



River Voices

QUESTIONING ASSUMPTIONS:

WHO CARES MOST ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?

by Jacob Cohen River Network Partnership Program www.rivernetwork.org



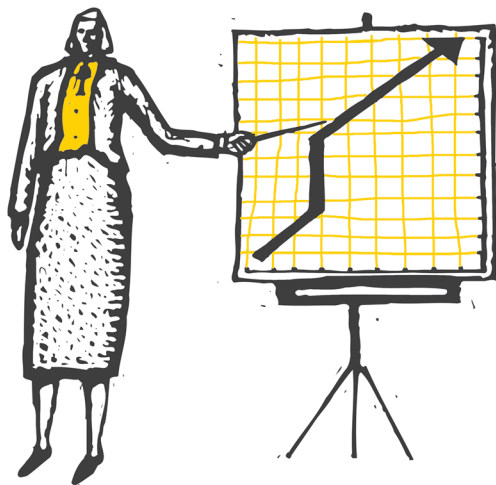
any of us in the river and watershed protection movement can relate to a familiar scenario. We plan an educational event or community meeting hoping to bring new faces into the

fold, often with a specific interest in bringing diverse voices to the table. We send out emails, make phone calls, attend tabling events, put up flyers and send

out mailings only to find another homogenous roomful of people on the day of the event. Afterwards we might ponder, "Why aren't more people of color interested in this work?"

"Perhaps we aren't focusing on *their issues*?" "Why are middle class whites the only ones thinking about the environment?" "Why don't people of color care?" In that moment, we forget the old adage about assumptions and make a costly mistake.

The truth of the matter is that, statistically, people of color *DO* care about environmental issues, typically as much or *more* than white Americans. In this issue of *River Voices*, you'll read about how environmental injustices have disproportionately affected people of color and lower income communities, and how



many have mobilized to restore the health of their environment and prevent injustices from happening again. Before we continue strategizing our outreach campaigns around false assumptions, we must learn this history and celebrate this ongoing work.

A number of recent studies also reinforce the fact that people of color in the U.S. care deeply about environmental issues. One study, conducted by Paul Mohai at the University of Michigan, details comprehensive survey responses of African American perceptions and lifestyle choices regarding the environment.¹ "The conventional wisdom is that, due to greater concerns about jobs, crime, education and other 'survival' issues, African Americans are unconcerned about the environment," says Mohai. "This study provides clear evidence that conventional wisdom is wrong."

After drawing on thirty years' worth of national data sets compiled by the National Opinion Research Center and twenty years' worth of data from the League of Conservation Voters, Mohai concludes that:

- African Americans are more likely than white Americans to buy pesticide-free foods (37% of African Americans vs. 29% of whites), consume less meat for environmental reasons (15% of African Americans vs. 8% of whites), and drive less for environmental reasons (16% of African Americans vs. 10% of whites).
- African Americans are as likely as white Americans to belong to environmental groups. According to a 1993 national survey, ten percent of African Americans and whites belonged to an environmental group. In 2000, nine percent

1 Mohai, Paul. "Dispelling Old Myths: African American Concern for the Environment." *Environment*, Vol.45 NO.5 (June 2003): pp. 10-26



River Network

Connecting People, Saving Rivers

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and unite people and communities to protect
and restore rivers and other waters that
sustain the health of our country.*

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thirty percent of the U.S. population is comprised of people of color, with the percentage of people of color under the age of 18 closer to 40%. Immigration, migration and fertility patterns indicate that by close to the year 2050, non-Hispanic whites in the U.S. population will become a minority.

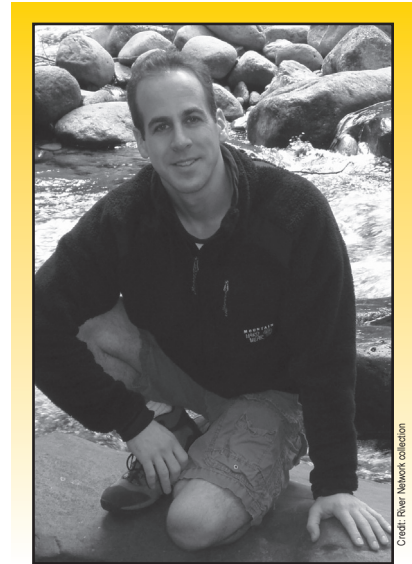
At the same time, people of color still bear a disproportionate share of the environmental burden in this country: According to the report *Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty*, as of 2007, “host neighborhoods of commercial hazardous waste facilities are 56% people of color whereas non-host areas are 30% people of color....Poverty rates in the host neighborhoods are 1.5 times greater than in non-host areas.”

How quickly and effectively will those of us in the watershed movement develop changing strategies and programs to serve the concerns of these constituencies and work to correct environmental injustices? Can we see beyond the issues that have historically garnered the attention of our movement to also include a more diverse set of concerns that appeal to a broader audience?

In 1997, River Network initiated its *Healthy Waters, Healthy Communities Program* to empower grassroots organizations, particularly in disadvantaged communities, to effect meaningful environmental change by providing them with the technical and organizational assistance to address water-based environmental contamination that poses a threat to human health. River Network’s focus on this work is amplified in our new strategic plan to more adequately resource the issues that will matter most to our growing and changing population in the coming years.

Most watershed groups would like to diversify their membership to grow their base of support. However, to succeed in diversifying our base of support, we need to be willing to broaden the scope of issues we address to meet the primary concerns of that broader constituency. While an effort to restore habitat in the upper reaches of a watershed is often critical to the health of downstream fisheries, such an effort alone is unlikely to seem urgent to downstream residents concerned about drug dealing in an abandoned park adjacent to the river.

This does not mean we need to shift our priorities away from restoring upstream habitat, protecting cold water fisheries, preserving pristine waterways and the like. Rather, we may be wise to consider diversifying our focus to also include issues that are meaningful to a broader populace. Most groups have limited resources and adding new issues to our agendas is obviously not easy; however, in certain watersheds, such efforts may garner an expanded constituent base that will bring new financial resources and human energy to bear on the issues that concern all of us.



Eyna Milchen

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of whites and eight percent of African Americans belonged to an environmental group. However, rather than joining traditional environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club or the World Wildlife Fund, African Americans frequently form their own groups and mobilize on a grassroots level.

- African Americans express significantly greater concern than whites about their local environment. According to Mohai, this correlates with the poorer environmental quality found in African American neighborhoods. Neighborhood environmental problems, such as high noise levels, abandoned houses, trash, litter, rats, roaches or other pests were cited as among the most important environmental problems facing the country by 26% of African Americans surveyed, compared to only three percent of whites.
- African Americans in Congress have been among the strongest and most consistent supporters of environmental protection legislation over the past two decades. Average pro-environmental voting scores for African American members in the House of Representatives have ranged from about 75% to 85%, while for other House Democrats and for House Republicans average scores have ranged from about 60% to 80% and 20% to 40%, respectively.²

“Environmental issues are not ‘luxury’ issues to African Americans,” explains Mohai. “Survey results such as these

² University of Michigan Press Release. *African Americans care about the environment as much or more than whites.* May 29, 2003

demonstrate that environmental quality issues are a priority on many different levels.”

As it turns out, the same can be said for Latinos in the U.S. An annual poll on the environment conducted by the Public

Policy Institute of California³ found that African Americans and Latinos in California are significantly more likely than whites to identify ocean and air pollution as a “big problem.” When asked about their level of concern regarding local air and water quality, 39% of African Americans and 30% of Latinos expressed significant concerns, while only 19% of whites expressed concern.

These studies are not alone in the trends that they illustrate, but what can we do with this information? We would do well to heed the advice of University of California-Davis’ Manuel Pastor in his assertion that “If we build on both the evident environmental sympathies and the social justice legacy of the Latino [and African American] communities, we have a chance to revitalize the environmental movement...It’s a vision that promises economic opportunity for diverse communities and demands protection for our precious land, coast and wildlife.”⁴

Once we learn about the crucial importance of the environmental justice movement to the larger landscape of environmentalism and social equality, we can apply the practical advice offered by fellow organizations on how to not simply increase the diversity in our respective groups’ work, but to move towards a more holistic, inclusive thinking about how to tackle the most pressing environmental issues of our time.

³ Public Policy Institute of California. *PPIC Statewide Survey: Californians and the Environment.* July 2009. www.ppic.org

⁴ Pastor, Manuel and Rachel Morello-Frosch. “The Assumption is Wrong: Latinos Care Deeply about the Environment.” *San Jose Mercury News.* July 8, 2002.



MANAGING DIVERSITY FOR SUCCESS

I arrived at the 10th Annual National River Rally and looked around. I wanted so badly to believe that maybe this year, maybe this time, there would be more people of color roaming through the convention area, manning booths and networking in the hallways. While I was heartened to see that tribal members were in attendance, I was disappointed that other people of color were underrepresented in this important event: a Rally that was addressing issues concerning the health and sustainability of our rivers and their watersheds around the country. A Rally being held in Baltimore, that would include a focus on the body of water that I had fallen in love with in the 1980s as one of the only black canvassers for an organization called Clean Water Action. A Rally whose content should, by all estimates, have attracted people from diverse populations who have lived alongside the Bay and its watersheds for generations, especially in the Baltimore area where the Chesapeake Bay is so important to the livelihoods of all and is clearly in so much danger.

Credit photo courtesy of Iantha Gantt-Wright



“Why is this happening? What is getting in the way? How can river and watershed protection organizations do things differently so that they can attract people from diverse populations as supporters, members and professional staff?” Most of us recognize that there is some need for greater diversity within the movement, but getting there is often easier said than done.

