

The Great Outdoors As Classroom: Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures

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A program of:



Wilderness
Inquiry

In partnership with:

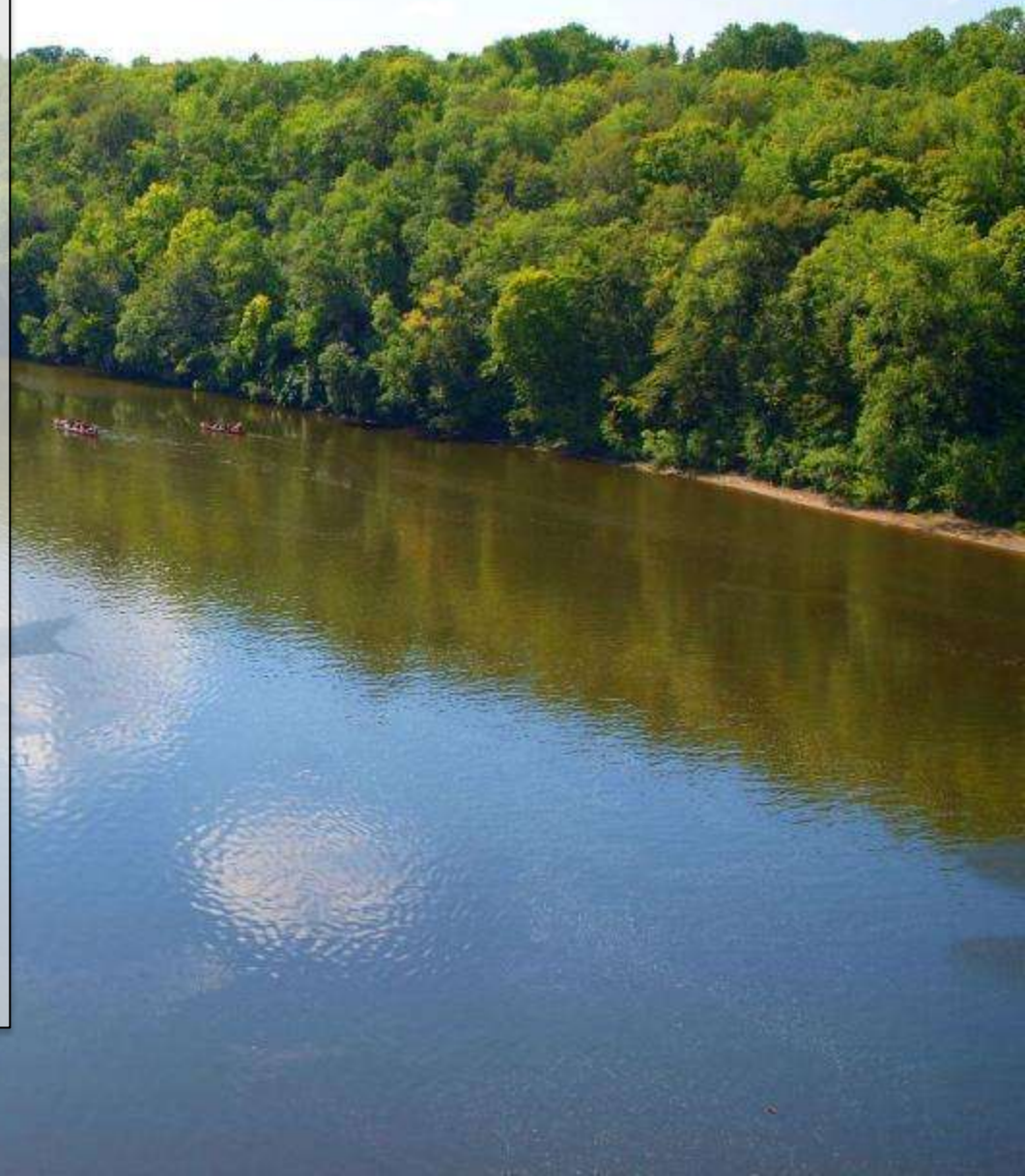


MISSISSIPPI
River Fund



OVERVIEW

- **10,000+** youth & families served annually
- Day-long **canoe** trips on the Mississippi River
- Overnight **camping** trips
- Integrated **classroom curricula** in schools
- Summer enrichment to **prevent learning-loss & tighten the academic achievement gap**



WHY is the UWCA Important?

