

You can help make sure parks still matter – partner with us!

We are looking for partners who will help us expand these low-cost, high-impact programs. The cost to help underwrite a GMW Scholarship, Native Travel Grant, or Park Break fellowship is as low as \$500. We work hard to make sure that your investment makes a difference in the "Next Generation."

To find out more, either . . .

- . . . scan the QR code,
- . . . go to www.georgewright.org/diversity,
- . . . call us at 1-906-487-9722, or
- . . . contact us at info@georgewright.org



George Melendez Wright:

A Hispanic Pioneer in Protected Area Conservation

The GWS is named in honor of George Melendez Wright (1904–1936), the first scientist to be employed by the National Park Service. The son of a New York sea captain and a mother from a prominent Salvadoran family, Wright was trained as a biologist. After graduating he joined NPS and carried out the first-ever survey of wildlife in the national parks. Fluent in Spanish, he also led park reconnaissance missions to Puerto Rico and the Big Bend country along the Mexico–U.S. border. Wright’s career, which promised even greater things, was cut short at the age of 31 by his untimely death in an car accident. Today, Wright is highly esteemed for his pioneering role in bringing science into the management of parks and protected areas.



Wright leading pack string through the Sierra Nevada, early 1930s

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Better knowledge, better decisions, better parks



Making Sure Parks Still Matter: The George Wright Society’s Diversity & Relevancy Programs

As the demographics of the United States continue to change in fundamental ways, conservationists are concerned about the lack of diversity in our professions.

In addition, we face the prospect of our stewardship goals becoming less relevant as fewer and fewer young people develop strong ties to the natural world and their own cultural heritage.

The George Wright Society (GWS)—the country’s leading interdisciplinary association of park professionals—promotes diversity and relevancy with three programs, two of which link to the GWS Conference on Parks, Protected Areas, and Cultural Sites.

George Melendez Wright Student Travel Scholarships enable minority students to participate in the Society’s biennial conferences so they can develop their interest in the conservation and preservation of parks, protected areas, and cultural sites throughout the world.



George Melendez Wright Student Travel Scholarship recipients & mentors, 2007

Guided by mentors, scholarship winners learn to navigate a professional meeting and get invaluable experience in making presentations and learning to network effectively.

Receiving the GMW travel scholarship provided me with the opportunity to present at my first conference. I made connections that have helped advance my academic and professional career. The scholarship is a symbol of GWS's commitment to engaging diverse youth in the preservation of our natural and cultural heritage.

Rebecca Stanfield McCown,
National Park Service, Conservation Study Institute



Park Break is a hands-on, results-oriented field seminar for graduate students contemplating a career in park and land-use management or related research and education fields. Park Break puts a small team of students in a national park unit for a week's worth of field and classroom activities, working in close collaboration with scientists and scholars, managers and administrators, and partnership organizations.



The intersection between Native interests and parks/cultural sites is one of the most dynamic areas in place-based conservation today. To have a genuine and mutually enriching dialogue, there must be face-to-face engagement between Native and non-Native people. We promote these conversations through our **Native Participant Travel Grants** to attend the GWS conference. Aimed at non-students, this program is part of a long-term commitment by GWS to make sure indigenous



voices play a meaningful role in the management of protected lands and waters that are of concern to them.



What makes Park Break unique?
It's the only in-park residency program focused on scientific and intellectual inquiry at the graduate-school level.



The GWS conference enabled me to meet other indigenous peoples from the Americas. It's a great place for us to come together and share our cultures, our experiences, and our hopes for the future. In a lot of cases, our communities have more than 10,000 years of knowledge and experience in protecting and managing these lands. We want our voices to be heard and we want to be included in a culturally respectful manner. I feel that the GWS is a great place to do that.

Nathalie Gagnon [Anishinaabeg First Nation],
Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, Parks Canada



I am a member of the first class of Park Break in 2008 at Acadia National Park. During that session I solidified a dissertation topic for my PhD work, started the process of my eventual employment at the park that summer, and made contacts that eventually led to a full-time position with the National Park Service. I am now a professor conducting protected area-related research and teaching future generations of park managers. I directly attribute my success to being involved in the Park Break program.

Ryan Sharp, Recreation and Park Administration Department,
Eastern Kentucky University

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