For years I have been working to support environmental/conservation organizations who want to do a better job of reaching

people from communities that aren’t traditionally viewed as supportive of and interested in environmental organizations and their work. It was for this reason that I had been invited to present a workshop at River Rally on this very topic; a workshop that was enthusiastically received, leading me to the belief that I am not alone in my ponderings.

So, when I was asked to follow up on my workshop by writing an article about what traditional river organizations can do to better reach and work with people from diverse populations, I jumped at the chance. Why was I so excited about this? Because I continue to believe that

until organizations like River Network, its Partner organizations and others actively work with and attract people from diverse racial, ethnic and socio-economic groups, we will not be able to address the myriad of challenging issues impacting our rivers. And, if we can’t get this done, my great nieces and nephews, Kennedy, Kameron, Markahjia and Zarie, don’t have

a chance of enjoying the Chesapeake Bay and the waterways that it feeds and that I grew up with. I, for one, refuse to let that happen.

How do you get your organization started on the path towards greater diversity? What needs to happen? Who needs to get it done? I suggest that only those who are serious about taking some really significant next steps read the rest of this article, because you will need a whole lot of courage to go this route. And, knowing that so many of you keep the rivers at the heart of your conversation, I would ask you to please hold that as a place to begin.

First and foremost, any organization,

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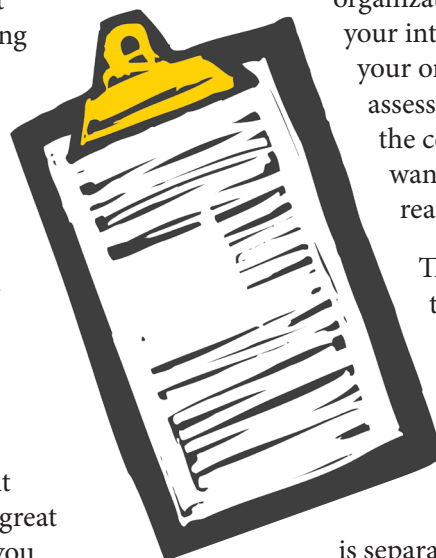
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institution or business attempting to engage diversity within, which doesn't just mean hiring people, but also shifting culture, thinking differently and making people of color a priority, must look internally at itself. This means doing some kind of organizational assessment. Ask the questions that you would like to have answered about your organization as it pertains to diversity: What would you like your organization to look like? What is getting in your way? Who utilizes your services? How do you compare to other organizations? What are your employees thinking about this? Do they care? Or, do they believe that targeting people for diverse groups might impact their work and/or their positions? Are they scared of losing something? What does diversity or multiculturalism mean to them?

There are many assessment tools out there and lots of great consultants that can help you to find the right one for your organization. Once you have completed the assessment you will have an idea of what the culture of your organization looks, sounds and feels like, and what aspects of your culture and the systems you have in place might be getting in the way of attracting people from diverse communities. It will also give you some ideas with regard to how to do a better job of retaining who you have, and engaging in broad-based partnerships with a variety of different kinds of organizations.

An additional benefit of taking a cultural assessment is that it will tell you what you still need to learn as an organization.



What are the things that people need to know? If we were to increase the diversity of our team, how might that look, feel and sound? What changes would we need to make in how we move and live within our organization? Are we willing to do it? What frightens or excites our current staff about this work? How can we be more effective if we do this? These are some of the questions that will be useful in moving forward. An assessment would also give you some better ideas for how you can improve the management of your organization in general, beyond your intention of diversifying your organization. Finally, an assessment will help you to target the communities that you really want to include and need to reach to get the work done.

The next step is to integrate this work into your organization's strategic plan. This is critical.

Many organizations take on an assessment and diversity work and see it as something that is separate from the work they do everyday. If this is the case, you are doomed to fail. Increasing the diversity and cultural competence of your staff is critical to your ability to thrive in a world where the demographics are so quickly changing around us. River and watershed organizations must now and in the future find ways to become not just more relevant to the broader population, but also to be more flexible, open and aggressive when it comes to building a broader and more diverse constituency.

One important point to remember is that we all have what I call "dimensions of diversity," or lenses and filters through which others see us, even when that's

not how we want to be perceived. My lens within traditional organizations was as the black woman that everyone knew had the answer for black folks. What people didn't realize was that another lens I wanted—and want others to see me through today—is what I call a “true environmentalist” lens. I don't do this work because I love to work on diversity, although I *do* have a great time doing it. I do this work because I love rivers, lakes and streams. I love the sun, the sky, the moon, the oceans and the seas. I live and breathe everyday of my life to protect the Chesapeake Bay. I believe it is the greatest gift that God, or spirit, or whatever you call this thing that gives us life, gave the eastern part of the country. We have been gifted with a gem so exquisite that it defies the laws of beauty. So, I get frustrated when I am seen as the woman who “does diversity” when I am the woman who does *the environment*, and knows that without a diverse and involved constituency for the Bay, my great nieces and nephews may not know it as I know it today. I still wonder why it is so hard for my white colleagues to see me in that way. I am extra sensitive about how to create safe places within organizations that allow people like me to be able to say and be with the fact that I am not just black; I am also green and blue.



Credit: FLICR photo courtesy of Chesapeake Bay Nations

To create an organizational culture that can support that degree of openness and possibility, it takes leaders who are truly willing to give this work all that they have. This means making diversity a priority. It is one thing to say “this is really important stuff.” It's another to say “this is really important stuff, and we are going to stick with it over the long haul”...even when we get tired, scared or concerned that somebody's going to think we have drifted into “mission creep” (whatever that means).



Although this is important as a program, this work goes far beyond valuing individual differences or developing human relationships. It takes into account the globalization of the world economy, as well as changes to the domestic demographic

characteristics of the population (diversity). Organizations taking a strategic approach to managing diversity will be in a position to gain a competitive edge over the long haul. And, our rivers around the country will be the greatest beneficiary of

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CONT. FROM PAGE 7 all. As you contemplate where you would like to go as an organization with such an important task, you need to do nine things:

- Recognize the economic and social consequences of *not* working doing this work.
- Define what engaging in diversity work really means to everyone through an organizational assessment.
- Be sure that you have engaged the people in your organization that can sustain change.
- Make this work a line item in your budget that does not go away; assign responsibility.
- Communicate your intentions.
- Develop an effective organizational strategy for engaging and managing diversity which should include a task group lead by an organizational leader who can move the process.
- Implement an action plan for organizational change that includes a strong focus on learning.
- Engage in constant evaluation of the diversity strategy.



- Fund the effort with dollars that are firm and will remain as a part of the budget.

I realize that it may seem like a lot of work, and I promise you that it is worth it. If you are serious about this work, it is not going to happen by sitting back and waiting for diversity to happen. It will take energy and yes, money. And, over the long haul our rivers will be the ultimate beneficiaries. Future generations will be able to count on rivers, lakes, oceans and streams because you moved out of your comfort zone to do something different... and in that, you changed the world.



AN INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT BULLARD

Here is a condensed text of an interview with Dr. Robert Bullard, one of the pioneering scholars and activists in the environmental justice movement. This interview, conducted by Errol Schewizer of EarthFirst!, is anti-copyright and may be reproduced and distributed at will.

ERROL SCHWEIZER (ES): *What is the environmental justice movement?*

ROBERT BULLARD (RB): The environmental justice movement has redefined what environmentalism is all about. It basically says that the environment is everything: where we live, work, play, go to school, as well as the physical and natural world. And so we can't separate the physical environment from the cultural environment. We have to talk about making sure that justice is integrated throughout all of the stuff that we do.

What the environmental justice movement is about is trying to address all of the inequities that result from human settlement, industrial facility siting and industrial development. What we've tried to do over the last twenty years is educate and assist groups in organizing and mobilizing, empowering themselves to take charge of their lives, their community and their surroundings. It's more of a concept of trying to address power imbalances, lack of political enfranchisement, and to redirect resources so that we can create some healthy, liveable and sustainable types of models.

ES: *How have environmental justice groups organized themselves?*

RB: For the most part, a lot of the small grassroots groups operate from a bottom up model. They don't have boards of directors and large budgets and large staffs but they do operate with the idea that everyone has a role and we are all equal in this together. The environmental justice groups are more egalitarian, most of them are led by women, and it's more democratic. Not to say it's perfect but

it does bring out the idea that power rests in all of us and when we operate as a collective, that's when we are most powerful and we move forward as a unit, as a body and not necessarily with a hierarchy. But I think a lot of it is when you can have an issue that can mobilize, organize and create the catalyst that gets thousands of people at a meeting, saying this is what we want and we're not gonna back up till we get it.

I think that's where the environmental justice movement is more of a grassroots movement of ordinary people who may not see themselves as traditional environmentalists, but are just as much concerned about the environment as someone who may be a member of the Sierra Club or the Audubon Society.

ES: *How has the environmental justice movement come into conflict with these traditional, white environmental groups?*

RB: There's been a lot of conflict and misunderstanding about what the role of some of the green groups are as it relates to environmental justice and particularly working in communities of color. And what we're saying is that it's just one environment. You're talking about planet earth, where we live, and if in fact we are going to have a global movement for environmental justice, we have to understand what environment is and what the agendas are...

We are saying that environmental justice incorporates the idea that we are just as much concerned about wetlands, birds and wilderness areas, but we're also concerned with urban habitats, where people live in cities, about reservations, about things that are happening along the

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CONT. FROM PAGE 9 US-Mexican border, about children that are being poisoned by lead in housing and kids playing outside in contaminated playgrounds. So we have had to struggle to get these issues on the radar of a lot of the large environmental groups.

We've made a lot of progress since 1990 when a letter was written to them charging them with environmental racism, elitism, looking at their staff, looking at their boards and saying that we need to talk. And there's been some talking and sharing and working together along the way. We've made progress but there's still a lot of progress that needs to be made because to a large extent the environmental movement, the more conservation/preservation movement, really reflects the larger society. And society is racist. And so we can't expect a lot of our organizations not to somehow be affected by that.

