

Hiking minorities good for makers of outdoorsy gear

By Hugo Martin, Los Angeles Times

Recalling the childhood fun she had at summer camp, Ciji McBride has decided to go back to the outdoors.

The 41-year-old African American beauty consultant from Baldwin Hills recently joined the Sierra Club, began taking day hikes in the Santa Monica Mountains and is planning a camping trip to Yosemite National Park next summer.

“As a kid, I always liked being in the outdoors, and as I approached my mid-30s and 40s, I said, ‘What are some of the things I like to do,’ ” she said. “You can go to bars and movies, and that’s all great, but we live in a state with great weather.”

McBride’s renewed interest in hiking and camping reflects the growing percentage of minorities spending time in the great outdoors, a significant shift for a demographic long underrepresented among campers and hikers in the U.S even as the nation’s population becomes more diverse. The development holds the promise of a potentially lucrative new market for state and national parks as well as makers of outdoorsy equipment and clothing.

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