry including misogyny, under representation in leadership roles, pay differences, little to no tailored gear and equipment, sexism and female stereotyping to name a few.” Gender inequality is an issue men are noticing and are trying to grapple with.

### **The Challenges for Men**

When we say “gender” we hear “women”; therefore, gender inequality is often seen as a women’s issue and struggle. “Most men don’t know they are gendered beings,” and when most white middle-class men wake up and look at themselves in the mirror, they simply see a human being as they have “no class, no race, and no gender” (Kimmel, 2007, p. 106). Therefore many men cannot quantify what they cannot see – to some the gender gap does not exist.

Some undeserving men have gotten a bad rap when it comes to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. Most men are not villains, nor do they need condemning, or as a survey participant noted, men do not want to feel like “there is going to be a witch hunt.” The challenge becomes that some men cannot figure out what they are supposed to do. As a survey participant noted, “I think a lot of the time men do not realize when they are being slightly sexist and a little education could go a long way,” while another said, “It is interesting talking about a male role in this discussion. It is sometimes hard to know our role and how to be empowering and not mansplaining.”

Fear is something I hear from colleagues, which was also evident in this survey – men are not quite sure how to be more inclusive without offending or saying the wrong thing.

Some feel like they have to walk on eggshells when it comes to discussing issues surrounding women, some feel like they do not know enough to speak up, some feel like they do not have the right to speak up, and some are fearful that they will say the wrong things. A study conducted by a non-profit asked men what might undermine their support of gender equality, and 74% of men cited fear – fear of loss of status, fear of other men’s disapproval, and sadly, fear of making a mistake (Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009). Sometimes this fear shuts men down.

Some males in the industry, on the other hand, are inquiring about how they can work to make the outdoor industry a better place for women, a more equitable workplace. One survey participant indicated “I see female friends of mine frustrated by the lack of respect [women are given] within the outdoor space. It disappoints me when I realize they are correct, and it makes me want to help change it.” These men want strategies and want to make a change, but often they do not know what the right steps are. As another participant articulated,

Gender inclusion in the outdoor industry is one big piece to overall inclusion in the outdoor industry and beyond. As a hetero, white, cisgendered, bearded, middle-class person I have a large capacity to influence change in this industry. Coming from my position of privilege I have great potential to challenge and provide growth opportunities for each person that I meet and interact with.

Some men care and want to help, but we (women) have left men out of the conversation and therefore the solutions. The woman-specific articles, books, blog posts, online forums and groups, social media pages, and even break-out sessions at outdoor conferences have been tremendously helpful for some women in the outdoor industry over

the past several years. When looking at the audience for these, they are overwhelmingly targeting women. Morse (1997) encouraged gender responsible leadership, which leaves the responsibility “with men as well as women in pursuing more equal power relations” (p. 128). A cultural change requires a shared and balanced gender leadership approach. One participant agreed and said this is about shared responsibility for all persons:

I have interest in gender inclusion because, as a male – a white male of relative privilege, people like me have run this industry for decades, and not necessarily because we’re the most qualified leaders/owners but because no one had equal enough power to make anything different occur. The time for balanced leadership is now.

## **Methodology**

A qualitative survey utilizing open-ended questions was distributed via various outdoor industry social media outlets. This survey was aimed at male-identifying individuals working in the outdoor industry. The survey sought to better understand their needs, concerns, and successes regarding the inclusion of women in the outdoor industry. A sample of some of the questions asked in the survey:

- What is your impression of the challenges women face in the outdoor industry?
- Do you notice gender disparity in the outdoor industry? If so, under what conditions do you notice this disparity?
- Are there tools, techniques, or strategies you are currently utilizing or have utilized that are EFFECTIVE for including women? If so, please provide examples.

- Are there tools, techniques, or strategies that you are currently utilizing or have utilized that are INEFFECTIVE for including women? If so, please provide examples.
- Why do you have an interest in gender inclusion in the outdoor industry?
- As a professional in the field, what do you need the most help or assistance with, in regards to working with women?

One hundred and seventy-two responses were collected, and the survey was segregated using emergent themes. The themes that emerged from the data have been combined with a literature review on inclusion strategies for women, mostly taking place outside of the outdoor industry. Little research has been conducted on inclusion strategies for women specific to the outdoor industry. This research project seeks to blend both theory and practice: the practical experience of males' inclusion work and their needs (gathered in the survey) are combined with academic research (through a literature review). The final product of this research project will be implications to practice as well as a field guide highlighting inclusion strategies focused towards male practitioners.

### **Thematic Analysis**

A thematic analysis was utilized to interpret the qualitative survey data. Pre-emergent themes were not utilized, as my understanding of the outdoor industry comes from my female-identifying perspective. This analysis was exploratory in nature, seeking to better understand the perspective of male-identifying individuals in the industry. This type of data collection affords the researcher the ability to “describe, create explanations, pose hypotheses, develop theories, and link their story to other stories” (Glesne, 2006, p.

147). Following the sociological tradition, themes were pinpointed and identified and their occurrences were recorded.

First, the data was segregated into major data clumps (identifying concepts), next the data was broken into numerous subcodes, and eventually, the data codes were placed in a meaningful sequence for further analysis and description (Glesne, 2006). Utilizing Wolcott's techniques (1994) of description, analysis, and interpretation, the data is moved further, to create connections and meaning for the readers. Description involves staying close to the data and letting it essentially speak for itself – utilizing participants' stories and quotations. An analysis is the identification of key factors in the data and the relationship among them – discussing the themes that arise from the data. Finally, interpretation means transforming the data – the utilization of the personal experience of the survey participants and attaching a literature review (Glesne, 2006; Wolcott, 1994).

The patterns revealed were translated into the themes of gender bias and hegemonic masculinity in the work environment. The ultimate goal of this thematic analysis is to display the data in a field guide format as “an organized assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action taking” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11). Action taking is vital for this research project as the focus is on implementing strategies for inclusion in the workplace.

### **Subjectivity and Positionality**

Understanding both my position in my research and how my identity will guide my research is vital in feminist work that strives to critique and create change. Subjectivity and positionality go hand in hand. Subjectivity encompasses my individual experiences,

perspectives, and feelings. This subjectivity will guide all aspects of my research, as it will determine how I analyze and interpret my research.

Positionality is about how I am defined by others. Positionality as defined by St. Louis and Barton (2002) is “the relational place or value one has that influences and is influenced by varying contexts” (p. 1), e.g., social, political, historical, educational, and economical to name a few. Who I am as an upper middle class, female-identifying, white, able-bodied, heterosexual, partnered female defines my positionality – much of this happened before I was born. How I position myself and how others position me within my work in the outdoors depends on additional qualities such as appearance, femininity, certifications, education, and technical skills.

Keeping my subjectivity and positionality at the forefront of my thought process and decision-making throughout the data analysis paved the way for trustworthy research. Yet, it was important that I push beyond subjectivity and positionality, utilizing Holloway and Jefferson’s (2000) core questions. These questions helped guide my analytical interpretations to ensure further trustworthiness: (1) What do I notice? (2) Why do I notice what I notice? (3) How can I interpret what I notice? and (4) How can I know that my interpretation is the “right” one? Several strategies were employed to ensure I was working with and alongside these questions during my thematic analysis. I tried to remain continually alert to my own biases, I spent prolonged time with the data constantly revisited it, and I asked friends and colleagues to work with portions of my data, making their own interpretations and comparing those to my own.

## Results

### Themes

**Gender bias.** There is confusion about where the root of the gender problem stems from, which causes calls to action to be slow, delayed, or even ignored. Despite the complex cause of bias, women in the outdoor industry are hindered because of it. “The unconscious bias that women face dismisses our expertise and lessens our penetration in the profession” (Gray, 2018, p. 42). Without a doubt, bias plays a part in the gender problem. As a survey participant indicated, “The main issues are that many of my male staff and clients are completely unaware of their own bias,” and another mentioned, “I have always known about it [bias], but I haven’t actually worked to address my own personal biases and inform others until very recently.”

Women who work and play in the masculine outdoor environment can be penalized for not conforming to their feminine gender norms. “Our society sees things such as ‘surviving in the wilderness’ and general outdoor skills as manly,” as one survey participant articulated. “Historically, women have been invisible in outdoors pursuits and have been inaccurately depicted because of the incompatibility between traditional perceptions of women’s roles and their participation in outdoor activities” (Henderson, 1996, p. 109). When women have a more masculine leadership style, they are perceived as “butch” or “bossy,” and they need to face any challenge with “fearless determination and a cup of toughen up” (Wright & Gray, 2013), and as a survey participant noted, “The industry tends to reward confidence over competence.” These women face adverse reactions and evaluations from participants on outdoor programs and trips. However, if women act within their feminine gender roles, they will be evaluated positively, and their interpersonal skills,

conflict resolution, or participant nurturing skills will be highlighted. Yet, there will be no mention of their technical skills, physical strength, directness, or assertiveness (Wittmer, 2001).

There are several types of bias, but the bias discussed most often in this survey is unconscious bias. We do not go to work intentionally thinking we are going to discriminate against someone of a different gender, race, or class. However, unconsciously we still have bias, and these biases favor men. As a survey participant articulated, “I am very surprised how much of a blind spot I have had for women in our field. There are systemic microaggressions and harassment at a level I was not aware of even a few years ago.”