We're not saying that people are evil and that these organizations are setting out to do harm, but we're saying that we have to educate ourselves and learn about each other. We have to cross those boundaries and go on the other side of the tracks, go to the meetings downtown and learn from each other. That's what we've been doing for the last twenty years: trying to get a handle on how we can work together in a principled way. And in 1991 we had the first national people of color environmental leadership summit and we developed 17 principles of environmental justice. Basically, how can we as people of color, working class people and poor people work on agendas that at the same time may conflict with the larger agendas of the big groups. And what we're saying is that we may not agree on 100 percent of the things but we agree on more things than we disagree on. And I think that we have to agree to work on the things we are in agreement on and somehow work

through those things where there are disagreements.

ES: *What kind of role has race played in the siting of toxic facilities in this country?*

RB: Race is still the potent factor for predicting where Locally Unwanted Land Uses (LULUs) go. A lot of people say its class, but race and class are intertwined. Because the society is so racist and because racism touches every institution—employment, housing, education, facility siting, land use decisions, you can't really extract race out of decisions that are being made by persons who are in power and the power arrangements are unequal...All of that is part of the environment and we have to make sure that our brothers and sisters who are in environmental groups understand that's what we are saying.

Environmental justice is not a social program, it's not affirmative action, it's about justice. And until we get justice in environmental protection, justice in terms of enforcement of regulations, we will not even talk about achieving sustainable development or sustainability issues...A lot of the groups that are trying to address these issues in the absence of dealing with race may be fooling themselves. When we talk about what's happening along the US-Mexican border and the colonias and the maquilas and the devastation that is happening along the border, the health conditions of children and workers and not understand that it's also related to our consumption patterns, consumption behavior and who has the most money to consume the most. And those are issues that may be unpopular when we sit in rooms and talk but I think that's how the environmental justice movement is forcing these issues on the table and really getting a lot of people to think about how we can start to address the disparities and the inequities and the privileged position that

some people have only because of the skin color that they were born in. And that's where the justice issues come into account.

Now all of the issues of environmental racism and environmental justice don't just deal with people of color. We are just as much concerned with inequities in Appalachia, for example, where the whites are basically dumped on because of lack of economic and political clout and lack of having a voice to say "no" and that's environmental injustice. So we're trying to work with groups across the political spectrums; democrats, republicans, independents, on the reservations, in the barrios, in the ghettos, on the border and internationally to see that we address these issues in a comprehensive manner.

ES: *Are you seeing more of a convergence between the traditional, white environmental groups and the people of color movements?*

RB: We haven't seen a total convergence; what we've seen is a better understanding of the various sides that are there, the various elements, the various components and priorities that are there. And for a long time historically, for example, black people in the south were not even allowed to visit state parks, because of Jim Crow and segregation. And somehow we were blamed for not having appreciation for state parks. I mean, it wasn't our faults, we couldn't go to them! So we're finding as the more urban folks get to visit parks and wilderness areas and are able to appreciate that these are national treasures and not just treasures for people that have money to visit them, it's everybody's. We all pay taxes. And so we are seeing more and more young people being able to take field trips to see the beauty of nature. And more and more people who are in environmental groups are now beginning to understand

that what happens in cities also impacts their lives.

So we can't just let cities buckle under and fall into this sinkhole. We have to talk about this convergence of urban, suburban and rural and talk about the quality of life that exists and talk about the issue of urban sprawl. Basically everybody is impacted by sprawl. People who live in cities face disinvestment, in suburbs with the trees being knocked down, chewing up farmland. So you talk about this convergence, a lot of it is happening now, but it has to happen with the understanding that we have to include everybody, that it has to be an inclusive movement or it won't work.

ES: *How can you pose these issues to people when organizing in low income and politically disenfranchised communities, especially communities with very little open space or access to natural areas?*

RB: The first line is that we have to start early. We have to educate young people that it is their right to have access to open space, green space, parks, outdoors, as opposed to people thinking that they're supposed to be living in an area where the only park is a basketball court with no net. We have to give people this idea that it's their right to have access to open space and green space and we have to provide funds to make sure that we get them early on and take them on field trips, take them to a wilderness area, a refuge, a reserve, to a park—a real park and to integrate this information into our curriculum.

In your geography course, in your social studies course, or science course make sure you integrate this into it, and have videos that you can show, but ultimately the best example that you can have is that young people visit these places and see for themselves what nature is.



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE:

THE ROAD TO A CLEANER PLANET FOR EVERYBODY

by Frederick Tutman

Patuxent Riverkeeper

www.paxriverkeeper.org

N

ot long ago, while walking along the banks of my waterway on a perfect evening with the sun low in the sky, I encountered a Hispanic family contentedly

fishing on the Patuxent River: mother, dad and a cherubic tike swinging her tiny legs contently in a baby stroller. All were sitting on the bank enjoying the river and being together outdoors as a family. On this cool summer evening, I asked this family about the things that concerned them most about our river, the Patuxent. The father told me with great passion about his boyhood experiences fishing back home in his country of origin. He spoke of his great

from environmental collapse. Sometimes it seems to me that the environmental movement is controlled by those who have the cost of admission. The issues and problems we work on are framed by those with a very specific view of the environment largely defined by their social circumstances and by conditions in their own neighborhoods. Often this means we in the “movement” have a sense of entitlement about the environment that is not shared by those without easy access to those things we take for granted.

The myth that minorities or the poor don’t care about the environment is such an incomplete snapshot that it’s almost bizarre. The interest and concern for our

IN AMERICA, NOT EVERYBODY SHARES THE SAME ENVIRONMENT, AND POLLUTION PROBLEMS TEND TO BE ECONOMIC CRIMES WITH ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES FELT MORE ACUTELY BY THOSE WITHOUT BETTER OPTIONS OR OPPORTUNITIES FOR REDRESS.

love of fishing and of the simple joy of watching the water go by on a lazy summer afternoon. But when I asked him about mercury in the fish, trash in the water and the problems of saving a watershed, he said simply: “Mister, we are poor people and immigrants, what can we do to change the world? Is that not the role of those who have everything?” This simple explanation of how society works from the perspective of a relative newcomer to our shores strikes me as intensely honest and clarifying.

So it is with some surprise that I often hear “environmentalists” confide in me their disappointment that more people of color or “minorities” are not actively involved in the efforts to save the planet

planet is ferocious among nearly all people I have met of any stripe, though for very different motives sometimes. But the ability to do much about environmental problems differs widely depending on factors like race, class, money and power.

The call to “Save the Chesapeake Bay,” for example, rings less clearly for people consigned to living in blighted cities; places desperate for renewal with almost no support from the environmental movement to restore or re-invest in such places. Aren’t such places part of the “environment” too? Should race and class matter? No, they should not, but in America they do anyhow. Race, class and culture divide us just as much as ever. Tell me your zip code and the odds are I can tell you quite a lot about the quality of your

local water, whether you drive a hybrid car, and your likelihood of owning a sailboat or participating in a water sport. Your income, education and your social status should not really influence your tastes or your choices when it comes to appreciation for nature, but sometimes these prompts can influence your ability to act on your connection to the environment as you know it, and the available options you can realistically use in order to make change around you.

A study and survey produced a few years ago by MD Sea Grant College revealed that environmental values or attitudes between Blacks and whites are almost identical. But you would not know this if you go to many gatherings of traditional environmental organizations. Isn't it possible that while environmental concerns are ubiquitous, that the forums we use to express our concerns are just as segregated and as class obsessed as the rest of the society?

I often encounter communities fighting vigorously against projects that are bad for the environment only to assure that if they are successful; such projects will ultimately be built in other, less empowered neighborhoods instead. As a nation of neighborhoods, there is something truly toxic socially about allowing bad projects to go anywhere. In a sense, a clean environment has become a commodity. Those with enough money or influence get better environmental quality. Those without inherit landfills, ancient sewer pipes, industrial waste and brownfields. If we smashed such contradictions and injustices, the commodity value of

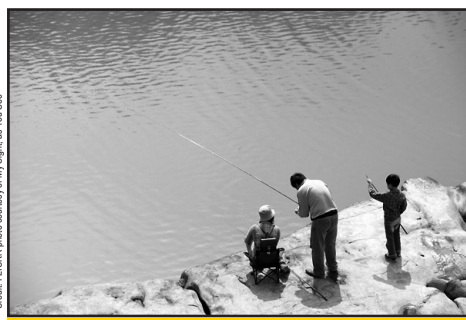
pollution would be abolished forever. If we made it unacceptable to pollute anywhere, then everywhere would be a clean place to live. If we did this then I assure you our "green" movement would be more inclusive and diverse.

The point is that the social and economic system we live in not only institutionalizes waste, inefficiency and pollution—it is reliant on it, and has normalized it to enrich those closer to the top of the social heap. They are the true minority group. This is the very same unsustainable economic system that many of us with

relative affluence depend on—the system that is warming the planet, poisoning the waters, choking the airways and plundering the best lands. The system that is typically good for business but lousy for people, and especially lousy for certain people.

The usual messaging of our movement tacitly reinforces the concept that the way to enjoy good environmental quality is to acquire wealth. If you want a better environment, just move to a better neighborhood.

Now before you throw up your hands and walk away claiming that we are not going to tear down the society or the economic system in our lifetimes, or change such fundamental things in a realistic way, consider this idea: healing what has gone wrong in our democracy, and as a result what is wrong with our environment, will require us to relearn how to function and behave in a society where our mutual future is tied to the environmental conduct of each and every one of us. We cannot have a winning solution that is moral unless everybody stands to win.