- Youth are not connecting to the outdoors



Who is Served

- 10,000 youth annually
- 5th–12th grade
- Youth of color
- Recent immigrants
- High mobility
- Underperforming students
- Low-income
- Inexperienced with the outdoors



What Students Learn

- Natural & cultural history
- Water quality/stewardship
- Hands on science lessons
- Water safety
- Outdoor careers

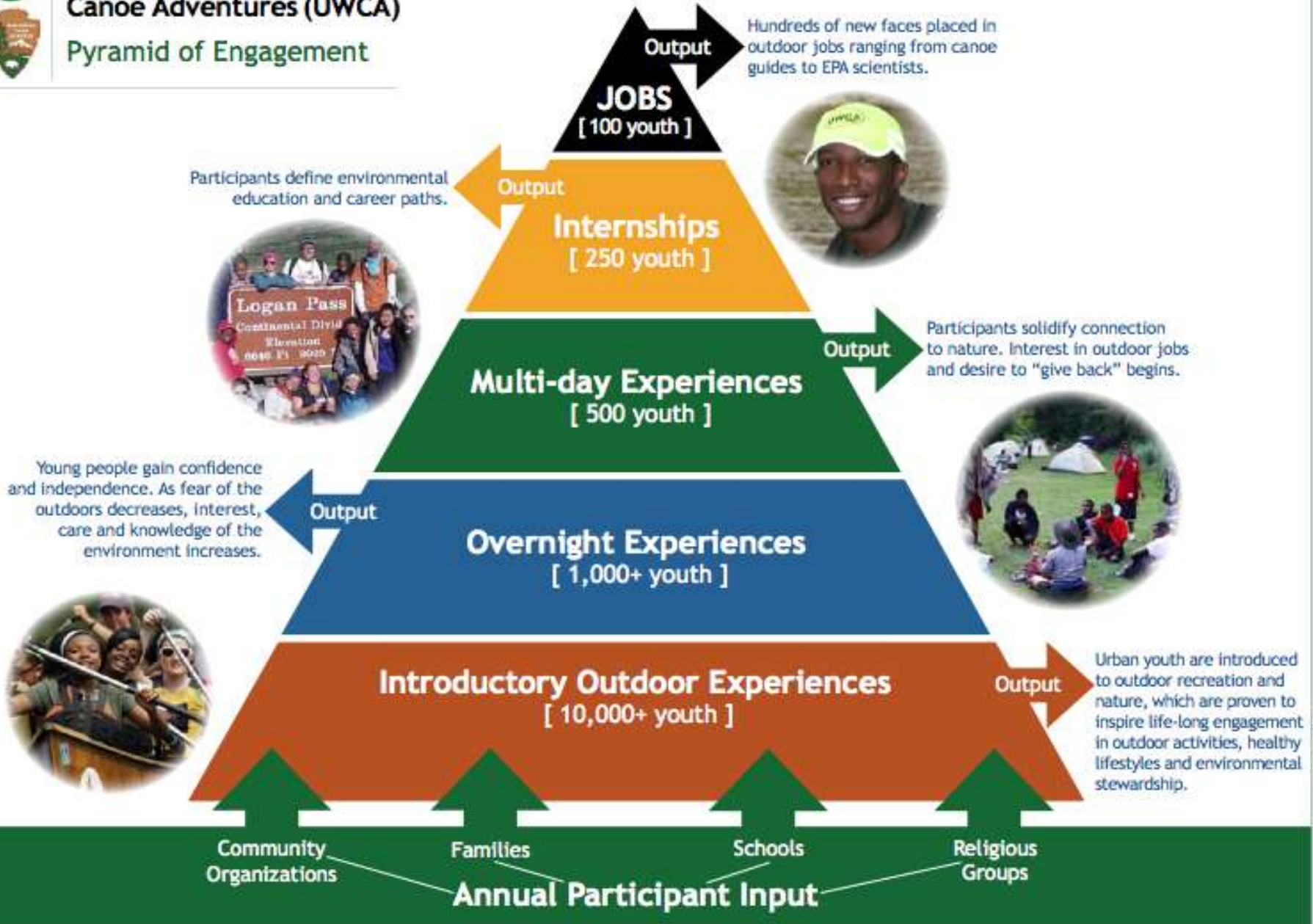


Youth outdoors & engaged in learning

[VIDEO](#)



Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures (UWCA) Pyramid of Engagement





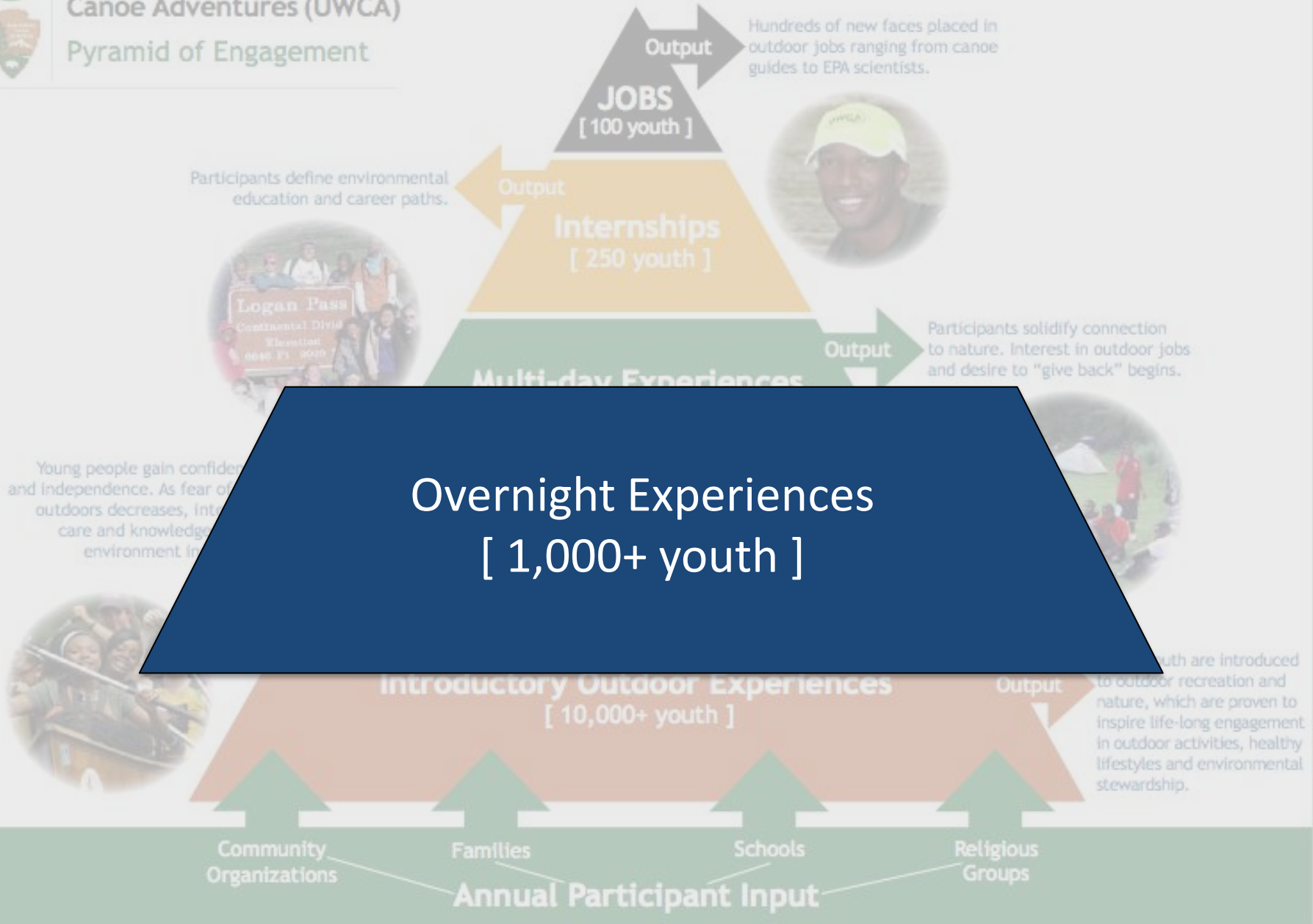
**Urban Wilderness
Canoe Adventures (UWCA)**
Pyramid of Engagement