Unconscious bias stems from childhood and from the stereotypes that we hold for characteristics that typically define men and women (Elsesser, 2018; Lipman, 2018; Tannen, 2001). “The activation of these stereotypes happens so quickly that we’re not typically aware of it – thus, the unconscious part” (Elsesser, 2018). Note, that not all unconscious biases are wrong, but they do influence decision-making, so it is crucial to become aware and conscious of biases in order to be aware of the factors that influence decisions.

**Hegemonic masculinity and the work environment.** Hegemonic masculinity persists in the outdoor industry and can be defined as the practice that legitimizes men's dominant position in society and justifies the subordination of women (McNeil, et al., 2012). The outdoor industry is filled with “pockets of bias” (Gray, 2016, p. 26) consisting of a hypermasculine culture that promotes valuing dominance, risk, and masculine traits over traditionally regarded feminine traits (Fletcher, 2008; Frohlick, 2005). The history of outdoor recreation and education has been created from a primarily male-based value system and perspective resulting in its current slants toward masculine characteristics and

preferences. This foundation also includes practicality, utility, seeking the rational truth, power and influence, objective rationalization, and competition (Henderson, 1996). As one participant states, “We’re still scaring away lots of people (or just boring them to tears) by sticking with these historical ideas of what being in the outdoors means. We’re not all going to be John Muir or some other historical white guy figure and appreciate the woods the way he/they did.”

From birth, men are conditioned to see the world in terms of winners and losers. Tannen (1994) found that in childhood, girls learn to play with other girls by collaborating while boys learn to play by competing and one-upping each other. When boys and girls grow up, these dynamics remain the same. It is important to remember though, “The pedagogy of recapturing their [men’s] rugged individualism, prevalent in the development of programming for boys and men, precludes some men from feeling comfortable in the outdoors” (Mitten, 2018a, p. 31).

The outdoors is traditionally seen as an arena for hegemonic masculinity and has been a domain for men and consequent male hegemonic thinking, often excluding women because of their inherent inferiority (Humberstone, 2000; Little, 2002). Martin (2004) references the “outdoor leisure identity,” which portrays the classic outdoorsman as rugged and tough: a “real man’s man.” The idea that the outdoor enthusiast is a larger-than-life white male, worthy of respect and adoration, persists today. This identity specifies who goes outdoors and who belongs (Dooley, 2016). Thus, the outdoors has become subject to social construction as a white, masculine space, and anyone who does not fit that description is unwelcome (Humberstone, 2000; Martin, 2004). The outdoor culture often feels like a “boys’ club” that values a masculine “bro” and “conquering spirit” mentality (Wright &

Gray, 2013) or, as one survey participant described, “hyper masculine ego driven” individuals.

The impact of the masculine, hegemonic culture on women in the outdoors can be devastating, causing women to not enter the industry or exit the industry early (Allen-Craig & Hartley, 2012; Edwards & Gray, 1998; Gray, 2016; Gray & Birrell, 2005; Loeffler, 1996a; Loeffler, 1996b; Sharp, 2001). A heavily gendered, hegemonic atmosphere sets women up for failure from the minute they step foot on the trail or in the office. As one survey participant stated, “After listening to story after story I wonder how many folks we’ve pushed out of this field. That bothers me, I wonder what we’ve lost and who we’ve disempowered.”

As survey participants expressed, “I believe the outdoor industry is very patriarchal” and is full of “dominating males seeking power” with a “lot of machismo involved in how hard people climb, how many uncomfortable conditions they endure, how ‘sick’ things are.” A male-dominated work culture poses problems, barriers, and threats to women (Gray, 2016; Gray, Allen-Craig, & Carpenter, 2017; Wright & Gray, 2013). Simply put, the culture surrounding the outdoor industry has created an environment where “women have a much steeper uphill battle than men” (Vink, 2015, p. 8). Many women working in outdoor education feel marginalized, undervalued, and overlooked (Gray, 2016; Gray et al., 2017; Wright & Gray, 2013). As one survey participant expressed, “The challenges women face in the outdoor industry are huge – I am glad I am male.”

***Career challenges for women.*** In addition to a masculine work environment, women face challenges particular to their gender in regards to career success and longevity in the outdoor industry. The short-term nature and challenging financial aspects of outdoor

employment can shape the career decisions women make. This type of work can be unappealing to women who are older, have families, are raising children, or are in debt (Loeffler, 1996b). As survey participants articulated, it is “harder for women to be away from children and family for extended periods of time,” and “extended time spent in the field is not conducive to responsibilities of new mothers/breastfeeding.” Women have indicated that they have faced various stigmas and have felt dilemmas surrounding the friction between family roles and career longevity due to the nature of the work (Wright & Gray, 2013).

Women seldom maintain long-term employment in the outdoor industry. Wright and Gray (2013) argued that the arduous nature and unconventional operations of the industry, in association with masculine technical prowess and physical competence, are reasons for this lack of career sustainability. “Those women who wish to make a career through various outdoor outlets must navigate a gendered environment carefully in order to be taken seriously and prove that they can be just as successful as men in the same field” (Dooley, 2016, p.1). Additionally, women “face the challenge of glass ceilings, where men are thought to be more suited for management,” and they “are not getting advanced into lead positions as fast as males do,” and they have “lower prospects for promotion/advancement” as articulated by survey participants.

### **Men’s Perceptions of the Challenges Women Face**

When asked what they perceived as the challenges women face in the outdoor industry, the list, depth, and insight the men provided was not only impressive, but also illuminating. One survey participant even stated that “there are many dangers in the outdoors for women and they are all men...which is deep-rooted in a misogynist society that can lead

male participants to disrespect female leadership, lead to female leadership attrition, AND female participants being unwilling to move into leadership roles.”

A survey conducted by a non-profit indicated that 51% of men cited lack of awareness about exactly what issues women face in the workplace (Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009). One survey participant summarized these challenges, “There are many... everything from micro-aggressions and mansplaining to scary/threatening encounters with men in the backcountry to being offered less technically challenging work, assumed to be physically weaker, and to be the emotional support for men who do not feel comfortable reaching out to other men – I could go on.”

Men’s perceptions of the challenges women face in the outdoor industry as determined by the survey were:

- Gender bias (stereotypes/social norms and proving oneself)
- Challenges of working in a male-dominated work environment (boys’ club/good ol’ boys, lack of mentors/role models, and biological factors)
- Challenges of sustainable career paths (family concerns and the gender pay gap)

A survey participant articulated, “Many men do not give a second thought to any of the above [challenges women face in the outdoors]. Men, even if they do give thought to the above, do not necessarily see these challenges as structural issues, but rather individual concerns.”

Equality was the main reason why male respondents were interested in gender inclusion in the outdoor industry. The survey also asked which areas of inclusion were men most interested in. The survey revealed men were most interested in advancement/promotion

and culture/work environment strategies. They were equally interested in gender inclusion on all levels including participants/clients, student leaders/interns, and professional staff (entry, mid, and professional level).

A majority of men surveyed indicated that they started to notice that there was gender disparity in the outdoor industry immediately upon entering their careers or even before their careers began when they were recreating in the outdoors personally. Yet, some indicated that they are just now seeing this disparity: “My most recent guiding experience highlighted VERY serious gender issues.” While others have seen it for some time: “I am a transgender man, so I’ve always been in tune to how I was treated,” and another noted, “I notice it in every company I have worked for in the guiding world,” and “I have been aware of the disparity for a long time but didn’t notice the severity until I made an effort to reach out to more women to apply to our program.” One participant who has been working in the outdoor industry since the 1980s articulated:

I noticed it then [in the 1980s] – out of 120 instructors, there were 5 women and none in leadership. Since then it has slowly changed, now there are more women ski school directors, instructors, and supervisors, yet if you look at the examination team for many of the divisions, women are not represented. Each outdoor sport can tell the same story.

Some specifically indicated that they noticed the disparity in their college days, often connected to academic work. A survey participant stated that “there was great disparity in the readings – the majority of readings handed out/recommended to the students were published by men.”

The survey indicated that the men noticed gender disparity in the outdoor industry most often when they were in the field or guiding or at conferences, professional workshops, or certifications. Additionally, areas including university academic programs, the media, and upper administrative or executive positions in the industry revealed more obvious gender disparity. This gender disparity can be found in “our facilitation, basic values structure, how we empower, and how we often praise leadership” noted a survey participant. What follows is an in-depth analysis of the challenges men believe women face in the outdoor industry:

**Gender bias.**

*Stereotypes/social norms.* Social norms can be described as how we choose specific social roles to adapt and learn regarding how we identify as women, men, or people identifying as other than binary. Women feel pressure to conform to the male standards of the outdoor industry and become aware of the need to act within these parameters early in their careers (Teal, 1994; Wright & Gray, 2013). In the outdoors, masculine tendencies are valued more highly than feminine tendencies, and in Western cultures ideas of individualism, self-reliance, and autonomy are promoted, especially for men (Mitten, 2018b; Wittmer, 2001; Wright & Gray, 2013). Even certain activities within the outdoor industry have their own stereotypes and biases as one survey participant noted, “I don’t like that snowboarding and kayaking are dominated by men. It’s as if women are supposed to ski. It makes no sense.” Wittmer (2001) suggested that male characteristics are task-oriented, directive, assertive, and independent. Female characteristics are understanding, facilitating, helpful, emotionally expressive, and interpersonally oriented. For example, in outdoor education two distinct roles tend to emerge, where the “male image” is the face, the leader, and the “female image” is behind the scenes, the sidekick (Wittmer, 2001), always the “forever apprentice” (Jordan,

2018, p. 218). Survey participants noted that the “image of recreation is a strong powerful male” and there is an “assumption that a female guide must only be there in a student/subordinate role.” These images underpin the idea that a woman leading in the outdoors could only ever be an imposter.