Credit: FLORIAN photo courtesy of IM Sight, as You See

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But still too many of us don't mind the "system" as it is. We just think it is a trash problem, preferring to work on the environment instead of changing the values of the socio-economic system that is strangling the planet. Still more people regard this talk about race, poverty and disparity as a distraction from the true aims of stewardship for the planet for its own sake. To such people, making this struggle about changing the "system" or fighting "the man" is more than they bargained for. Besides, it sounds negative and we prefer "positive" action, right? Indeed most of us have never lived in a fair and just society and so we would not know where to begin the job of healing an unfair society as a pathway for fixing the environment. Nothing seems broken to some of us and so why all the fuss? Perhaps if you are downtrodden it is much more obvious that the source of many of the earth's problems are identical to many of the intractable social problems that plague us such as crime, poverty, educational failure and much more.

So the high road for our green movement is for us to reach out not just with "education" but with compassion for people and the willingness not only to teach but also to learn about the environmental problems of others. With genuine inclusiveness comes a richer perspective on the issues that affect us all. More diversity will strengthen our movement, not dilute it. We cannot succeed in our aims for a clean planet until we learn to embrace the moral and actual inclusiveness of our vision for a better world. A movement that seeks to build on a foundation of homogeneity is one that merely reinforces privilege, isolation and a myopic view of what the environment truly is about. So, as long as we tolerate the suffering of real people while working on either big picture problems or self-

serving parochial problems (while debating the science), we will make the disenfranchisement factor even worse. As long as we expect environmental victims to accept, without question, our framing of what the "environment" is, then we will never win full participation.

The way to start making effective change in our movement is both fundamental and systemic. Not only must we as humans alter the way we eat, live and spend money, we must change how we interact as a community among ourselves.

Actually, to change the environment we have to change the very idea of what community means. Only then will we have an environmental movement that captures not only the hearts and minds of the existing choir but also that of the poor, the disenfranchised and, in fact, the very people who are usually first to suffer and have the most to lose as our planet sinks deeper into decay. If we want fishable, swimmable waters or sustainable energy or to stop global warming, then there is no other feasible solution but to clean up the whole society, and as we do so, abolish environmental inequity.

In sum, we must be prepared to take up the cause of those who have been wronged and reflect diversity in our choice of issues while accepting the complex truth that diversity itself may also have the effect of altering those issues in many ways. Let it be that we don't just want "minorities" on our bandwagon; we also want a better, more inclusive and fairer bandwagon too.



THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE

As the world becomes increasingly aware of and alarmed by the changes in the earth's climate, it is also becoming evident that climate change will affect populations differently. With rising temperatures, human lives—particularly people of color, low-income, and Indigenous communities—are affected by compromised health, financial burdens, and social and cultural disruptions. These communities are the first to experience the negative impacts of climate change such as heat-related illness and death, respiratory illness, infectious diseases, unaffordable rises in energy costs, extreme natural disasters and loss of ecosystem services. Not only do they bear disproportionate burdens from climate change itself, but also from ill-designed policies to prevent climate change and the side effects of the energy systems that cause it as well. Moreover, those who are most affected by global warming are least responsible for the greenhouse gas emissions that cause the problem—both globally and within the United States.

Groups like the Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative (EJCC) are committed to demonstrating that climate change is fundamentally an issue of human rights and environmental justice, and to promoting fair and just solutions to the climate crisis. Through community organizing, research, education and coalition building, EJCC redefines the debate about global warming to include the voices of the marginalized and unduly burdened, while promoting accountability and transparency in government policies and industry practices. It is important that all organizations working on climate change issues understand how the effects will impact communities differently, and work towards achieving fair solutions to climate change.

CLIMATE JUSTICE

Climate justice is a vision to dissolve and alleviate the unequal burdens created by climate change. As a form of environmental justice, climate justice is the fair treatment of all people and freedom from discrimination with the creation of policies and projects that address climate change and the systems that create climate change and perpetuate discrimination.

Climate justice organizations are working strategically at the centers of injustice, in cities and communities across the United States. Climate injustice affects communities both locally and globally. In the U.S., a vast majority of low-income, communities of color are concentrated in urban centers in the Southern United States and along coastal regions—areas at high risk of flooding and major storms, and that have a history of substandard air and water quality.

by Nia Robinson

*Environmental Justice and
Climate Change Initiative
and*

*Bevan Griffiths-Sattenspiel
River Network*

www.rivernetwork.org



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Other river and watershed groups can play an important role in the climate justice movement by working with disadvantaged communities to implement solutions for preventing and adapting to climate change.

SAVE WATER, SAVE ENERGY, SAVE \$\$

Saving water—or reducing water consumption—saves energy, and therefore also saves money. The potential for low-income households and local businesses to reduce their water and energy bills through water efficiency is huge: a family of four switching from a standard 2.5 gallon per minute showerhead to a low-flow 1.5 gallon per minute showerhead can save over 8,000 gallons of water and reduce their carbon footprint by 1,700 pounds per year. This generates a savings of more than \$150 per year on water and energy bills! A similar savings can be racked up for businesses: the California Urban Water Conservation Council found that restaurants were able to cut

River Network's Saving Water, Saving Energy program provides information and strategies for reducing the carbon footprint of water and increasing water efficiency. Read more on www.rivernetwork.org/programs/saving-water-saving-energy or follow Bevan's blog at www.rivernetwork.org/blog/swse.

their utility bills by up to \$800 a year by installing water efficient pre-rinse spray valves (which saved approximately 50,000 gallons of water and 7,600 kilowatt hours of electricity annually). Households and businesses can become more economically viable while saving water and reducing their carbon emissions at the same time, a win-win for people and the planet.

Many water utilities offer free water-efficient fixtures such as faucet aerators or showerheads, as well as water audits to help their customers identify leaks and strategies to save water. Yet outreach to disadvantaged communities is often lacking and as a result, the divide between affluent and low-income communities grows wider while utilities miss a great opportunity to reduce both water and energy demand.

CLEANER ENERGY, CLEANER WATER

Reducing our energy consumption protects our rivers by reducing the water use and pollution associated with power production. Power plants are the single largest source of toxic waste in the U.S., and are often located in or near disadvantaged communities.

As the United States begins to shift increasingly toward domestic, low-carbon sources of energy, communities—and the rivers that run through them—will

continue to be vulnerable to the water and air impacts of energy development. Just as the effects of climate change will weigh disproportionately

on communities of color, we must ensure that the decisions being made to develop new energy supplies avoid the injustices historically associated with power plant siting and pollution. Clean energy, energy efficiency and green water projects offer an opportunity to lift up our poorest communities by providing well-paying jobs and by reducing utility bills and the harmful impacts of power production on rivers and drinking water supplies.

RESTORE LAND, PREVENT FLOODS, PREPARE COMMUNITIES

Environmental groups or community revitalization organizations working to depave parking lots or turn an abandoned lot into natural space may not realize they are contributing to the ability of their community to deal with the effects of climate change. In addition to creating green spaces and beautifying neighborhoods, removing concrete allows the ground to absorb increased rainfall and therefore reduce polluted runoff and flooding that could overwhelm a community. Planting trees and other vegetation absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and helps to reduce temperatures in urban areas. Harvesting rainwater or allowing it to naturally absorb back into the ground can recharge depleted aquifers and increase local water supplies, thus avoiding the environmental and financial costs of developing new sources of water. Incorporating such programs into a climate smart plan in all communities—especially those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change—can ensure that the community has created a fair plan for protecting its residents from the greatest harms that may occur as conditions worsen.

STRONGER TOGETHER

River and watershed groups should reach out to the climate justice movement to help eradicate environmental injustices and forge new partnerships for river and climate protection. As Lisa Jackson, the Administrator of the Environmental



Credit: Flickr photo courtesy of odanmencia

Protection Agency explains, “Over the years, environmentalism has largely been seen as an enclave of the privileged... People are seeing more and more that environmentalism doesn’t come in one shape, size, color, or income bracket.... To confront the urgent environmental challenges of the 21st century, we need to make sure that every community sees their stake in this movement.”



CASE STUDY

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY AT EARTH FORCE

by Lisa Bardwell
Earth Force
www.earthforce.org



The foundations of Earth Force—service-learning and environmental education—are about social change. Our Earth Force service-learning process focuses on understanding root causes and addressing issues systemically. Our watershed program, Global Rivers Environmental Education Network (GREEN), grew out of a commitment to engaging young people around taking action to address water quality issues.

At Earth Force, we want young people to understand how the system works so that they can address public policy and community practices in ways that achieve lasting positive change in their communities and the environment. We have made a commitment to working in communities most impacted by environmental degradation. In order to do that work well, we must be willing to explore how power and privilege drive the educational and political system in this country.

We could certainly ignore this level of analysis. But it doesn't mean that students still won't ask the hard questions: "Why is the river so much dirtier down river than it was upstream in the suburbs?" "Why are so many of the industries located where people of color live?" At Earth Force, we see our job, in part, as providing training and support that enhances the ability of our educators to truly engage their students in exploring the answers to these questions. We can help educators strategize about how to make space for those difficult discussions and support them in ensuring that their treatment of students doesn't perpetuate unproven assumptions about each of their students based on race, class or gender.