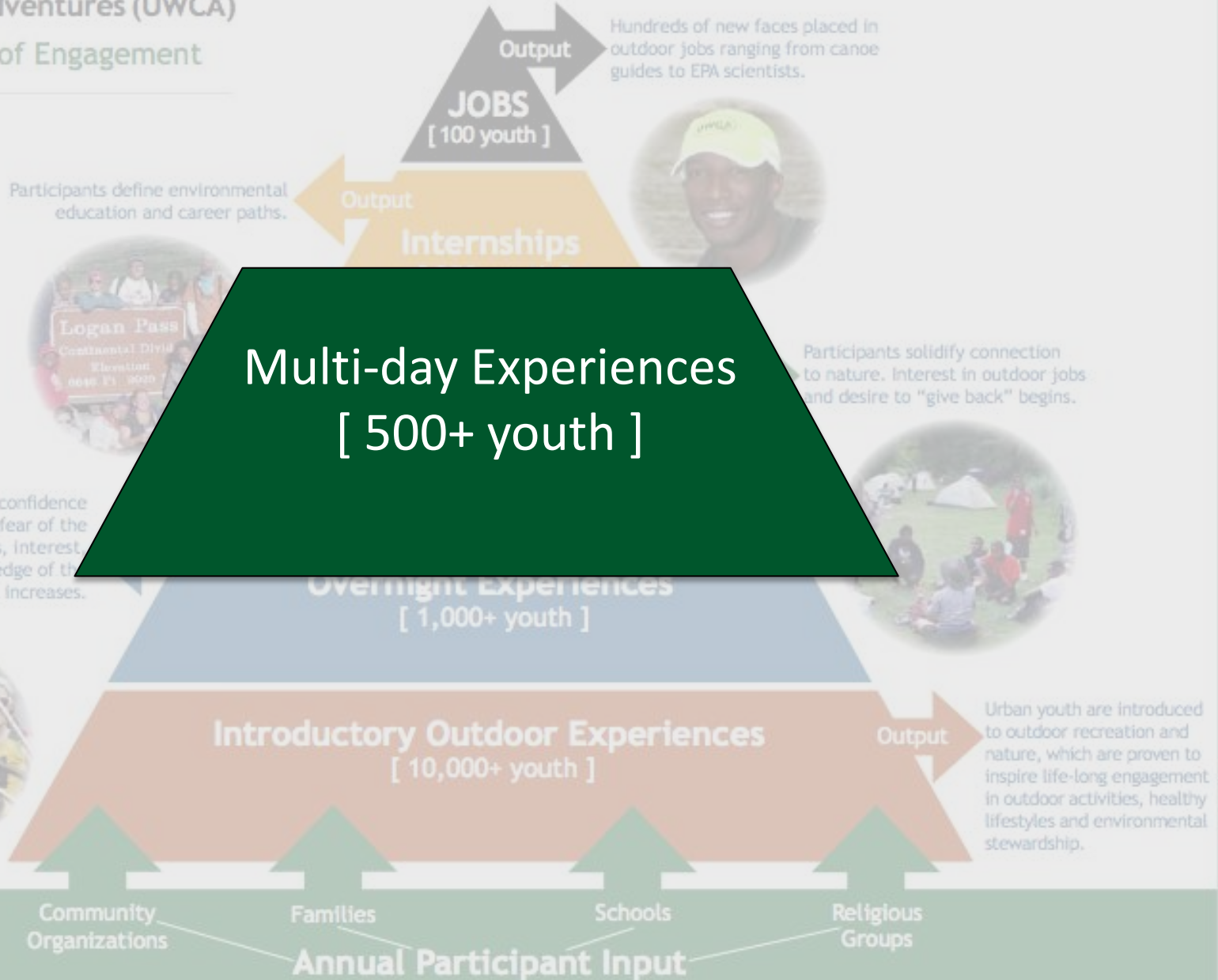
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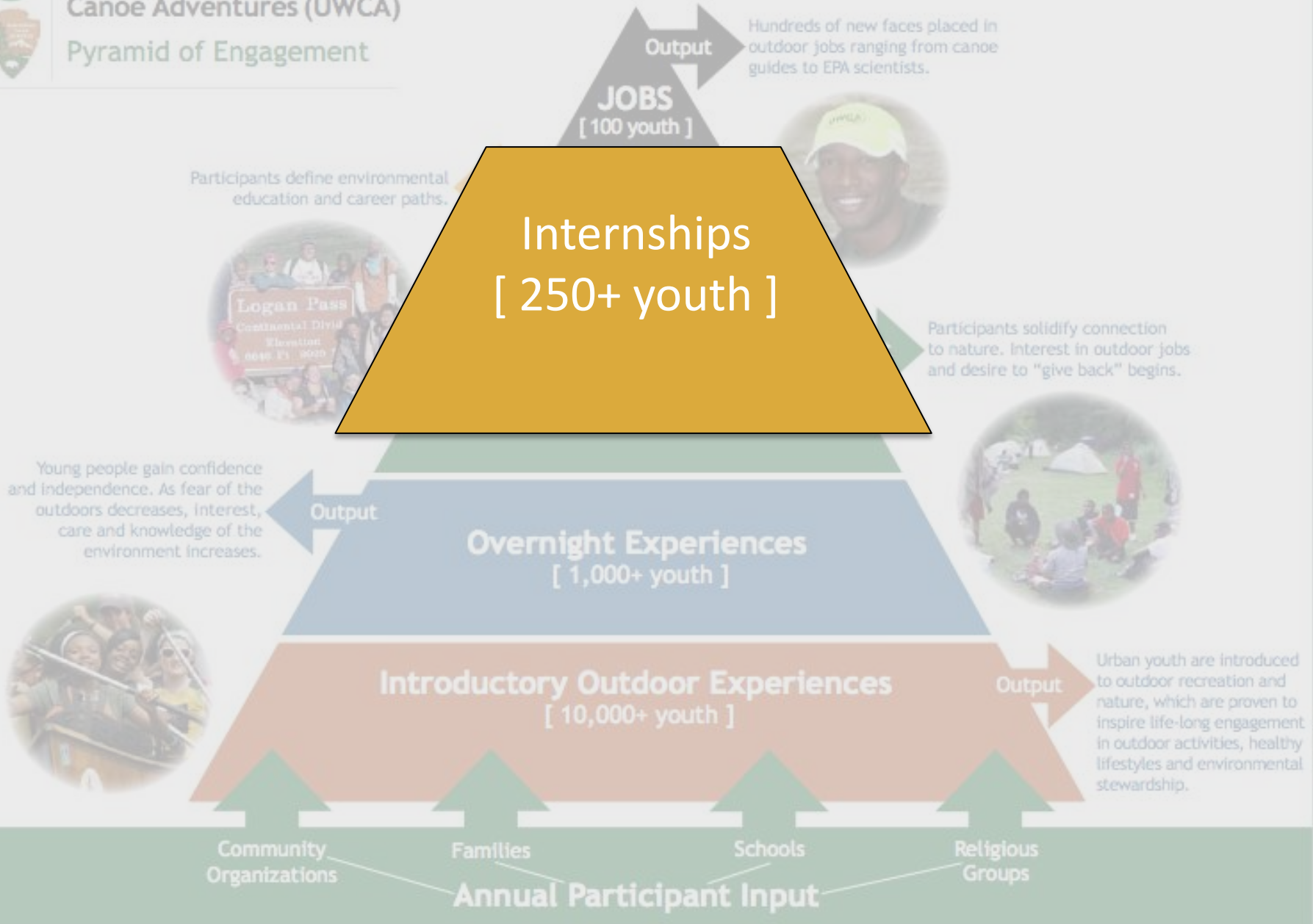
**Urban Wilderness
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Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures (UWCA) Pyramid of Engagement