*Proving oneself.* While other industries utilize the term “respect gap,” the outdoor industry tends to refer to this concept as proving oneself. Lack of respect for women working in the industry is ever-present. As survey participants noted, women have a “lack of confidence from clients/students,” and “aren’t taken seriously or are treated as less than by older coworkers and many clients.” Mostly, men are assumed to be competent until they prove differently, whereas women are assumed to be incompetent until they prove otherwise (Lipman, 2018). “Many people including clients and other professionals don’t assume they [women] have skills until they prove it,” noted a survey participant. Another participant provided an example: “Men are trusted with almost no proof of ability/skill to guide in areas they may not be certified to guide in, while women are forced to prove themselves before even being considered.”

There is an overemphasis on technical skills and an underemphasis on interpersonal skills within the industry (Neill, 1997). Technical skills include outdoor living skills (camping, navigation, survival) and activity-specific skills (rock climbing, caving, sea kayaking), while interpersonal skills include leadership, decision-making, problem solving, and communication (Ewert, Sibthorp, & Sibthorp, 2017; Kosseff, 2003; Robbins, 2015). A survey participant noted, they see women in the outdoor industry,

having to prove themselves in ways male colleagues don’t. They often don’t get the immediate respect of clients in regard to their skill set. Male guides are looked at as

the “experts” with females assisting, which is obviously not the case. I think it’s an uphill battle for women to be seen as an expert in their field.

Women guides are often expected to underperform when compared to their male colleagues. This can result in women feeling pressure to perform, not only on par with male peers but better than men, in order to be respected (Teal, 1994; Wright & Gray, 2013). As a survey participant noted, women are not “being shown the same amount of respect as male leaders from students or clients and they feel the need to be so much MORE dialed/knowledgeable than male colleagues in order to gain respect.” Take a look at women carrying larger than necessary backpacks (in proportion to their body size) or enduring painful blisters (in lieu of speaking up and appearing weak) in order to prove themselves worthy to their clients or participants (Jordan, 2018). As one survey participant noted, “There’s such a strong pressure for women in the field to be ‘one of the guys’ that sometimes they don’t recognize it’s [gender disparity] an issue or they don’t want to seem vulnerable by acknowledging there’s a problem.” The outdoor industry is “operated within environments in which women had very little room for error” (Joyce, 2016, p. 31). Failure is not an option for women in the outdoors.

### **Challenges of working in a male-dominated work environment.**

*Boys’ club/Good ol’ boys.* A survey participant indicated a huge challenge is “males being in the power seats at outdoor programs working with the old culture.” This boys’ club as described by another participant is when people are “regularly getting outside and pushing each other’s skills in a male identifying way. These boys’ clubs often do not use social norms that females identify with nor do they use inclusive behavior and language to make females feel comfortable.” As Dubreuil Karpa (2018) noted, “The lack of women in visible

leadership roles has led to a lack of pressure to change the current programming” (p. 357). And many of these programs were designed by the good ol’ boy network. This male-dominated culture can be a stumbling block for women, yet the pressure continues for women to try to be included and to be part of the club.

“Male stoicism and crusty self-reliance” still remain dominant in the general perceptions of the outdoors, resulting in some women struggling to fully engage (Straker, 2018, p. 97). The “outdoor sports and their communities are male-dominated in terms of numbers and influence. I imagine it to be difficult or intimidating at times to crack into that mold,” noted a survey participant. Getting a foot in the door of the outdoor industry can be challenging, and fitting into the outdoor community mold can add tremendous pressure on women. This pressure to “fit in” and conform makes many women feel like “frauds” (Gray, 2016; Teal, 1994), causing women to have “perceived skill deficits, a sense of not belonging, or even a judgmental workplace,” which can, in turn, give them a “feeling of being phony, fraud, or a pretender” (Gray, 2016, p. 34).

Some women indicate that they suffer from “imposter syndrome,” causing them to utilize techniques such as “male masking” to survive (Gray, 2016). “Women often appear to adopt a macho culture to be a recognized member of the club,” noted a survey participant. When women change their appearance to fit in with their male colleagues or adjust their language or terminology in order to “talk the talk” and play along in the club – this is male masking. In a world where women feel like they do not belong, and when they try to belong in this world they come up against criticism that seems misplaced, this can be devastating (Gray, 2016).

*Lack of mentors/role models.* There are few women mentors for women (or men) in the industry. One survey participant noted, “At the high school our girl students do not have role models to look up to and at the guide service it’s almost the same thing and it perpetuates the idea that it’s a men’s industry and makes it hard for women to be seen as equal.” Another even indicated that they “have not had the opportunity to be mentored by a female supervisor and to me, this indicates that there are not as many senior females in the outdoor industry.”

The opportunity to work with other women in the outdoors is limited. Only 10-15% of mountain bikers are women, only 25% of sponsored athletes are women, only 30% of the fly fishing community are women, and only 40% of skiers are women (Glass, 2016; Gleich, 2018; Sutak, 2018). The lack of women and the practice of pairing females and males together as a leadership team for programs decrease the opportunity for women to be able to work side by side (Loeffler, 1996). The long-term impact of the lack of women mentors in the industry could be detrimental. A survey participant noted, “There are a large number of interested and eager females that ultimately are under mentored, which leads to a loss of interest and/or competence that leads to a failing of gender inclusion in our industry.”

Fewer women in the industry have led to “women having to find a kind of personal armour”; in addition, women have formed “strong bonds with each other based on mutual respect and shared tolerance” (Pryor, 2018, p. 174). Another aspect of mentorship to be considered is that “women face larger challenges in finding willing mentors due to the social bias of young women spending extended periods of time in the backcountry with older men,” as described by a survey participant.

**Biological factors.** Women in the outdoors are often faced with the fact that women are physiologically different from men, which seems to be a concept in this industry that cannot be ignored (Bell, 1996; Fletcher, 2008). As a woman working in outdoor education indicated, “It became apparent that our bodies, as gendered, were encoded with conflicting meanings in outdoor adventuring, in which it might seem self-evident that the social codes for femininity would have less value” (Bell, 1996, p. 149).

A survey participant noted these biological implications, stating, “When a job is physically demanding, it’s no longer women’s work.” Some would look at a woman of smaller stature and question whether she was physically able to perform the work. A person in a leadership position with a small or weak body type can create fear in participants that they may be unable to perform, while on the other end of the spectrum, a woman with a larger body type is questioned about her performance and ability (Bell, 1996; Fletcher, 2008). A woman interviewed in one of Bell’s (1996) studies discussed her feelings, “I don’t fit the norm of the outdoor wilderness leaders because my body shape is different. What I have to battle with constantly with a group are assumptions on their part that I’m not qualified” (p. 149). One survey participant noted, “Women are seen as weaker and lesser – their talents are overlooked.” Women are constantly faced with proving their body types to their co-workers, participants, or clients in hopes of obtaining approval and evoking confidence that they can indeed lead a particular activity in the outdoors.

Men surveyed also brought up other biological aspects that cause challenges for women, including technical gear and equipment: “Even down to our gear (ex: 2-man tent, rental sleeping bags are almost always cut to men’s dimensions, climbing shoes at the gym are almost always in men’s sizes, etc.)” One particular participant even indicated his

awareness of female challenges including menstruation, urination, and appearance management.

### **Challenges of a sustainable career path.**

*Family concerns.* Several survey participants discussed the challenges that women have when they begin to think about starting a family. The impact that children can have on women's careers in the outdoors can be a real challenge and a game changer. A participant mentioned knowing female colleagues "who've been explicitly asked during hiring interviews whether and when they plan to have children and who've been denied job offers." Women's societal expectations to fulfill caretaking roles as wives and mothers may not necessarily be compatible with the outdoor industry (Little, 2002). As articulated by one survey participant, "Females working in higher up positions, often there is judgment placed on their family and maternal behaviors that young professionals have difficulty identifying with."

Women have indicated that they have faced various stigmas and have felt dilemmas surrounding the friction between family roles and career longevity due to the nature of the work (Wright & Gray, 2013). A 2018 study researching women's career changes after having children revealed that 20% kept working in the field, 20% kept working but with far less field time, 23% changed to administrative roles, and 23% left work altogether, while 14% changed careers (Lutz, p. 401). Another survey participant discussed that unless women work for a large employer, "there is a large segment of the outdoor industry composed of businesses small enough that state and/or federal regulations regarding maternity leave, Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), etc. do not apply."