Having made this commitment, we realize we have opened ourselves up to a whole new world—one that requires us to change as an organization as well. We have had to look at ourselves—do our demographics reflect the communities with whom we work? We have had to look at our curriculum—what cultural assumptions does it make? We have reflected on our staffing and hiring practices—who wants to work at Earth Force? Have we excluded people by how and where we post our jobs or by how we describe our work? We have had to examine our trainings, our strategies for reaching out to communities and how we do our fundraising with this new lens. We have just started on this journey and learn each day how much more there is to know. A few things we have learned so far:

- **Make the work a priority:** It's not enough to say you are committed to working on inclusivity. It must be seen as a priority and addressed with intention or it will always end up being tabled until the next meeting. We saw ourselves doing exactly that, and decided to dedicate an hour (at the beginning) of our staff meetings to inclusivity work. On the national level, the Executive Directors have committed to sharing and discussing articles around race, class, gender and privilege on our weekly calls. We commit at least a half-day to training for the entire network at our annual planning retreat.
- **Stay the course:** Inclusivity is not a short-term project, it is a journey. We realized that becoming more inclusive is about changing our organization and that it was going to permeate all aspects of our work. As an organization and as individuals, we had to commit to realizing how much we didn't know, to being

uncomfortable, to making mistakes, to not being “pc,” to forgiving each other and to pressing on. A motto we have adopted is to ‘assume good intention’ so that people can ask questions and a candid conversation can be had about different experiences.

- **Create safe ways to have the conversation:** We have spent a lot of time talking, reading and thinking about inclusivity, and yet sometimes still avoiding the hard conversations. It has taken time to build the trust necessary to support these conversations. We learned that though we are all facilitators and educators, we needed to have ground rules to make space.
- **Be courageous:** Bring the inclusivity work into all aspects of your life. Each of us recognizes that our personal journey must happen along with the organizational one. Our challenge is to bring the work and learning from the personal journey to the work of the organization.
- **Be proactive:** Start the work now, not when you need to hire new staff and are trying to figure out how to reach a more diverse applicant pool. Odds are, if you haven’t done the organizational work, your job openings won’t speak to a different audience. And, if you have to wonder why you aren’t getting a diverse pool of applicants, you haven’t done the work.

DOING – it’s important to think and talk and explore, but our goal is to DO inclusivity NOW, in small and meaningful ways every day.



- **It’s not about “looking” more diverse:** Hopefully by now, we’ve made the point that this work is so much more than having a staff and board that look diverse. An inclusive workplace feels and acts inclusive as well. Hiring people of color into an organization that has not addressed issues around race and class and the ‘isms’ will not accomplish the work of inclusivity.
- **Inclusivity work is not the responsibility of the people of color in your organization:** Hopefully this goes without saying, but we found that we were looking to the people of color to lead conversations and be the inclusivity chair. We have learned that it is important for white people to learn about their privilege in this process. It is also important that everyone to feel included—white people too. We all have a culture and a heritage and a lifestyle that is relevant and important. It’s the responsibility of all members of a community to behave inclusively.



TIMELINE OF ENVIRONME

These milestones were excerpted from the Second National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit: Celebrating our Victories, Strengthening our Roots and the Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty: 1987-2007 reports.



Credit: Fulton Archive/Getty Images

Linda McKeever Bullard files *Bean v. Southwestern Waste Management, Inc.*, a lawsuit on behalf of Houston's Northeast Community Action Group, the first civil rights suit challenging the siting of a waste facility.

The Great Louisiana Toxic March, led by the Gulf Coast Tenants and communities in "Cancer Alley" (the corridor between Baton Rouge and New Orleans), brings public attention to their toxic living conditions.

First edition of the *People of Color Environmental Groups Directory* published by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

EPA releases *Environmental Equity: Reducing Risk for All Communities*, one of the first comprehensive government reports to examine environmental justice.

The Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University was formed.

President Bill Clinton issues Executive Order 12989, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations."

The Washington Office on Environmental Justice opens in Washington, DC.

U.S. Congress passes the Civil Rights Act. Title VI prohibits use of federal funds to discriminate based on race, color and national origin.

United States Public Health Services (USPHS) acknowledged that lead poisoning was disproportionately impacting African Americans and Hispanic children.

United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice issues its *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States* report, the first national study to correlate waste facility siting and race.

The First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit was held in Washington, DC, attracting over 1,000 participants.

1968

1969

1971

1982

1983

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1991

1992

1994

The pesticide DDT is banned.

Congress passes the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Warren County residents protest the siting of a polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) landfill in Warren County, North Carolina.

Presidents' Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) annual report acknowledges racial discrimination adversely affects urban poor and quality of their environment.

Martin Luther King, Jr. leads black Memphis sanitation workers in garbage strike just before his assassination.



Credit: Ernest Wilkins

EPA, DOJ, DOD & Olin Chemical Company settle \$25 million lawsuit with black residents in Triana, Alabama. The tiny all-black community was contaminated with DDT from Redstone Arsenal Army base and was dubbed the "unhealthiest town in America."

Clean Air Act passed by U.S. Congress.

Robert D. Bullard publishes *Dumping in Dixie*, the first textbook on environmental justice.

Activists of color write two separate letters to the "Group of 10" national environmental organizations calling on them to dialogue with activists of color on the environmental crisis impacting communities of color and to hire people of color on their staffs and boards of directors.

EPA established the 25-member National Environmental Justice Advisory Council.

West Harlem Environmental Action leads fight over the North River Sewage Treatment Plant, drawing in activists from over 12 northeastern states. This gathering catalyzes the formation of the Northeast Environmental Justice Network.

The Farmworker Network for Economic and Environmental Justice was formed.

First wave of Title VI administrative complaints filed with EPA.

NTAL JUSTICE MILESTONES

National Emergency Meeting of Blacks in the United States, New Orleans, LA. This and subsequent meetings laid the foundation for the creation of the National Black Environmental Justice Network.

Asian Youth Advocates wins a campaign victory at Richmond High School in Richmond, CA, and broadens the notion of environmental justice to recognize school environments as a key arena for youth.

The Indigenous Anti-Nuclear Summit, held in Albuquerque New Mexico, develops a Declaration that established the mandate of work on nuclear issues.

EPA Superfund Relocation Roundtable Meeting is held in Pensacola, Florida. As a result, EPA decides to relocate 358 African-American and/or low-income households living next to the Escambia Wood Treatment Plant in Pensacola, Florida.

Residents of Anniston, Alabama Sweet Valley/ Cobb Town Environmental Taskforce won a \$42.8 million settlement against Monsanto chemical company for PCB contamination that forced community to relocate.

EPA's Office of the Inspector General issued a report, *EPA Needs to Consistently Implement the Intent of the Executive Order on Environmental Justice*, stating that the EPA had not fully implemented Executive Order 12898 nor consistently integrated environmental justice into its day-to-day operations.

The Second People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit convened in Washington, DC.



Credit: FLUOR photo courtesy of The Voice of Eye

Rep. Yvette Clark (D-NY) introduced H.R. 5902, the Getting Youth Re-invested in Environmental Education Now Act (GREEN Act). The goal of the legislation was to introduce environmental education into the curriculum of schools across the nation.

1995

1998

2000

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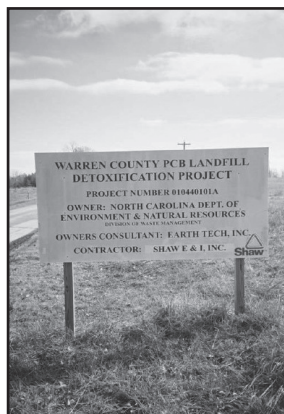
First Interagency Public Hearing on Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898 was held at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Environmental Justice Fund was founded by six networks to promote the creation of alternative funding strategies to support the grassroots EJ organizing.

The North Carolina General Assembly released \$7 million in appropriations to begin the detoxification of the Warren County PCB Landfill.

Macon County Citizens for a Clean Environment successfully wage a major fight to stop the siting of a mega landfill near historic Tuskegee University campus.

Environmental justice leaders participate in Climate Justice Summit in The Hague, Netherlands.



Credit: Environmental Justice Resource Center

The EPA's inspector general issued yet another report, *EPA Needs to Conduct Environmental Justice Reviews of Its Programs, Policies, and Activities*, outlining the failures of the EPA in the Bush Administration to comply with the mandates of Executive Order 12898.



Credit: FLUOR photo courtesy of Beaufort/Fluor

Key environmental justice legislation including H.R. 4652, the Environmental Justice Access and Implementation Act; H.R. 1103, the Environmental Justice Act of 2007; and H.R. 1602, the Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Environmental Justice Act of 2007, is passed.

The two-square-mile Baldwin Hills Park, in the historic African American heart of Los Angeles is the largest urban park designed in the U.S. in over a century. Earlier community efforts defeated attempts to site a power plant and garbage dump here.

After a conference on the Shintech Title V permit application convenes an array of grassroots environmental justice, civil rights, faith-based, legal, and academic center leaders, Shintech suspends its effort to build a PVC plant in Convent, Louisiana.

Florida Legislature passes the 1998 Environmental Equity and Justice Act.

TAKING ACTION:

HOW TO BE A STRONG WHITE ALLY TO PEOPLE OF COLOR

by Robert Marino
Bainbridge
Graduate Institute



The purpose of these suggestions is to help white people understand how to personally act against racism. Hopefully, it will also help you to strengthen your personal relationships with people of color. The guidelines were developed over two sessions in which a group of self-identified people of color were asked the question: "In what ways can white people become good allies to people of color?"