**Urban Wilderness
Canoe Adventures (UWCA)**
Pyramid of Engagement

JOBS
[100 youth]

Hundreds of new faces placed in outdoor jobs ranging from canoe guides to EPA scientists.



Participants define environmental education and career paths.

Internships
[250 youth]



Output

Participants solidify connection to nature. Interest in outdoor jobs and desire to "give back" begins.

Multi-day Experiences
[500 youth]

Young people gain confidence and independence. As fear of the outdoors decreases, interest, care and knowledge of the environment increases.

Output

Overnight Experiences
[1,000+ youth]



Introductory Outdoor Experiences
[10,000+ youth]

Output

Urban youth are introduced to outdoor recreation and nature, which are proven to inspire life-long engagement in outdoor activities, healthy lifestyles and environmental stewardship.

Community Organizations

Families

Schools

Religious Groups

Annual Participant Input



UWCA

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wilderness
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ALIZUM

UWCA Evaluation Highlights

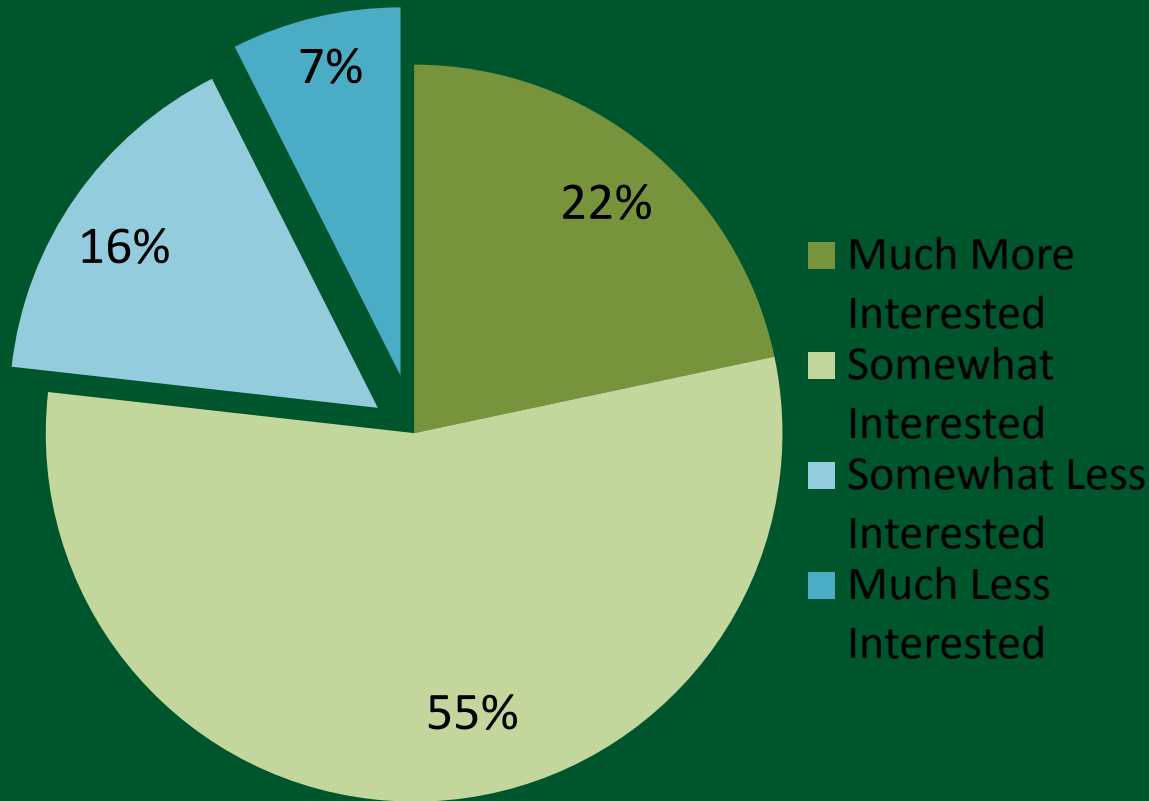


Evaluation Methods

	Student pre-trip survey	Student post-trip survey	MPS student records	Teacher survey
	650/610 94%	650/449 69%	1,372 100%	32/17 53%
Level of student engagement		✓		✓
Attitudes about the River	✓	✓		✓
Attitudes about science & environment		✓		✓
School attendance patterns			✓	
Pursuit of future outdoor activities		✓		
Learning objectives		✓		✓
Teacher attitudes				✓