**Gender pay gap.** A survey participant indicated that they only started noticing the gender disparity in the industry, “when some female colleagues told me how much they get paid,” and another noted, “I’ve always noticed the uneven distribution of pay.” Although outdated, one of the few articles discussing the pay gap in the outdoors stated that men earned \$5,000 more a year than women (Medina, 2001). Sadly, this is the only study quantifying the pay discrepancy women face in the outdoor industry. “The pay gap, like other types of bias, is often invisible: it is explained away by other factors” (Lipman, 2018, p. 126) such as age, previous job positions or salaries, and even potential. Looking outside the outdoor industry, The National Women’s Law Center (2017) found the average woman will earn \$418,800 less than the average man over a four-decade career. “Sustainable career paths with sufficient wages and conditions that support personal and family growth” can be a huge stumbling block for women as noted by a survey participant. Another stated, “They [women] are not recognized, are paid less, expected to be more compliant, more easily ridiculed if something is off or if they do not present and perform at 102%. It is not equal, and this is not okay.” Not only can the gender pay gap be invisible, but also there is a culture of silence surrounding salaries, which creates a real taboo about having clear and professional conversations around what people make.

### **Men Seeking Assistance**

The survey indicated that men were looking for help, assistance, and guidance in regards to working with women in the outdoors and expressed they were most interested in strategies and creating a culture change including but not limited to: tangible tools for active inclusion, best practices, resources for training, and feedback assistance. One survey participant indicated, “I’ve heard the issues identified, but rarely have I seen ‘good’ examples

of how to fix this problem.” Additionally, men were interested in hearing women’s stories and experiences: “let us hear from women, let us share their stories” noted a survey participant. Participants mentioned wanting to “fight my own biases,” “recognize my unconscious biases,” “identify bias or deep-seated social norms, and find out how to move past them” in hopes of “changing my worldview/philosophy from one that drifts back to a bro culture.”

The survey revealed that this group of individuals understands some of the challenges women face in the outdoor industry. Additionally, men are interested in learning how to be more inclusive of women in all roles of an organization and in a variety of areas within the industry. In the next section, implications for practice will be presented that help fill in the gaps and create tangible strategies that men can begin utilizing to reduce the challenges and stumbling blocks women face in the outdoors.

### **Implications for Practice**

The data has been constructed in a manner that will provide practitioners with ideas and strategies for implementation into the workplace. When beginning to think about implementing inclusion strategies men can study the habits of the workplace, observe the interactions taking place (between supervisors, colleagues, clients, participants, and students), and examine behaviors between all people – behaving like an anthropologist. The survey indicated that some men in the outdoor industry have been trying to find solutions for inclusion, but as one survey participant said, “We do a good job of superficially highlighting the problem without pragmatically addressing the issue,” and another noted it is important that we “actively work at inclusion instead of passively working towards equality.”

When the men surveyed found success in a strategy, initiative, or program, they overwhelmingly indicated that they gained or developed the knowledge to facilitate effective inclusive practices through colleagues or mentors. Another highly ranked area for learned inclusion behaviors and strategies was classes/academic work and conferences/workshops/trainings. The strategies listed below are a combination of current research surrounding inclusion in the workplace and effective strategies implemented by survey participants.

The following strategies are suggested:

- Communication (microaggressions, meeting etiquette, the humility trap, and feedback)
- Training (awareness and unconscious bias training)
- Policies and reporting mechanisms (hiring, promotion structure, and harassment and reporting strategies)
- Efforts surrounding culture/work environment (mentorship opportunities and role modeling to other staff)

### **Communication**

Men and women communicate differently, which can cause confusion and frustration. In the workplace, some women tend to be chattier and friendlier in emails and texts, while some men tend to be shorter and more direct. To a woman, men's communication styles can look flat, unfriendly, and at times hostile. A survey participant expressed, "Even how I communicated with my partner was from a masculine value structure and was not what I intended." Also, some women are more likely to communicate with softening language seen through the offer of thanks as well as apologies (Lipman,

2018). One study found that women with higher ranks utilize less powerful language as if to downplay their authority and digital personas – they are essentially making themselves smaller and less threatening (Prabhakaran, 2015). Women want to avoid being called bossy, even when they are the boss. Some also pose statements as questions and add qualifiers to their sentences, such as “This may be a stupid question,” or “I don’t want to bother you,” making women seem more hesitant (Lipman, 2018). All this downplays women’s status, giving power over to someone else in the conversation or the meeting; usually, this is a man.

Men in all positions, especially those in leadership, need to speak up, call out the inappropriate behavior, and interrupt the bias. Research has shown that when women speak out on their own behalf and assert their authority, they are almost inevitably punished for it (Lipman, 2018). Additionally, women are punished for adopting traditional male characteristics like assertiveness or self-promotion. A survey participant confirmed this by noting, “Assertiveness in females is less favorable than assertiveness in men.” The more women display these stereotypical male behaviors, especially in male-dominated environments, the more they are disliked (Jordan, 2018; Williams, 2013).

**Microaggressions.** Microaggressions are “instantaneous, subconscious, and unbidden reactions we have when we interact with people who represent culture groups different from our own” (Jordan, 2018, p. 223). Microaggressions can be challenging to point out, and it might take a bit of practice to identify them; however, it is crucial to become familiar with them as their negative impacts on women in the industry can be devastating. “To outside observers, the comments or actions may have little meaning; however, they speak volumes to those who experience such consistent messages throughout their lives” (Jordan, 2018, p. 223). Microaggressions also have several themes, as presented

by Kaskan and Ho (2016); not all are listed below, but many of these can be seen in the outdoor industry.

- Sexual objectification: Commenting on the dress or attire of female colleagues, participants, or clients intentionally or unintentionally might feel belittling to a woman. Also, “You look cute” is not a compliment. If you would not say it to a man, consider not saying it to a woman (Jordan, 2018; Lipman, 2018).
- Use of sexist language: Phrases like “man up,” “bro,” and even “two-man tent” and “hard skills” can be perceived negatively. Qualifiers as provided by a survey participant, “she is a really good fly fisher, for a woman,” is degrading. The generic use of male pronouns like “he” and “guys” when addressing a diverse group can be off-putting to women. Use “you all” instead of “guys,” noted a survey participant. Call it what you like, “mansplaining,” “maninterrupting,” or “bropropriating,” these terms, defined by a survey participant, as “a man explaining something to someone, typically a woman, in a manner regarded as condescending or patronizing.” These terms are part of our lingo and have even found a place in the Oxford Dictionaries (Lipman, 2018). When sexist language is being utilized, the best approach is a prompt response. A survey participant indicated they, “call out negative gendered language and hold a space for conversations about why this language perpetuates sexism.”
- Assumption of inferiority: When a man offers help to a woman (who is not asking for help) when she begins picking up her backpack and that man does

not offer the same help to another man, when a woman leader responds to a participant or client's question and the participant or client looks to the male leader for confirmation instead, or when a "client turns to the male guide for questions rather than the female guide," he is assuming women are less physically (and/or mentally) able than men. Also, asking a female colleague how she got her job might imply that she landed her job as a "diversity hire" (Jordan, 2018).

- Restrictive gender roles: Implementing intentional non-binary roles or "intentionally reversing traditional gender roles," as articulated by a survey participant, in the workplace and in the field can go a long way in role modeling positive, gender-neutral expectations. Men should not be the only ones moving or carrying heavy objects or loading boats on trailers, while women should not be leading camp set-up or meal prep every day. "Gender stereotyping sometimes seems to have an influence on job roles," and "Women are often treated as special and given softer assignments," noted survey participants. Another participant offered that he is "intentional with who answers which questions/teaches which skill – the first night, I like to cook and have my female co-leader teach technical skills such as tarp set-up."
- Denial of the reality of sexism: When a survey participant indicated that the challenges women face in the outdoor industry are "way less than in other industries," or when another stated simply, "NO" (yes, it was in all caps) when asked if they noticed gender disparity in the outdoor industry, they are

indicating that sexism is over; the problem is fixed. Discussing these points of view instead of ignoring them can spark powerful discussions.

- Sexist jokes/humor: “I have witnessed other guides make gender jokes in the past, and this is unacceptable to me, and often offends clients, regardless of gender,” noted a survey participant, while another stated, these jokes are just “sexism masked with humor.” Even laughing or smiling at these can condone further comments and behavior.

When leaders hear or see inappropriate behavior, calling out and condemning may not be the most effective method of confrontation. Some situations may be dealt with better through a non-confrontational approach that requires reflection from the offender. Upon hearing an inappropriate comment, leaders can ask, “What did you mean by that?” This approach encourages the offender to come to their own realizations about their behavior. If this approach is unsuccessful, pulling the individual aside and letting them know that others are noticing their behavior may work. These behaviors may be negatively affecting their perception and reputation (Grant, 2017).

**Meeting etiquette.** Women tend to not speak up in meetings, and when they do they can seem tentative. Men dominate meetings, and as a survey participant reiterated, “I tend to speak over others,” and some men “only seem to ‘consider’ what the females in the team have to say.” As one study found, men speak 75% of the time (Karpowitz, Mendelbery & Shaker, 2012); another found that men are three times more likely to interrupt women, while women very rarely interrupt men (Synder, 2014). A survey participant noted they have a tendency to “only let loud voices be included in the decision making process.” When women

do speak, some men can be seen physically withdrawing. Others even assert their physical space by pointing, standing up, or placing their hands on the table.