- Learn the histories of people of color as well as their current struggles.
- Become knowledgeable about issues of race, racial history, racial politics, etc.
- Learn to see and understand the day to day stress of racism.
- Racism is deeply personal. Do not try to depersonalize it and make it a philosophical discussion.
- Put yourself in uncomfortable positions.
- Go to where communities of color are and participate in the issues that are important to those communities.
- White people have to go out there and introduce themselves, volunteer and participate.
- Expect that there will be an initial rift when meeting people of color because of the power differential. You have to prove yourself by your actions.
- Acknowledge differences.
- For example: ask, "I see you are Hispanic. What country are you from?" This can be OK to ask!
- Don't overcompensate. Don't say "I don't see color." Don't be "colorblind." It is OK to befriend people with differences and acknowledge those differences.
- Don't make assumptions.
- Ask questions that do not insinuate assumptions by tone of voice.
- Don't assume that you know everything about other people. Have humility.
- Get rid of stereotypes.
- Get rid of assumptions that people of color are not as smart or sophisticated as white people.
- Learn your own histories and current struggles.
- Learn your own historical context: your family and power issues that preceded you and your people here in the U.S.
- Get rid of guilt. It shuts down and paralyzes white people.
- Listen more.
- Ask what people of color think. If you don't like the answer, don't start arguing or trying to rationalize it away. Think about it.
- Listen and correct yourself if told that you did something offensive. Use it as a learning experience. It is not easy for people of color to correct white people. The act itself is a show of their investment and interest in you. Take it to heart.



- Ask questions of people of color.
- Be willing to honestly ask questions and listen.
- Do not worry about offending people of color. If you are worried, ask anyway.
- Humble yourself. Don't be afraid to approach people of color.
- Learn about the complexities of immigration.
- Speak out to other white people: like convinces like.
- Bring up issues of racial justice regardless of who is in the room, especially if it is all whites.
- White allies should be the presence of racial justice in white communities. What you learn is happening in communities of color you should share with white communities.
- Bring up the power dynamic issue.

- White people need to bring up things like "there are not enough people of color here."
- Learn the art of bringing racism into a conversation without making other white people feel defensive.

- White people need to interrupt other white people when racist comments or innuendos are made. Don't rely on people of color to do this.



- See and value the strengths of people of color.
- See people of color as peers with power.
- Recognize the value of alternative systems of everything from running a meeting to communicating, to seeing history, to seeing each other. People of color often bring these systems to the table.



- If you are part of a predominantly white organization, partner with organizations that are primarily run by people of color.
- Don't always take the mentor role; join in an equal power relationship.
- In coalitions, for example, rotate facilitators and learn each other's strengths and styles.



CASE STUDY

THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COALITION FOR WATER

The following article was written from a discussion with Miriam Torres, Southern California Program Director of Environmental Justice Coalition for Water and with text from www.ejcw.org.



Access to clean, safe and affordable water is a fundamental human right essential for a healthy population, environment and economy. It is a reality

that many low-income communities and communities of color in the U.S. lack access to safe, affordable water for drinking, subsistence, cultural or recreational uses. Therefore, water justice is a part of achieving environmental justice. Water justice is about building a communal vision for how water is distributed and managed.

It requires alternative water allocation and use systems, from conservation, to water reuse, to watershed planning. It will be achieved when low-income communities

and communities of color have access to water for drinking, cooking, swimming, fishing, cultural and other uses; when the health and environmental burdens low-income communities and communities of color bear are addressed.

The Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW) began in 1999 as a project of the Pacific Institute, facilitated by volunteers who saw the need for an environmental justice voice within California water policy. The first focus was on addressing the absence of community

concerns within the CALFED Bay-Delta Program—a consortium between the California State Government and the Federal Government to manage water resources. Today, the EJCW has expanded its focus into community support and technical assistance, legislation and movement building.

EJCW is a network of more than seventy grassroots and intermediary organizations whose mission is to educate, empower, and nurture a community-based coalition that will serve as a public voice and be

an effective advocate of environmental justice issues in California water policy. While the priorities of member organizations ranges from indigenous sovereignty to immigrant rights, all recognize that access to safe, affordable water is a crucial part of achieving economic development, a

clean environment and ensuring public health for low-income communities and communities of color. Accordingly, member groups organize around contaminated drinking water, expansion of dams, and many other water-related issues. The training and coordination that EJCW provides enables community members to take control of their water resources by participating in water policy, planning and decisions. This ensures that policymakers are listening to the concerns of community members and are held accountable for the heavy impacts water



Credit: EJCW photo courtesy of Ben Ave

policy has on low-income communities and communities of color. EJCW's community engagement model has led to successes in a number of areas. The Coalition has:

- Secured \$290 million dollars in water bond funds specifically for disadvantaged communities lacking safe drinking water systems and adequate wastewater infrastructure.
- Succeeded in getting Governor Schwarzenegger to sign new legislation that strengthens the regulation of bottled and vended water and ultimately protects hundreds of consumers who purchase it.
- Provided trainings, workshops and other capacity building opportunities to over 200 individuals and more than 15 grassroots organizations working on water justice issues.
- Assisted the community of Maywood to secure funding for a \$1 million dollar water conservation project that will install 3000 high-efficiency toilets, while generating jobs for local residents.



Credit: FLICKR photo courtesy of Orange County girl

working on water issues and to find ways to collaborate, particularly on legislative issues that require a broad support base. While the EJCW is a California-based organization, all are welcome to join the movement for water justice.



What can other water conservation organizations do to promote water justice? Organizations and activists can learn about environmental justice principles and how they can be applied in their own work. A recent *New York Times* report demonstrates the dire conditions of our waterways and drinking water across the nation, and low-income communities of color are likely to bear the brunt of that contamination. The EJCW encourages watershed groups to reach out to environmental justice groups

PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit held on October 24-27, 1991, in Washington DC, drafted and adopted 17 Principles of Environmental Justice. Since then, The Principles have served as a defining document for the growing grassroots movement for environmental justice.

PREAMBLE



WE,

THE PEOPLE OF COLOR, gathered together at this multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national and international movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction and taking of our lands and communities, do hereby re-establish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth; to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to insure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and, to secure our political, economic and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples, do affirm and adopt these Principles of Environmental Justice:

- 1 Environmental Justice** affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.
- 2 Environmental Justice** demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.
- 3 Environmental Justice** mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things.
- 4 Environmental Justice** calls for universal protection from nuclear testing, extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes and poisons and nuclear testing that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food.
- 5 Environmental Justice** affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination of all peoples.
- 6 Environmental Justice** demands the cessation of the production of all toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive materials, and that all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production.
- 7 Environmental Justice** demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.

8 Environmental Justice affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.

9 Environmental Justice protects the right of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages as well as quality health care.

10 Environmental Justice considers governmental acts of environmental injustice a violation of international law, the Universal Declaration On Human Rights, and the United Nations Convention on Genocide.

11 Environmental Justice must recognize a special legal and natural relationship of Native Peoples to the U.S. government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination.

12 Environmental Justice affirms the need for urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and provided fair access for all to the full range of resources.

13 Environmental Justice calls for the strict enforcement of principles of informed consent, and a halt to the testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color.

14 Environmental Justice opposes the destructive operations of multi-national corporations.

15 Environmental Justice opposes military occupation, repression and exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures, and other life forms.

16 Environmental Justice calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives.

17 Environmental Justice requires that we, as individuals, make personal and consumer choices to consume as little of Mother Earth's resources and to produce as little waste as possible; and make the conscious decision to challenge and reprioritize our lifestyles to insure the health of the natural world for present and future generations.



CASE STUDY

INCLUSIVE COALITION ADDRESSES TOXICS AND DRINKING WATER

*Communities for Clean
Water*

*Article by Joni Arends
Concerned Citizens for
Nuclear Safety
www.nuclearactive.org*

Our existence was for millennium in this place....Santa Clara Pueblo, in which I reside and am a tribal member, is only 3 air miles from the Los Alamos National Laboratory. In the short 67 years of LANL's existence, the nuclear industry has disrupted our spiritual connection, ecological environment, and has tainted the Rio Grande, the life blood water way for New Mexicans.

*~ Marian Naranjo,
Executive Director*

*Honor Our Pueblo Existence
and Communities for Clean
Water member*

Los Alamos National Laboratory, or LANL, is a United States Department of Energy (DOE) national laboratory, managed and operated by Los Alamos National Security, LLC, a private corporation, and located in Los Alamos, New Mexico. LANL is located on the Pajarito Plateau, between the Jemez Mountains to the west and the Rio Grande to the east. The Jemez Mountains are the ancestral Homelands of Pueblo Peoples. During the twelfth century, people slowly migrated to their present locations along the Rio Grande. Northern New Mexico is also home to many tribes including the Pueblos of San Ildefonso, Cochiti, Jemez and Santa Clara and to a large Hispanic population.

The laboratory is one of the largest science and technology institutions in the world and conducts multidisciplinary research for fields such as national security, outer space, renewable energy, medicine, nanotechnology and supercomputing. The laboratory was founded during World War II as a secret, centralized facility to coordinate the scientific research of the Manhattan Project, the Allied project to develop the first nuclear weapons.

Because LANL continues operations as a research and development facility for nuclear weapons, radioactive, toxic and hazardous contaminants of all sorts are discharged through outfalls to the canyons and legacy wastes travel in stormwater toward the Rio Grande. The formation of an active coalition of non-governmental organizations located on tribal lands, watershed conservationists and concerned citizens has raised the specter of concern for the land, water, air and peoples of the region.

BACKGROUND

After the catastrophic Cerro Grande fire in 2000, the activist watchdog group Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety (CCNS) became alarmed about the transport of toxic materials off the LANL site into the Rio Grande watershed. CCNS organized a conference that summer that drew over 450 participants. Amigos Bravos, Honor Our Pueblo Existence and the Embudo Valley Environmental Monitoring Group, began collaborating in 2005. These groups formed the core that in early 2006 became Communities for Clean Water (CCW); the New Mexico Acequia Association joined soon thereafter. Other members include Partnership for Earth Spirituality, Rio Grande Restoration, Tewa Women United, the Don Gabino Andrade Community Acequia, SouthWest Organizing Project and the Western Environmental Law Center.