Increased Interest in Science & Environment

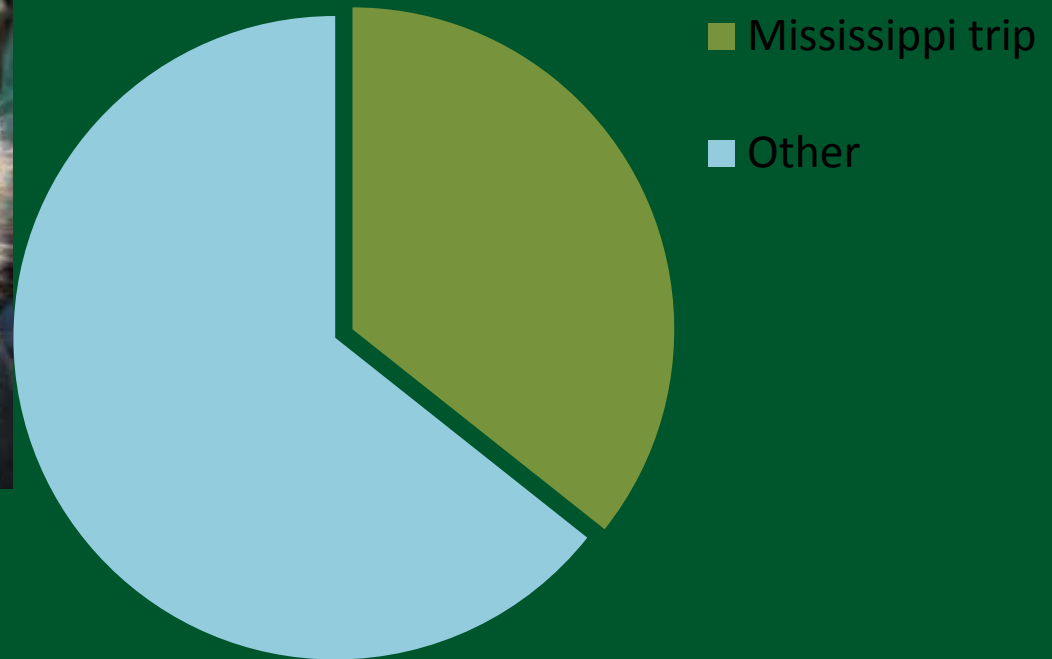
Students' Level of Interest in the Environment because of the UWCA Program



From exposure to engagement

- Changed the way students felt about the Mississippi River
- 320 natural sightings, geologic formations, and people
- Students highly engaged

Students cited the UWCA as one Of the best experiences in school



Conclusions

- Reaching an underserved population
- Fostered greater interest in the Mississippi River, science, and the environment among young people
- Outdoor-based teaching heightens interest and encourages participation
- Environmental stewardship among students increases after their river experience
- Collaboration amplifies impact
- UWCA is replicable nationally



What makes the UWCA Successful?



- Key partnerships
- Innovative educational experiences easily integrated into classrooms
- Ability to serve large numbers of youth
- Long-term funding strategy
- Delivers measurable results
- Duplicable