This can result in women having little impact on the decisions being made. “Meetings, quite simply, are the killing fields of a woman’s career” (Lipman, 2018, p. 10). Men who become aware of these dynamics within meetings are in the best position to change it. This could take place at a meeting with colleagues or could be an informal meeting on a trip with participants or clients. One survey participant noted they “even pay attention to who is talking when making technical skill-based decisions” during meetings.

Some suggestions include, asking people to stop talking, asking people to listen to what others are saying, asking people to pay attention, and staying engaged. Implementing meeting rules is another good way to ensure everyone is offered equal time – the most important being no interrupting (regardless of gender). Disrupting this pattern, cutting off the interrupter, informing them that they have interrupted, and asking the speaker to continue with their thought is a way in which to change these behaviors.

Women speaking up is just the first hurdle. Woman’s ideas are often hijacked, and the credit goes to a man. “Amplification” occurs when one woman speaks up in a meeting, and another woman repeats her idea, giving her credit for it (Lipman, 2018). This technique focuses on women reinforcing each other in an environment where men can take over quickly. This technique can be utilized by anyone in a meeting, not just the boss.

**Humility trap.** Some women tend to attribute their success to luck; whereas, men attribute theirs to their hard work or intelligence. Women can also have a hard time owning their accomplishments; therefore, they diminish and even talk about them less. “Women can undervalue/undersell their experiences and judgment” as described by a survey participant.

This is called the “humility trap” and is rooted in the childhood idea that good girls do not brag (Allen, 2015). Women can struggle with talking about their achievements and can be viewed unfavorably when they do. A strategy for this comes in the “buddy brag” idea, where women are asked to share their successes with other women, each making it a priority to talk up the others’ accomplishments to colleagues (Allen, 2015).

**Feedback.** Men can be fearful of providing women with accurate feedback, as they are afraid of the emotions it could bring up. Due to this, men can go easier on women when providing feedback, causing women to not receive the feedback they are seeking. As participants noted, they want to learn “how to provide feedback to young women about maturity and professionalism without being perceived as insensitive or sexist” and also how to better understand how women “prefer to receive feedback.” Women feel that if they show emotion, they will be penalized, causing a challenging dilemma in the workplace.

Men and women can express emotions differently. The fear of tears should not keep men from providing women with the honest feedback they need to progress their careers. “If a woman does tear up, understand why: She isn’t crying because she is sad. She’s crying because she is frustrated – or because she’s *mad as hell*. When men are angry, they yell; for women, crying is pretty much the same thing” (Lipman, 2018, p. 244).

Women’s evaluations are more likely to be filled with positive comments (for the reasons listed above) and yet, women are less likely to be promoted. For self-evaluations, men tend to overrate themselves, while some women will underrate themselves and tend to give credit to the team’s work (Ross, 2013). Additionally, men tend to overestimate competency, and to them, accomplishment often increases self-efficacy. As a survey participant noted, “Confidence is often an important factor in consideration for promotion

within field-based positions, and young men often display much greater confidence than their female counterparts even when their ability is less than or equal.” Women underestimate their competency and do not necessarily correlate accomplishment with self-efficacy (Mitten, 2018b).

Utilizing male-dominated tropes in evaluations, such as “you need to be more confrontational in meetings” and “you need to speak up more,” can imply that a masculine personality is more valued (Lipman, 2018). As one survey participant articulated, “Sometimes I notice I give feedback based on a masculine conception of leadership.” For some women, linking strengths to areas of development is more impactful than just offering weaknesses as researchers have found that some women react to negative feedback far more strongly than men do (Lipman, 2018). Focusing on action and behaviors rather than personality traits tends to be more successful. A survey participant indicated that as a director, “Checking my own biases during evaluations (and those of the people recommending/or not recommending) when thinking about promotions” is key for effective inclusion. Another participant provides training on how to

effectively give and receive feedback and build this into staff work routines, paperwork, and performance reviews. In addition, there are multiple formal and informal ways in which staff at all levels are able to give feedback and contribute to program-wide decisions.

Including a second woman in the room when needing to have a robust conversation or provide tough feedback is another strategy. This can allow the person providing feedback to have someone check in on their behavior and provide moral support for the person receiving feedback (Lipman, 2018).

## **Training**

Although few survey participants indicated the specific elements of their training that made them successful, we can look at current research (most of which comes out of the business world) in order to put together the characteristics that make up effective inclusion training.

**Awareness training.** Wright and Gray (2013) argued that women's desire to enter the outdoor industry "arises less from wanting to conquer a 'male-dominated' field and more about a deep desire to be immersed in an environment that encourages discovery and freedom" (p. 13). Women are "often drawn to the allure of working and playing in outdoor environments because these offer liberation, empowerment, and freedom from certain societal norms" (Gray, et al., 2017, p. 25). One survey participant indicated, "I think males (first year college students) are drawn to the outdoors for different reasons (adventure, power, personal growth)." The reasons why women love working in the outdoors may be the same as or different from men, and seeking to better understand the motivations of all colleagues is key.

One survey participant noted they "hire male instructors/guides who are aware of feminist ideologies and train instructors in issues of power, privilege, and identity development" as a way in which to increase awareness among staff. Women are attempting to fit into a world that was created in the image of a man in a myriad of ways. "We're always a little bit like a tourist, trying to mimic the habits of locals so we can blend in" (Lipman, 2018, p. 2). As a survey participant noted regarding obstacles women face trying to adapt to the outdoor industry, "You would have to have your eyes closed to not see it."

Some women feel pressure to change the way they look, dress, and even speak to fit in. While covering a sex discrimination suit, a reporter articulated the challenging balance and thin line that women must walk: “Speak up – but don’t talk too much. Light up the room – but don’t overshadow others. Be confident and critical – but not cocky or negative” (Streitfeld, 2015, para 1). There are daily conscious and unconscious decisions women make regarding their appearance and presence to simply to fit in with men. Women need to stand out, but not too much, “to be as unobtrusive as possible so that we can be recognized for our work, and not penalized for the way we dress or speak or look or act” (Lipman, 2018, p. 6).

**Unconscious bias training.** This type of training is different from diversity training that many have been required to attend over the years. A Harvard study found that corporate diversity training made the gender gap worse in part because it made men feel bad about themselves (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). Many men left these trainings feeling beat up and blamed. Keep in mind that research has shown that any training that is mandatory, specific only to managers (as opposed to being offered to all employees), or mentions laws is bound to backfire (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016).

The goal of unconscious bias training is to teach that bias affects decision-making. The research concluded, if the belief is that everyone is trying to fight against stereotypes and biases, others will do the same. Whether this happens because of peer pressure or groupthink mentality, it works, and people’s own biases disappear (Duguid & Thomas-Hunt, 2015). When utilizing this strategy in training, it is important to remember that all people have biases, and most are trying to fight them; it is not necessarily the fault of an individual. The focus is not on getting rid of biases but on becoming aware of personal biases and how those affect actions. One survey participant even included value training,

“such as empathy, compassion, and authentic connection” with their unconscious bias training.

When it comes to incorporating unconscious bias concepts into training, resources can be found outside the outdoor industry. Catalyst.org is an online resource for workplaces that work for women. This website is full of bias-reduction resources including research, reports, infographics, and webinars that can be incorporated into training. The Implicit Association Test (found at [projectimplicit.org](http://projectimplicit.org)) is another resource that could be incorporated as it measures individuals’ bias against a variety of groups. As part of training, Google offers “bias busting” workshops as a way for employees to practice ways of calling out each other’s bad behavior (Zomorodi, 2015). A survey participant indicated they have found success in “training staff to identify and interrupt microaggressions, sexism, and non-inclusive behaviors as well as passing around articles about sexism in the outdoor industry.”

Ongoing bias-busting workshops can provide an opportunity to practice and utilize real-life scenarios (or potential foreseen bias issues). Also, ongoing educational opportunities through social media can be a “great tool in conjunction with select timeframes (i.e. International Women’s Day, Women’s History Month),” noted a survey participant. Bias training should transition into action – unlearning behavior. Examining and discussing what takes place in the workplace, as a group, is the starting point for editing and/or adjusting behaviors.

## **Policies and Structure**

**Hiring.** Hiring consists of how potential hires are recruited, whom is hired, and how they are hired. Many have already realized that outdoor media and ads are problematic, but few have thought about how we advertise for positions in the outdoor industry. Employment

ads can create a barrier if not carefully constructed. Certain words listed in ads can attract men while subtly steering away women. Words like “proven track record, extremely, challenge, analyze” are more likely to attract men while “passion for learning, support, and empathy” would subtly suggest the position is for a woman (Gaucher, Friesen & Kay, 2011). Job postings can be analyzed through the online tool Gender Decoder to see if the position description is gender neutral (Cassandra, 2016).

As one survey participant noted, “If you look up the demographic makeup of outdoor companies in general, unless they are woman-owned/operated or have made a concerted effort to increase the hiring of women, they are very male-dominated.” In looking at the hiring process, researchers have found that people tend to hire others who essentially replicate themselves – people who look and sound like them (Rivera, 2012). Striving for as much diversity as possible on hiring committees reduces the likelihood of replicating the existing group of employees in the next new hire. By adopting elements of blind hiring and leaving out personal information, an employer can focus only on an applicant's abilities. Online resources such as Blendoor, Unbias, Interviewing.com, and Talent Sonar can assist in incorporating blind hiring into the workplace.