INDEPENDENT ANALYSIS

For the past six years, Communities for Clean Water has documented and publicized the presence of PCBs, chromium, radionuclides, perchlorates and other toxics in LANL's canyons, the Río Grande watershed, and the regional drinking water aquifer. CCW has shown conclusively that stormwater runoff is carrying toxins into the canyons below the lab. Using LANL data and their own independent hydrologist, CCW has also shown that fast-moving toxins can reach the river through springs within 26 years. Using LANL data, well-drilling experts have shown that LANL's well monitoring program is fatally flawed and cannot provide reliable data on the scope of toxic pollution of the regional drinking water aquifer—a claim supported by a 2007 National Academy of Sciences report.

LANL'S TOXIC LEGACY

CCW has repeatedly brought these concerns to LANL management, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Energy (DOE), the National Nuclear Security Administration and other governmental agencies. Despite these efforts, and a Consent Order signed by LANL with the State of New Mexico mandating clean up of toxic waste sites by 2015, the full impact of LANL's toxic legacy may only just be beginning to be felt. Hundreds of unlined pits, trenches and shafts containing toxics remain unmonitored. PCB contamination in soils at LANL is as high as 38,000 times the standard for human health; the state issued a first-ever "do not eat" fish advisory for White Rock Canyon, below LANL on the Río Grande. Chromium-6 (or hexavalent chromium) is in the regional aquifer supplying Los Alamos County at 16 times the New Mexico groundwater protection standard. Plutonium has been detected in the Buckman well field, the source of 40% of Santa Fe's drinking water.

ACCOUNTABILITY

In order to hold LANL accountable, Communities for Clean Water is focusing on two major campaigns. The first is a Clean Water Act lawsuit against the DOE for stormwater violations at LANL, which includes the CCW organizations and two members of the Pueblo de San Ildefonso. CCW's other focus is an outreach campaign directed at impacted communities, the media and public officials.

CCW has also taken advantage of several ground and surface water permits—especially the lab's first-ever Individual Stormwater Permit—to press for

assurances that no additional pollutants are discharged; to advocate for cleanup of historic spills; to educate and mobilize the public around the impact of LANL's toxic legacy; and to get more information from LANL into the public record while continuing to press for independent analyses of all relevant issues.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CCW and the Clean Water Act legal process have raised awareness with the public, media and elected officials about toxic discharges from LANL and the need to increase environmental cleanup and restoration funding at LANL because of both environmental and public health concerns.

Through Marian Naranjo, there has been dialogue and information-sharing with not only the Pueblo nations surrounding LANL, but all 19 New Mexico Pueblos, the Apache Tribes and the Navajo Nation.

CCW action has strengthened the ability and willingness of the NMED and the EPA to confront LANL; by their own admission, CCW involvement has made NMED and EPA write better permits and do an overall better job in protecting water.

The new cleanup manager at LANL has stated that the Consent Order is attainable and that compliance means "being perfect" in fulfilling the lab's cleanup obligations.

LANL's attorneys, LANL Environmental Program staff, the Department of Justice attorney representing DOE and LANL, and EPA staff have met with CCW to discuss stormwater discharge problems at LANL and the appeal of the new Individual Stormwater Permit.

Finally, at a fundamental level, CCW efforts have contributed to increasing calls for a change in LANL's mission.

"As a percentage of the total resident population in 2000, New Mexico had the largest percentage minority population (55%) among the contiguous states and the second largest percentage minority population among all states (only Hawaii had a larger percentage minority population (77%)."

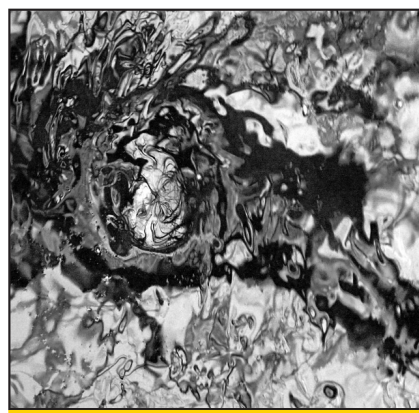
~ Final Site-wide Environmental Impact Statement for Continued Operations of LANL, DOE/EIS-380, May 2008

"Since 1990, the minority population in potentially affected counties surrounding LANL grew by about 33% (from 49.3 % in 1990 to 54.4% in 2000) of the total population in the potentially affected counties."

~ Ibid.



One aspect of River Network's *Healthy Waters, Healthy Communities* program work is an ongoing partnership with a local community group, the Forest County Environmental Support Team (FCEST) in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. The largely African American community felt deceived when they learned about years of serious creosote contamination, about which only the adjoining white neighborhood was told. Both a stream and ground water running through the community was contaminated with the creosote. Exposure to creosote can cause mild health problems such as rashes to more severe illnesses, including liver and kidney problems and cancer.



Credit: FLICKR photo courtesy of Dawn Collette, III

After the City hired a consultant who told City officials and residents that their exposure to creosote did not likely pose a health risk, the community asked for River Network's help to review this information. We helped FCEST secure the services of a local monitoring professional who reviewed the methods and data collected by the City's consultant. Through her review, we discovered that the City's consultant did not follow basic methodological monitoring requirements set forth by EPA. Our monitoring expert testified about this at an important meeting of the City Council.

Now, the EPA agrees. In a seven-page letter dated November 6, 2009, Dawn Taylor, a member of the EPA's Site Evaluation Section, told Mayor Johnny DuPree that APEX Environmental Consultants failed to test for the primary constituents normally associated with creosote contamination.

Steve Irving, a Louisiana environmental attorney who has been consulting with FCEST, told the Hattiesburg American newspaper, "The APEX effort was a joke at best. I don't think the problem is at the lab, however, as they did what they were told to do. The problem is with the testing itself and the instructions that the lab was given. This was an effort to not find anything." Officials at APEX declined to comment for the newspaper on the matter.

Now city leaders hope to sit down with EPA representatives to determine what the next step will be. FCEST has asked River Network for our input what those next steps should be. Actions as varied as further monitoring to contaminant clean-up are likely to be on the table.

River Network
www.rivernetwork.org

The first watershed protection situation I worked with was on the southern, impoverished and rural side of a Kentucky Appalachian county. A cave and its river were threatened by a proposed landfill expansion—as were the homes of older, often ill coal miners and retired farm and factory workers. We did not even know there were larger and more resourced groups out there ready to help us, and just bulldozed towards a locally-based victory against the landfill expansion—and it took over eight years. If we had known to make better use of members of state and national environmental groups, maybe it would have only taken four years to stop that thing!

Hilary Lambert is presently the Steward of the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network in Aurora NY.

Karst Environmental Education and Protection, Inc. (KY)
www.keepinc.org

Cayuga Lake Watershed Network (NY)
www.cayugalake.org

Each year SPAWN organizes dozens of creek restoration, environmental education, monitoring and conservation-based community projects and training opportunities in the Lagunitas Creek watershed of Marin County, California. Our volunteers range in age from 75 to 5, encompass many ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, including school groups and special needs organizations, and stem from a variety of strategic partnerships. We welcome them all, and always strive to match our diverse group of supporters with a diverse portfolio of meaningful and effective volunteer projects that leverage individual skill sets and help us achieve our ultimate goal of bringing endangered salmon populations back from the brink of extinction.

Strategic partnerships with organizations such as Environmental Traveling Companions and Girl Scouts, with County Courts as a provider of authorized community service work, and networking and collaborating with many fishing, conservation, and activists partners has brought SPAWN a very diverse set of supporters. Partnering with a diversity of organizations leads to a diverse community-based work force! Providing volunteers and our community with rewarding experiences that encourage educational and social values while simultaneously restoring wild salmon populations motivates participants to spread our message, bring along friends and come back for more!

Salmon Protection and Watershed Network (CA)

www.spawnusa.org



Credit: Flickr photo courtesy of Jane De Cesare

Here at Pamlico-Tar River Foundation we have been working since February, 2008 on a Diversity Project that focuses on assessing the needs of the underserved population within our 16 county watershed area. We are now examining what our survey (conducted last year) is telling us. What

are the needs of the underserved, and how can we reach out to provide inclusion in our environmental advocacy for the targeted population? We believe we are moving in the right direction for what will be the start of an ongoing process. Diversity is a complex issue that requires a thoughtful approach and we have an Outreach Coordinator on staff devoted exclusively to these efforts.

We are now involved in approaching African-American and Latino churches in our watershed in order to provide lesson plans for youth within the church congregations. The educational resources we distribute have been carefully selected so as to provide the students with an interactive learning experience that reinforces the connection with our immediate environment. These materials fit well into a Sunday school setting. So far, these efforts have been met with enthusiasm.

Pamlico-Tar River Foundation (NC)

www.pt rf.org

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

"It was a sunny hot day and I was canoeing down the Anacostia River for the first time in my life. There I was, a middle aged African American woman in a canoe with my guide, a white man, educating me on the environment and this thing called "a watershed." I was terrified but desperately trying to conceal my fear of the water. As I was grasping to comprehend all of the environmental lingo from my guide, the wind cautiously touched my face. The paddles became instruments that were in tune with the lyrical sounds on the river as we carefully explored the shores, the waters and the eco-system. The wind and the water became a symphonic whisper that gave me a sudden sense of comfort. I felt this tremendous sense of calm and some semblance of healing.

This river trip happened many years ago. My guide was Robert Boone, then Executive Director of the Anacostia Watershed Society, who came into my urban community in the District of Columbia to educate us on the Anacostia River and its significance. Robert had this incredible sense of community and its connectedness to the environment. Still, I struggled with why the river and my environment should matter to me. I was already consumed with the social ills of the urban communities that I was working in as a social worker. The environment simply was not a priority.