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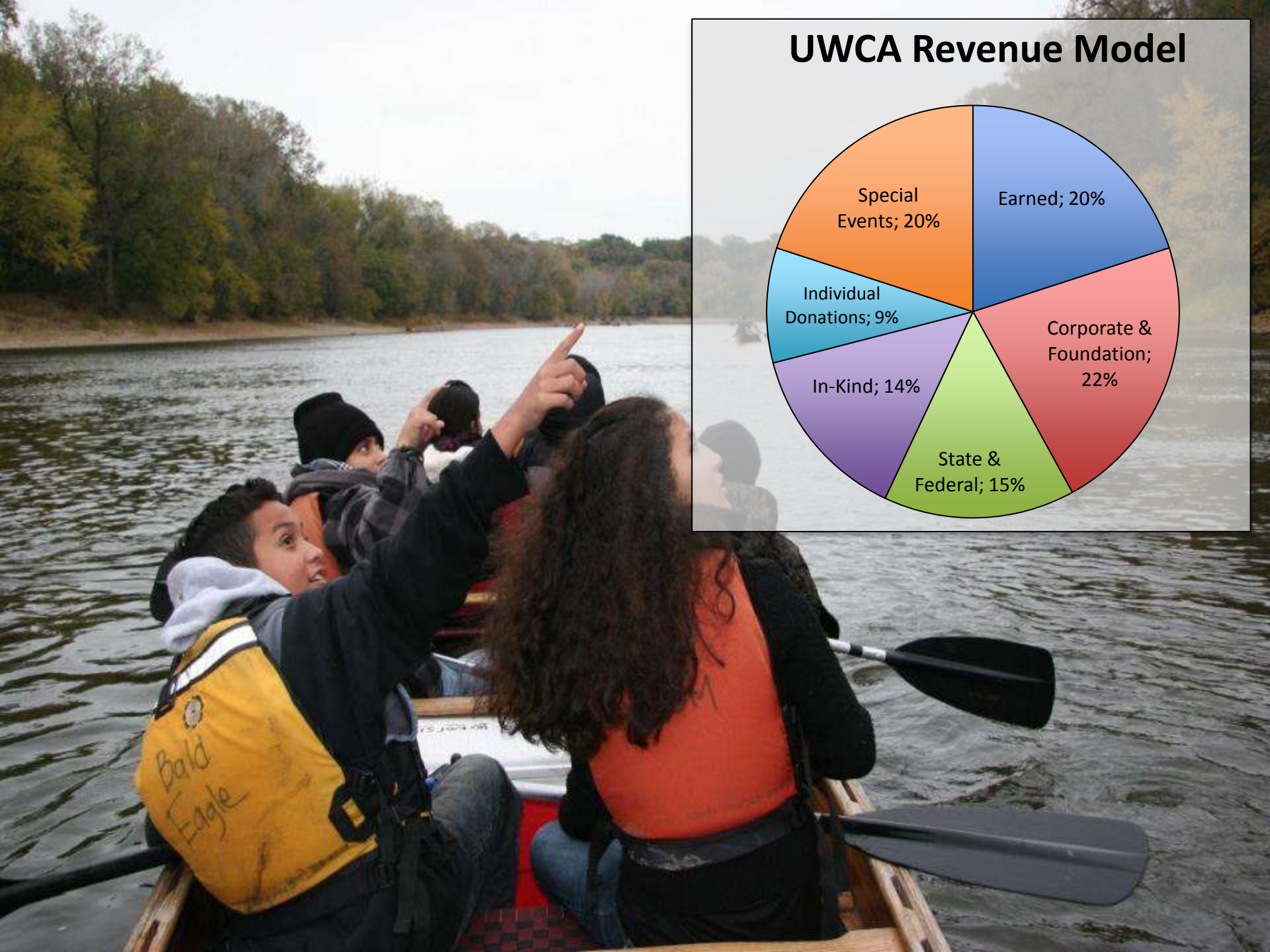


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PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Urban Education. Global Citizens.

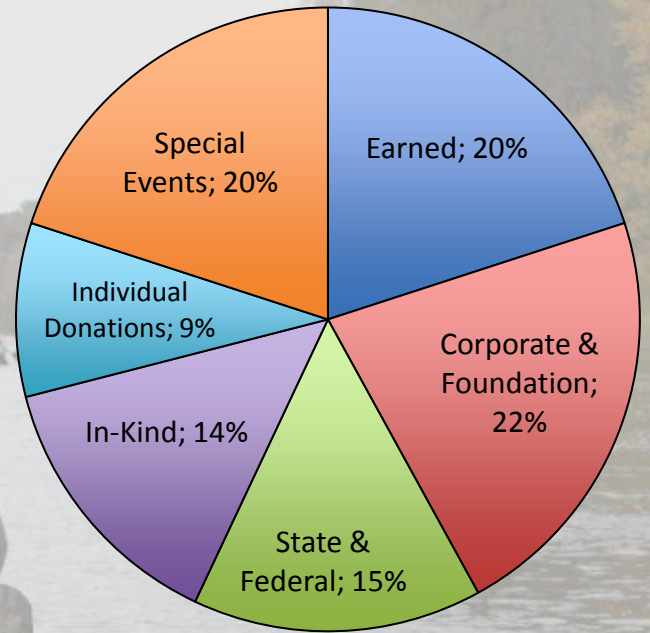


KEY PARTNERSHIPS

A collaboration of **Wilderness Inquiry**, the **National Park Service - Mississippi National River & Recreation Area**, the **Mississippi River Fund** and many others, UWCA is designed to connect urban youth and families to the wilderness right in their own backyard.



UWCA Revenue Model



Unexpected Challenges



- Weather
- Challenges in working with schools
- Barriers from land management agencies
- Funding

Impact Story



THANK YOU!

- More information about the Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures Program can be found at:

<http://www.urbanwildernesscanoeadventures.org>



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