

WCNR Diversity & Inclusion Program Partnership with Diversify Whitewater



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Who is Diversify Whitewater?

Diversify Whitewater is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based out of Fort Collins with the mission of promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in paddlesports by removing the barriers that exist for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and allies in kayaking, canoeing, rafting, and stand-up paddling. Diversify Whitewater was founded in 2020 by two Women of Color, Lily Durkee and Antoinette Lee Toscano, with the goal of bringing together BIPOC & allies on rivers, lakes, and waterways in Colorado and around the country. Lily is the current President of Diversify Whitewater and is also a PhD Candidate in the Graduate Degree Program in Ecology here at CSU.

What work do they do?

Diversify Whitewater hosts free community paddling events for BIPOC and allies, and our first two events in the summer of 2020 were held in Northern Colorado. They were so well received by the Front Range community that in 2021, we held four events in Colorado and five events in other states: Maryland, North Carolina, Oregon, and California. We are planning our events for 2022 and currently have 13 events on the schedule, and we have expanded to include nine total states! You can find our full event schedule [here](#). From 2020-2021, Diversify Whitewater provided paddlesports instruction and river trips to over 450 BIPOC & allies, with the help of over 200 volunteers, local business and nonprofit partners, and paddling industry sponsors such as Badfish SUP, NRS, Kokatat, Liquidlogic Kayaks, Watershed Drybags, Immersion Research, Astral Footwear, and others. We are looking forward to another full and fun events season in 2022, and to continue growing and expanding our programming in future years.

How does Diversify Whitewater work advance DEI efforts?

Diversify Whitewater works to create safe and inclusive spaces for BIPOC & allies to learn new paddling skills and meet other individuals interested in pursuing paddling as a form of outdoor recreation. We work to increase representation in the paddling community by sharing stories of BIPOC paddlers on our social media, nominating BIPOC paddlers for sponsorships and features through our industry sponsors, and providing mentorship and creating community for new BIPOC and ally paddlers. At and beyond our paddling events, Diversify Whitewater seeks to educate the broader paddling community on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) to help foster a welcoming and inclusive environment for people with diverse backgrounds and identities.



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How does Diversify Whitewater have ties to WCNR?

Diversify Whitewater's partnership with WCNR was initiated by Lily and WCNR's Director of Diversity and Inclusion Dr. Rickey Frierson. Since our initial correspondence, we have been communicating and collaborating in order to become a resource for Warner students and the Colorado community and to create opportunities for belonging, development, and growth.

What opportunities are available for WCNR students to be involved?

Whether it be an internship or volunteering, Diversify Whitewater is happy to offer opportunities for WCNR students to get involved with our organization and help to advance our mission of promoting DEI and removing barriers in paddlesports. We are always looking for volunteers to help staff our paddling events, such as our **upcoming event on the Cache la Poudre River on June 25th**, where we are looking for volunteers to help with the logistics of the event (e.g., on-shore setup, check-in, raffling prizes, traffic control), photography and video, raft guiding, and safety boating. Volunteer sign-ups will open 30 days prior to the event. Keep an eye out for announcements about this event and all other events by checking [our website](#) and following our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts.

Our organization is also looking for volunteers to help in administrative roles such as social media content production, graphic design, grant writing, event planning, and finances. We are currently unable to offer paid positions as we are currently 100% volunteer-run, however we will be happy to offer compensation once this is feasible for our organization.

If you are interested in volunteering for Diversify Whitewater in an administrative role, please fill out this [Volunteer Interest Form](#). Volunteers of any and all backgrounds and experience levels are welcome. If you have any additional questions, please reach out to [Lily Durkee](#).

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