Several large companies, including Google and the Royal Bank of Canada, have created their own hiring bias cheat sheets that are utilized when evaluating employees for hiring and promotion. Some of the following questions (adapted from the Royal Bank of Canada, 2013) are:

- When I say a candidate is not the “right fit,” what do I mean?
- What does my pool of candidates look like? Do I speak up if it is not sufficiently diverse?

- Which of my past hires were successful, and what can I learn from those choices that did not work out as well?
- Do I have the same go-to people all or most of the time?
- Whom do I take to important meetings? Whom do I encourage to lead or speak out at meetings?
- Am I creating opportunities for those less extroverted to demonstrate their capabilities equally to clients, participants, or other colleagues?
- How do I identify employees for promotion and succession?

**Promotion structure.** Research shows that at every level, women are 15% less likely than men to be promoted, and women are promoted only when they have proven themselves with past performance – men get promoted on their potential (Waller & Lublin, 2015). One survey participant indicated that it, “feels like there is more male representation in senior program positions. Whether that is from sexist promotion practices and perceived technical competence, or a result of retention of female staff, it’s hard to pinpoint.” One study indicated that men are four times more likely to ask for a raise than women, and when women do ask they ask for 30% less than men do (Lipman, 2015). Promotions are sometimes being awarded to the squeaky wheels (the men who are asking for raises more often).

This comes down to the fact that some women tend to have a lack of self-promotion. They can be hesitant to bring up or discuss promotions for fear of being penalized, causing “lower prospects for promotions/advancements” as noted by a survey participant. Men are more likely to advocate on their own behalf (Lipman, 2018) and “tend to promote/advance earlier, and maybe with less competence, but more confidence,” stated a survey participant.

Women are also less likely to seek promotion opportunities because they do not see role models; they do not fit in and do not get support from their supervisors. It all comes down to trust, and when women do not feel they have the support and trust of those above them, they are less likely to step up. Also, men often make assumptions about women's aspirations (usually surrounding their interest in travel, work hours, and job descriptions) without actually including them in the conversations. Assuming rather than asking women results in women often being overlooked for promotion opportunities. Including women in the conversation and letting them make their own decisions about whether to accept a promotion is ideal (Lipman, 2018).

Relating back to unconscious bias, it is valuable to keep tabs on pay and promotion of all employees. Elsesser (2018) recommends that companies assess their pay structures to check for unconscious bias in pay and promotion, but suggests having an outsider do this if possible. "Only these checks and balances can eliminate the unconscious bias that keeps women from earning the same pay as their male counterparts" (Elsesser, 2018). Some strategies include having senior women share their salaries with younger women, while other companies are prohibiting questions about candidates' salaries at previous positions to break the cycle of paying women less when they switch jobs (Lipman, 2018). Online salary databases such as Glassdoor, PayScale, and Salary.com are publishing salaries in hopes of reducing the invisibility and silence surrounding pay. Issues of pay are also a political issue, so understanding where politicians stand on their legislation and initiatives surrounding fair pay is crucial.

Another suggestion that has proven effective for the encouragement of promotion is "nudging" (Zomorodi, 2015). Nudging could look like a supervisor emailing women in their

department, before each promotion cycle, informing them of the research surrounding women and promotions and urging them to nominate themselves. All employees can advocate on behalf of others as well as urge friends and colleagues to do the same; this is not a role for supervisors only.

**Harassment and reporting strategies.** Companies and organizations need unambiguous human resource policies as well as reporting systems. There needs to be understanding about how to report experiences or observations of inappropriate behavior or sexual harassment, along with processes that help to reduce the risks of retaliation or gossip, for those fearful of reporting. A survey participant noted “Maintaining work environments with clear expectations of professional conduct and behavior with consequences for sexist language/actions” is an effective tool for inclusion.

In a 2015 study, 71% of women who had been sexually harassed at work did not report it (Johnson, Kirk & Keplinger, 2016). Women are often hesitant to report out of fear of the retaliation and punishment. Even women who do not experience overt harassment are familiar with the subtle digs and lack of respect that are part of daily life. Gray (2016) argues that women in outdoor education do not often face obvious resistance or overt prejudice but instead, are faced with invisible obstacles and hidden bias, making it harder to pinpoint. These incidents are wearying, difficult to fight, and the steady drumbeat of them can be debilitating. Some questions to ask are:

- Are there written definitions and solid examples of prohibited behavior?
- Do these include examples of how victims and observers of inappropriate behavior or harassment should both respond and report?
- Are the HR processes and disciplinary measures clearly outlined?

- Are there well-defined consequences for prohibited behavior?

Reducing the fear around reporting sexual harassment and inappropriate behavior can happen if workplaces are proactive about encouraging people to speak up when they see something wrong. One survey participant “encourages female employees to not accept but confront concerns knowing they are supported.” Incorporating bystander training is a way to explain clearly what people should do when they observe harassment or poor behavior. All observers should be encouraged to report and intervene when they become aware of an issue. It can be noted that in male-dominated fields, having men speak up and intervene as observers is highly effective in reducing sexual harassment (Johnson, Kirk & Keplinger, 2016). As a survey participant articulated, “Role modeling to my male employees what appropriate behavior is and speaking out against behavior that is less than appropriate” is an effective inclusion strategy.

### **Efforts Surrounding Culture/Work Environment**

Implementing consistent and confidential culture surveys can provide valuable information for a more accurate, up-to-date, and data-driven view of workplace culture. This data can help keep a finger on the pulse of a workplace’s culture (Johnson, Kirk & Keplinger, 2016). These surveys can help determine if women have supportive supervisors, colleagues, work groups, and work environments. This allows for the opportunity to rethink masculine cultures that could be characterizing the workplace. A variety of culture surveys can be found online and can be easily adjusted to fit the needs of any workplace.

**Supporting and implementing female mentorship opportunities.** Most are familiar with the term “mentor” as someone who provides advice, but it is important to note that men typically have a “sponsor” rather than a mentor – someone with power who

champions a colleague to get him promotions and new jobs (Lipman, 2018). Women tend to have mentors who are there for support and advice, usually behind closed doors. Dobbins (2016) suggested several ways to overcome this mentorship barrier: (1) formal mentorship programs are more effective as they provide clear and shared goals and objectives and take away the social awkwardness of seeking out one another; (2) assign diversity managers, and implement diversity task forces; these can help create transparency in the workplace and indicate that inclusion is a priority. Additionally, educating colleagues on the differences between mentors and sponsors, while encouraging a blend of both styles to include supporting, advocating, and standing up for one another, is the best solution.

With the scarcity of senior women in the outdoor industry, expecting women to mentor/sponsor other women could impact their workloads, preventing them from balancing all their job responsibilities well. “Women simply can’t do it all on their own. By putting the burden on the very few of them to be the symbol and the savior for all women, we can unwittingly set them on a path to failure” (Lipman, 2018). Men can be mentors/sponsors as well as women and are vital to equalizing the workplace. As a survey participant noted, “I think there are both male and female leaders who are quite able to bridge this gap.”

**Role modeling to other male colleagues, participants, and clients.** Men can drive the cultural change in workplaces – benefiting both sexes. Men changing their behavior can suddenly change the cultural landscape. Letting others see this behavior is vital. Changing behavior can come in a variety of forms, many presented in the information above.

Additionally, these other actions could make a lasting impact:

- Before a meeting, talk to the woman sitting by herself instead of joining your other male colleagues to talk about the newest problems that have been put up in the climbing gym.
- Tell a male colleague about a female you admire in the industry (Catalyst, 2018).
- Consider changing your perspective and language surrounding “comfort zones” and “challenge by choice.” A survey participant noted they struggle with “balancing the act of encouraging someone to expand their comfort zone versus pushing them too far.” Do not assume that an activity or skill you are asking someone to participate in is comfortable for them. Also consider that the “challenge by choice paradigm may not offer an authentic choice that is central to an experience of personal empowerment” (Mitten, 2018, p. 122). Reframing these paradigms can help participants and clients feel less intimidated and more welcome.
- Reevaluate how you incorporate natural consequences (participants’ feet get wet – they hike in wet boots and socks the entire day) into your programming. Are there areas you can trade a natural consequences model for a compassion model? This can be a small change that could reframe your leadership goals away from ones that are focused on individualism and consequences and more on compassion, inclusivity, and acceptance (Mitten, 2018c).
- Consider making your personal and family commitments visible to other employees. When you take time off to take your child to the pediatrician or leave work early to make a child’s sports commitment, put it on your calendar for all to see (Feintzeig & Eshelman, 2016). Work/life balance is not only a women’s issue, although often it feels that way.

- When planning or organizing social gatherings, make sure they are inclusive for everyone. Do women, families, and kids feel welcome at your activity or event? Consider a local rock climbing wall versus a multi-pitch climb several hours away.
- Standing up and speaking up when inappropriate behaviors are observed is an effective tactic – it is about disrupting the patterns and “actively working to dismantle the systems in place which are creating the inequalities” noted a survey participant. In male-dominated workplaces, men speaking up can be highly effective (Johnson, Kirk & Keplinger, 2016). Another stated, “ignoring the issue and/or letting people get away with comments or behaviors, have a negative impact on the experience of others.”

