



Who is the Woods Project?

The Woods Project, Inc is a Houston-based nonprofit organization that provides low-income high school students with transformative, experiential learning opportunities in the outdoors.

The Woods Project (TWP) engages underserved Houston high school students in year-round experiential education and wilderness exploration, that develops pivotal behaviors and life skills necessary for success in school, in the workplace and in life. As a result of participating in place-based, wilderness educational and recreational experiences, their students are inspired to raise the heights of what they can imagine for themselves – today, tomorrow and into the future.

TWP set out nearly 15 years ago, confirming that when you bring young people into nature, and away from their home lives, cellphones and social media, and provide them opportunities to see, experience and encounter moments of natural beauty and wonder, while simultaneously finding themselves physically and mentally challenged, they wake up to whole new worlds of possibility they had never imagined.

What work do they do?

TWP offers students from low-income communities the same kind of access to outdoor spaces and recreational activities that are more common among their higher-income peers. By challenging their students to spend time outside, rely on their peers, step up to leadership roles, spend days or weeks away from their families and mobile devices, understand and care for the natural environment, and undertake the physical and mental challenges of outdoor recreation, TWP helps students develop life and leadership skills that correlate strongly with success in school, in the workplace and in life.

TWP's year-long programming includes:

- School-based curricula that introduce concepts of conservation, environmental awareness and camping skills, and encourage the development of communication, teamwork and critical thinking skills
- Single weekend and two-week long overnight camping/immersion trips
 - Recreation opportunities near Houston
 - Guided field education about the area's history, forest ecology, and Leave No Trace Principles
- The Junior Leaders Program, which offers continued leadership development opportunities and extra-curricular experiences
- Virtual College and Career Readiness Workshops (as of Spring of 2020)
 - Well received by students, college counselors and school administrators



OFFICE OF
**DIVERSITY
& INCLUSION**
WARNER COLLEGE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

How does The Woods Project have ties to WCNR?

TWP was introduced to WCNR through a CSU alumni who also serves as a TWP volunteer. Since that introduction, WCNR has been a session presenter at our annual College and Career Readiness Workshop.

How does Natural Areas work advance DEI efforts?

At TWP, we know that when young people are inspired by the beauty and wonder of nature, the wisdom of mentors and the affirmation of their infinite value and worth, they become ever greater, smarter, stronger and more visionary individuals. Through wilderness education and exploration of public lands and other natural areas where people of color are significantly underrepresented, our students develop the tools they need to find their voices to work toward change.

TWP understands that experiences matter. To that end, we partner with like-minded organizations and corporations that offer opportunities for alumni, including but not limited to: nominations to the Posse Foundation, paid internships, full and partial scholarships for extended wilderness experiences, summer and year-round employment. TWP is working with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to create a multi-day externship for small groups of students to shadow park staff to gain exposure to the variety of green professions within the park system. We host an annual College and Career Readiness Workshop. Sessions include panel discussions with professionals in green career, higher education with focus on pathways in Earth Science, financial literacy, interview/resume building and more.

What opportunities are available for WCNR students to be involved?

WCNR students (at least 22 years of age) can participate as a weekend or summer trip leader. Volunteer leaders have the important role of helping students put into practice critical thinking and problem-solving skills through the introduction of wilderness recreation activities. For many TWP students, a weekend trip is their first exposure to sleeping and cooking outdoors, exploring nature, and seeing stars at night. Volunteer leaders also provide TWP students with stable, mature adults outside of their family units.

If you would like more information please reach out to the WCNR Diversity & Inclusion Program [here](#)