### **Limitations**

As mentioned earlier, this research project speaks in gender binaries and could benefit from a more inclusive and intersectional perspective in both its survey questions and in the implications for practice. The survey’s distribution and range could be widened as the data indicates that areas such as outdoor retail, wilderness medicine, wilderness therapy, military recreation, and parks and recreation are underrepresented in this survey. Furthermore, 28% of the survey respondents worked in guiding, 25% in colleges/universities (evenly split between academics and student affairs), and 13% in non-profits; 45% of the participants that indicated they worked in guiding worked in the area of rock climbing, 17% in ice climbing or mountaineering, and 10% each in rafting and in skiing. Outdoor activities in the guiding realm, such as kayaking, canoeing, hiking/backpacking, sea kayaking, biking, and fly fishing, are underrepresented in the data. Additionally, no questions were asked about the country

and/or region of participants' location. This information could provide another layer of cultural understanding to the data.

The survey data presented mixed results on the effectiveness of women's programs. The questions utilized in the survey did not pull enough information to determine the reasoning behind why some survey participants indicated that their women's programs were effective, nor did it reveal why some indicated that women's programs were ineffective. We know from the research that some women participate in women's programs for their ability to not be judged by gender and opportunities to fully participate (Mitten, 2018b) and that gender disparity is still present in co-ed programs (Wright & Gray, 2013). This topic could benefit from more specific and targeted questions and analysis.

Understanding that a portion of the audience may not be ready to engage in discussions of inclusion strategies can make implementation challenging. Individuals must be aware of and understand their own biases (as well as their privileges) before they are actively able to participate in a change process for their workplaces or the industry as a whole. Here are a few examples found in the survey indicating a lack of awareness:

- "It seems natural to me that if someone 'belongs' in the mountains, they'll find their way there, regardless of gender."
- "Overall I feel like the women in the outdoor industry are more self-confident and cool, they don't tolerate misogyny and unfair treatment etc. at least those I have worked with. That's why I haven't really considered the issue [inclusion], it felt somewhat extraneous."
- "I never exclude women, problem solved."

- “Why are there so many women only groups, if men did that, they would be brutally attacked.”
- “Everyone thinks they are a special snowflake, guess what you are not. Get over yourself and your gender identity. Don’t base your identity in your job or success – just work hard and expect no handouts. I never got them and I continue to work hard when no one is around. It is called work ethic something lost today!”
- “I feel that we have a long way to go. Women get more in the outdoor industry than anyone else. There are women programs, women scholarships, and all kinds of things that help them to get similar positions as men. I feel in some ways this makes them become weak. We need strong women to take charge, we need to put those women in leadership positions. This would help other women be strong. Not free rides.”

Trying to unpack the complexities, biases, and deep-rooted misogyny in these participant statements is almost mind-boggling. Consider that these statements are from individuals who cared enough or were compelled to fill out a survey about inclusivity. What do you think some men, who do not care enough to participate in such a research project, think and say?

### **Charge for the Future**

The outdoor industry prides itself on its inclusive, welcoming, and free-spirited culture, yet Gray (2016) challenged “the long-held assumptions that outdoor education is inclusive, democratic, and egalitarian” (p. 36). I would agree; the industry is far from succeeding in these characteristics. Moreover, as one participant indicated, “We are an industry of empowerment and self discovery, we have to practice what we value.” The

outdoor industry is missing this “practice” aspect. It is time for the industry to open its eyes to the reality that the industry is not what it seems.

One survey participant stated, “Women are exceptional outdoor professionals. We need more of them, more of them in higher places, and more of their voices valued/heard if we are to serve our goals. Any chance that I have as a male should be equally available to women.” There is much to be hopeful for regarding the new, young professionals entering the outdoor industry. They are not as self-conscious about gender, are more willing to talk about gender, and accept non-traditional gender roles regarding work and family (Lipman, 2018). “To effect real change, these young men and women will need to shed the bad habits of their elders, and stay focused on breaking the cycle of unequal pay, promotions, and respect” (Lipman, 2018).

Even the staunchest supporters of females will face structural and cultural challenges when putting their efforts into action – but do not be discouraged. It will take vigilance, hard work, and persistence to move our outdoor industry toward a more inclusive and equitable culture. These efforts take courage, and for those who are stepping up – thank you. Remember, as a woman, I am more likely to offer thanks, but in this instance, I am genuinely grateful for your efforts and support and am excited about the culture change you will help bring about. Women cannot do it alone; men play a critical role in making a difference. Call yourself a feminist, an ally, or neither? Your actions will transcend any label.

## **Conclusion**

### **The “Academic Conclusion”**

Gender equality in the outdoors is an industry problem, and if both women and men are not aware of the issue, cannot name the problems, or are unwilling to seek a solution, then things will not change. Feminism and the outdoors are often viewed as separate, even opposite. Only recently have conversations in popular media outlets begun to bring up the idea of women’s equality and inclusion. Even though more conversations are taking place, when bringing up the word “feminism” in a group of outdoor people, most tend to recoil. The divide between feminism and the outdoor industry is vast; however, I do not believe that giving up on feminism is the right answer. I argue that digging in and learning more about feminism is the best approach. Rather than shy away from a touchy and controversial issue, I have chosen to push forward, ask the difficult questions, and go against the flow.

Utilizing feminism to problematize the outdoor industry can illuminate new ways of understanding and improving the industry as a whole. I believe that feminism can provide a critique of the outdoor industry’s culture, challenge its norms, and push to emancipate and empower women. Feminism can split the outdoor industry’s worldview and perspective wide open, but only for those who are brave enough to learn more, ask more, and confront the norm. This dissertation is a new way of thinking, a paradigm shift about gender in the outdoors – it is one that unites, rather than divides, both men and women.

The amount of available research and stories surrounding women in the outdoors has become more available in the past several years and seems to be on the rise. This is in part due to both mainstream and some outdoor popular media outlets that have begun discussing gender disparity. The time is past due for a feminist critique of the outdoor industry, and

with movements such as the Women’s March, Times Up, and Me Too, the language and issues surrounding women’s equity are becoming more familiar. So, the timing of my research project has been serendipitous.

I am a bit hesitant, though, as I wonder how long this increase in conversation and awareness will last. It was not too long ago when discussions of women’s issues in the outdoor industry also seemed to be on the rise. For several years in the late 1980s and early 1990s, research and conversations about women in the industry were taking place, and momentum was spinning up. Then a plateau, even a decrease – we stopped hearing about women. In the past two decades, “It can be argued that we [women] have experienced heightened levels of bias and career regression” (Gray & Mitten, 2018, p. 8). We began hearing less and less about women in the outdoors until very recently when the ball began rolling once again. Gray and Mitten (2018) stated:

Perhaps our blind spots have exacerbated the problem. For instance, the success we achieved in the field during the 1990s may have lulled us into a false sense of complacency, becoming smug and not actively pushing for the additional changes necessary to truly achieve parity. (p. 9)

The outdoor “foremothers,” the pioneers in the academic world regarding women’s issues in the outdoor industry — Tonia Gray, Karla Henderson, Barbara Humberstone, T.A. Loeffler, Denise Mitten, and Karen Warren — have helped paved the way for so many women (Ahmed, 2017; Wall, 2017). One cannot help but wonder who will fill their shoes. Many of these notable scholars are at the height or the end of their careers, and there are very few young women writing and researching women’s issues and feminism who are ready to step in and take up their cause. If and when these foremothers stop writing about gender

disparity in the outdoors, what will become of this upsurge in momentum? Will the variety of journalists and bloggers writing about women in popular media continue their dedication to this cause throughout their careers, or will they find another topic to focus on?

Although I am just beginning my academic journey, my goal is to help follow in the footsteps of these foremothers and continue working on women's issues in the outdoors and dedicating my research to these efforts. This dissertation is not a finalized project, but a foundation, a starting point for further research, and my chance to speak up.

It is time to step up and be valiant whilst challenging the status quo within the profession. We need to break through the barriers created not only by men, but also by women's unwillingness to speak up and explicitly challenge the biases that prevent fuller participation. (Gray, 2018, p. 47)

Applying feminist thought to the outdoor industry can help challenge, encourage, and inspire both men and women in the industry to be more inclusive professionals and leaders.

Feminism is how women pick each other up in an unjust and unequal world by asking ethical questions, creating relationships with others that are equal, finding ways to support those that are not supported or less supported, and learning to break through historical patriarchal walls. (Wall, 2017, p. 48)

Just like backcountry navigation, feminism has a steep learning curve, requires special tools, and takes practice. If you do not have the necessary tools, like a map and compass, navigating around a new landscape can be quite challenging. Likewise, without the proper tools, navigating through feminism and feminist theory can be challenging. We may not feel comfortable with feminism at first (I know I was not), so we must task ourselves to dig deeper, helping us transform our personal and professional lives. I have accomplished an

autoethnographic theoretical application, a qualitative survey resulting in data analysis, and an inclusion field guide all framed within a feminist methodology. My hope is that this research project will serve as a map, a tool, a pathway for transformational change, for those interested in navigating feminism in the outdoors.

### **The “Real” Conclusion**

As I wait until the last minute to put the final touches on the conclusion of this dissertation, I continue to struggle with the way in which to wrap up such a project. My committee asked for more length and a deeper discussion surrounding my dissertation journey, along with how I will apply this work to my life and profession. A dissertation takes both heart and soul, and let us not forget the intense amount of mental stress and pressure a project like this puts on an individual. It is as if I have become like Eeyore, the donkey from Winnie the Pooh – with a little grey rain cloud (aka, my dissertation and defense) sitting over my head, following me around daily. Please do not confuse my gloom with frustration, disappointment, or boredom related to my topic or my field of study. Quite the opposite in fact – diving further into self-reflection, the outdoor industry I know and love, and the new (to me) intriguing topic of feminism has both equally challenged and inspired me. Essentially, having to close this out and include all that I have learned about feminisms, my practice in the outdoor industry, and my journey through both this dissertation and my doctoral program is emotional, intimidating, and complex.

As my deadline looms (two days away to be exact), the procrastination continues, and I am still waiting around and avoiding this conclusion. Mary Neal Meador, once my Writing Center advisor and now my feminist companion, self-esteem counsellor, and unofficial committee member sends me an article. As I settle in for another late night writing session, I

begin reading the article she sent me, “I’m a WNBA Player. Men Won’t Stop Challenging Me to Play One-on-One.” As its author, Deveraux Peters, begins her article in the *Washington Post* I am reading along half-engaged, mainly distracted, thinking this is just one more way to distract myself – like moving plants around in my office, rearranging files, cleaning things that do not need cleaning and oh how the list of meaningless, distractions could go on. Within the first few paragraphs, though, she hits me with this:

I’m not going to play you one-on-one. I’m never going to play you one-on-one. I have been playing basketball my entire life, and for just as long I have been challenged by men who think they are better than me. I had to prove my skill in middle school against the boys who thought girls couldn’t play basketball. I had to prove my skill in high school when the guys’ egos were hurt because the girls basketball team was more successful and more popular than theirs. I had to prove it in college when grown men started challenging me to one-on-one games because there was no way this college woman was better than they were. Time and time again, I have trounced men — far too many to count. Now I have nothing to prove. (para. 3).

That is it! I wanted to jump out of my seat and cheer (but both my husband and daughter were already asleep), so I thought instead of yelling, I would write. Why had I never thought about this concept: “I have nothing to prove”? I am about to finish my terminal degree, and I have an impressive outdoor resume for a young professional, and yet, this is the first time that I have ever really considered the idea that “I have nothing to prove” (Peters, 2018, para. 3).

Earlier in the autoethnographic portion of my dissertation, I discuss how this dissertation, and specifically my work around feminist theory and its application to my practice, was my way of amending the past and re-doing the time I did not file a complaint to HR. But as I read Peters' article I wondered, was writing enough? Is writing action? Would a mindset change be a better way in which to "make up" for that regret?

Academically speaking, there can be crossover between traditional sports and outdoor sports, especially in terms of their male-dominated fields, physical involvement, and meaning/benefits for women. It was not abnormal that I was able to both connect and draw inspiration from an article about women's basketball, despite the fact that my basketball skills are non-existent. Peters (2018) goes on to say, "*I. Do. This* [play basketball professionally]. But men still didn't see it that way: Why can't a man respect a woman at the top of her field" (para 8.)? Right! I do this too – I work professionally in the outdoors. I made it, just like Peters, yet despite all the hard work, credentials, and accomplishments, it is not enough for some men.

If only they could step in my shoes for just a few days. They would hear the comments my colleagues make when they realize my research focuses on a feminist critique of the industry, they would see how people react when I try to stand up for myself when someone in my workplace says something degrading or laced with sexist humor, they would hear the comments my students make when they realize I am their professor and yes, I am the one who will in fact teach them outdoors skills. They would glimpse back into my past and see the experiences that made me doubt myself, made me wonder if I could really do it, or made me wonder if this really was the right place for me. Could they take it? Would all the challenges past, present, and future be worth it for them to keep working and keep moving

forward in this industry? I will assume that for some, my story, my position, and my struggles would be too much.

Yes, I have made it, I have succeeded, and no I should not have to continue to prove myself, but sadly I know I will continue to fight this battle for years to come. I am not saddened though, nor am I discouraged. I think this stance comes from a place of freedom and privilege – one that I have recently obtained (remember, women are more likely to attribute their success to luck, so I must be intentional in both my words and thoughts). In regards to freedom, I can reflect on my previous position in the outdoor industry (outside of academics). I was sitting in a place that felt like the perfect storm. I was coming to know and understand feminism, and my worldview was knocked wide open – I was no longer able to view the world as I had once before. I was also working in a sexist, power-hungry, micromanaged, egotistical, boys’ club where I was fearful to stand up and speak out. This combination was deadly to my spirit and almost to my career in the outdoor industry, as I had begun to look for jobs elsewhere.

In regards to privilege, the phrase “do what you love and love what you do” comes to mind. Although true, this statement holds privilege. I understand that my upbringing, as well as my identity, have a tremendous amount to do with this privilege. Women of color, women who are disabled, women of lower socio-economic status, women not identifying as female, and women who are other than heterosexual have additional obstacles. I am privileged in that I can speak up, and I can worry less about losing my job, my family, or my status. Now, my reputation may be another thing. Some men in the outdoor industry do not want to hear a woman bring up, let alone discuss, feminism; working alongside a feminist, well, that might as well be some men’s hell. Yet, both my position in academics and this

doctoral journey have afforded me the opportunity to deeply reflect and better articulate my perspective. Finally, I have the chance to speak up and speak out. It is liberating and inspiring. As an educator, I know the work I do surrounding feminism is not only cathartic for me, but has the opportunity to be comforting, empowering, and reflective for others.

I love working in the outdoors, I love sharing my passion for the environment and adventure with others, and I am so happy that I have been brave enough and persevered long enough to make my place in such a unique career field. I cannot help but hope that one day soon, a young outdoor professional reads my work, just like I read Peters – late at night when motivation was low – and they wake to find meaning, motivation, and heart. My hope is that as I move forward with my research into feminism, women, and the outdoor industry, that I can use my position and freedom to push forward, ask the hard questions, and work toward a long-lasting culture change that this outdoor industry desperately needs.

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## Appendix A

### Survey Questions

- 1) What area of the outdoor industry do your work in?
  - a) Camps
  - b) College & University Academics
  - c) College & University Student Development
  - d) Guiding (Please specify the type of guiding)
  - e) Military
  - f) Non-profit
  - g) Parks & Recreation
  - h) Resort
  - i) Tourism
  - j) Wilderness Therapy
  - k) Other
- 2) At your current workplace, what is the breakdown of male to female staff (in percentages)?
- 3) In reference to questions 2, are you satisfied with this breakdown? Yes or No. Please explain.
  - a) Entry-level
  - b) Mid-level
  - c) Top-level/executive
- 4) What is your impression of the challenges women face in the outdoor industry?

- 5) Do you notice gender disparity in the outdoor industry? If so, under what conditions do you notice this disparity?
- 6) If you answered yes to question 5, when did you start noticing that there was gender disparity in the outdoor industry?
- 7) What area(s) of inclusion most interests you? (Select all that apply)
  - a) Advancement/Promotion
  - b) Recruitment
  - c) Retention
  - d) Training
  - e) Workplace environment/Culture
  - f) Other
- 8) What population most interests you? (Select all that apply)
  - a) Participants/Clients
  - b) Professional staff - Entry-level
  - c) Professional staff - Mid-level
  - d) Professional staff -Top-level/Executive
  - e) Student leaders/Interns
  - f) Other
- 9) Are there tools, techniques, or strategies you are currently utilizing or have utilized that are EFFECTIVE for including women? If so, please provide examples.
- 10) If you answered question 9, where did you gain or develop the knowledge to facilitate effective inclusion practices for women?
  - a) College/University

- b) Conferences/Workshops
  - c) Mentors - Family
  - d) Mentors - Professional
  - e) Outdoor education/Leadership programs (NOLS, OB, etc)
  - f) Popular/Social media
  - g) Scholarly books/Articles
  - h) Other
- 11) Are there tools, techniques, or strategies you are currently utilizing or have utilized that are INEFFECTIVE for including women? If so, please provide examples.
- 12) Why do you have an interest in gender inclusion in the outdoor industry?
- 13) What was your reasoning for participating in this survey/project/discussion?
- 14) As a professional in the field, what do you need the most help or assistance with, in regards to working with women?
- 15) What else would you like me to know about this topic, your thoughts, or your experiences?
- 16) Is there anything else that you would like to say or include that I did not provide a space in which for you to do so?
- 17) How many years have you been in the outdoor industry?
- a) 1-5
  - b) 6-10
  - c) 11-15
  - d) 16-20
  - e) 21-25

f) 26+

18) What is your age?

a) 18-24

b) 25-34

c) 35-44

d) 45-54

e) 55+

19) How would you classify your position?

a) Entry-level

b) Mid-level

c) Top-level/Executive

d) Other

## **Vita**

Katie Coley Wall was born in Thomasville, Georgia, to Dinah and Curt Coley. She graduated from Elon University in May 2006. The following fall, she entered The University of Mississippi to study Higher Education/Student Personnel, and in May 2008 she was awarded the Bachelor of Science degree. In the summer of 2014, she began study toward a Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership from Appalachian State University. In December 2018, Mrs. Wall commenced work toward her Ed.D.

Mrs. Wall currently works as a faculty member teaching outdoor recreation management and resides with her husband and daughter in the High Country of Western North Carolina.