However, Robert was persistent. I started to go to a lot of meetings. I finally understood that the river is like a lifeline for the eco-system—not only in Washington, D.C. but the whole region. Our community began its engagement with the river by forming Youth Eco-Patrols, where we stenciled storm drains with "Don't Pollute the Anacostia River." The kids had a blast doing it and became pretty well versed and informed about recycling and how litter ends up in our storm drains and subsequently kills our river.

It was tough teaching the adults because of their daily struggles in life: keeping a roof over their heads, feeding their families and dodging bullets. We quickly discovered that there was this pervasive cloud of anger that hovered over the community because these citizens were constantly functioning in a survival mode. Well unbeknownst to us, the brilliance of the youth certainly prevailed. They ended up educating their parents on recycling because they practiced what they learned from Anacostia Watershed Society at home."

Brenda Richardson, a resident of Ward 8 in Washington, D.C., and an eco-feminist, has been working on welfare reform, environmental justice, economic development and health issues for the past 18 years. Ms. Richardson currently serves as the President of Women like Us and as Deputy Chief of Staff in the Office of Councilmember Marion Barry's Ward 8 Constituent Services Office.

The Anacostia Watershed Society is a non-profit organization working to protect and restore the Anacostia River and its watershed communities by cleaning the water, recovering the shores and honoring the heritage.

Anacostia Watershed Society (MD)
www.anacostlaws.org





Our take is that “diversity” isn’t something that you DO with specific programs, it’s something you ARE by being a part of the Environmental Justice movement; by making the values, health and justice for our nation’s most vulnerable communities at the core of your values. Joining forces with diverse communities by following THEIR lead in their struggles is a level of respect that’s long overdue.

We have been told we have had the most consistently diverse Board of Directors of any environmental group in NC, and many folks ask why. It’s simple, we work on the issues that are threatening low income rural communities, communities of color, and we clearly and unabashedly prioritize them.

Clean Water for North Carolina (NC)
www.cwfnc.org

On the topic of diversity, Sweetwater Alliance, a Minnesota nonprofit organization working to raise water literacy by merging the arts and science, recently put out a call for artists to participate in a dialogue focused on community water concerns. Sixteen artists engaged in four study circle sessions to discuss readings from *Water Consciousness* (Lohan, 2008). Upon conclusion of the study circles, the artists developed works of art in all mediums which represented their concerns about water issues. This art then went on display in Duluth, MN as a means to help educate the public about water.



Credit: Kristen Anderson, Artist

Kristen Anderson is a fiber artist who wanted to express her concern for a controversial energy project. Her piece titled *Canestio* (photo) is modeled after a hydrology map showing the underground flows from the Canestio mine pit trout lake into the nearby town water systems of Coleraine, Bovey and Taconite. The water from the Canestio is in demand from a private corporation, Excelsior Energy. This business hopes to harvest that water to cool its machinery and use it for processing its product of coal-based power. This controversial project would be adding bleaching agents into the lake and concentrating the existing elements to the point of eventual contamination of the water and the inevitable decline of the trout. The corporation had no formal plan for protecting the water systems that use the Canestio as a watershed. The hydrology map powerfully shows the unseen: the water connection between the Canestio and the surrounding communities as well as the potential danger this corporation poses to the health of those communities.

Sweetwater Alliance (MN)
www.sweetwateralliance.org



The National Committee for the New River recently participated in a program that placed racially and ethnically diverse students in summer internships with local land trusts across North Carolina. To say we loved our intern Jasmine would be a huge understatement; the program was a giant success. We made her a nametag with the title Super Intern, and we weren’t kidding! We have already applied and received funding for another intern next summer.

National Committee for the New River (NC)
www.ncnr.org

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Reprinted, by permission, from Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty: 1987 – 2007; a report prepared for the United Church of Christ Justice & Witness Ministries. Principal authors are Robert D. Bullard, Ph.D., Paul Mohai, Ph.D., Robin Saha, Ph. D, and Beverly Wright, Ph.D. Chapter 8, Conclusions and Recommendations. Copyright © March 2007 by the United Church of Christ. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

The full report, including recommendations for congressional, executive branch and industry action, is available at www.ucc.org/assets/pdfs/toxic20.pdf.



any of the environmental injustice problems that disproportionately and adversely affect low-income and people of color communities could

be eliminated if current environmental, health, housing, land use and civil rights laws were vigorously enforced in a nondiscriminatory way—without regard to race, color or national origin. Many of the environmental problems facing low-income persons and people of color are systemic and will require institutional change, including new legislation. We also recognize that government alone cannot solve these problems but need the assistance of concerned individuals, groups and organizations from various walks of life. The following recommendations are offered:

STATE AND LOCAL ACTIONS

Require State by State Assessments (Report Cards) on Environmental Justice. Require states to evaluate and report their progress made on environmental justice. From 1993 to present, nearly three dozen states have expressly addressed environmental justice, demonstrating increased attention to the issue at a political level by passing legislation. However, little is known about the efficacy of these laws and if in fact they are being enforced.

Require Brownfields Community Revitalization Analysis (CRA). Parties seeking to benefit from governmental subsidies should be required to conduct a Community Revitalization Analysis (CRA) and take steps to address the most serious impacts identified in the analysis.

Develop Brownfields Partnerships with Academic Institutions. Residents in neighborhoods with brownfields sites must be an integral part of the redevelopment process. Many brownfields are located in or near low income and people of color communities and historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities.

Establish Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Funds to Promote Environmental Justice Driven Community Development.

Environmental justice organizations should become involved in redevelopment processes in their neighborhoods in order to integrate brownfields priorities into long range neighborhood redevelopment plans. This will allow for the use of Tax Increment Finance (TIF) funds accrued by the redevelopment process to fund the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields sites for community determined uses. It is imperative that EJ groups and other community based organizations are provided resources to drive the development process, as investment in an area increases and as real estate values

rise—to minimize gentrification and displacement of incumbent residents.

Establish Community Land Trusts.

The establishment of Community Land Trusts (CLTs) could allow communities to purchase or obtain brownfields from local governments at below market rates, and then redevelop them for a variety of community needs including limited equity housing. CLTs are community-governed nonprofits, with development priorities that are determined by local residents.

Adopt Green Procurement Policies and Clean Production Tax Policies.

State and local governments can show leadership in reducing the demand for products produced using unsustainable technologies that harm human health and the environment. Government must use its buying power and tax dollars ethically by supporting clean production systems. Ecological tax reform can assure that public money goes to safer materials and promotes pollution prevention.

**NONGOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATION ACTIONS**

Develop Community Benefits

Plans. Encourage environmental justice movement leaders to develop environmental justice criteria for Community Benefits Plans (modeled after those employed successfully in union organizing) in order to assess the desirability of any given brownfields redevelopment project proposed for a community.

Increase Private Foundations' General Support Funding for Environmental, Economic and Climate Justice, and Healthy Communities. Increase private foundation support for efforts of environmental justice groups and their allies to craft and implement

legislative, public policy and legal advocacy campaigns to address long ignored environmental and public health inequities. Currently there is a tremendous amount of attention and focus by environmental grantmakers in particular to issues of climate change. But very little attention is being paid (in terms of grants and philanthropic support) to campaigns that focus specifically on climate justice issues.

Fund Support for Training New

Generations of Leaders. Environmental justice organizations, campaigns and collaborative partnerships, including environmental justice centers and academic programs at universities, remain the stepchild of philanthropic giving, thereby exacerbating environmental and public health disparities. Increasing the pool of young people of color in the environmental fields makes good economic sense. It is also good common sense, given the changing demographics of the country. Funders should challenge their environmental grantees to confront the issues of diversity on their staffs and boards.

Target the “Dirty Dozen” Environmental

Justice Test Cases. Since much of the environmental protection apparatus was placed on hold or shut down altogether over the past decade, we urge the national environmental, civil rights, human rights, faith-based and political organizations to “adopt” environmental justice test cases to draw national attention back to the deadly mix of waste, race, class and government inaction. We recommend the national coalition compile a list and target the twelve worst cases, the “Dirty Dozen,” of private industry and government installations that have polluted African American, Native American, Latino

CONT. ON PAGE 36

CONT. FROM PAGE 35 American, Asian American/Pacific Islander and poor white American communities and their residents.

Step up Efforts to Diversify Mainstream Environmental Organizations.

There must be a serious and sustained effort to redress this utter lack of diversity within the mainstream environmental movement, an effort that moves beyond tokenism toward real organizational transformation. In the twenty years that have passed since the original publication of *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States*, there continues to be a huge divide between “mainstream” environmental organizations and environmental justice groups. The environmental movement in the U.S. continues to be one of the most segregated spheres in American society. While a few environmental organizations took seriously the challenges put forward at the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991, the overall lack of diversity at the staff, board and program level remains staggering.

Continue to Strengthen Racial, Ethnic, Cross Class Collaborations Among Environmental Justice Organizations.

Important strides have been made by the environmental justice movement in building multiracial, multiethnic coalitions and in developing strategic alliances with mainstream environmental groups, organized

labor, faith-based groups and the scientific community. An October 2005 conference called *Summit 2005 – Diverse Partners for*



Credit: FUDOR photo courtesy Smiley Men With A Hat

Environmental Progress took some initial steps at strengthening alliances within the environmental justice movement. Since then several regional meetings have occurred and in September 2007 “Summit 2007” [took] place to “strengthen the network of environmental advocates that is reflective of race, ethnicity, culture, class and geography.” We encourage these and similar efforts to work together in a multiracial, multiethnic fashion to achieve our collective mission to end the suffering of communities most affected by environmental degradation.



RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality. 3rd ed. By Robert D. Bullard. Westview Press, 1990, 1994, 2000.

Environmental Injustices, Political Struggles: Race, Class, and the Environment. By David E. Camacho, Editor. Duke University Press, 1998.

Environmental Justice

This quarterly peer-reviewed journal is the central forum for the research, debate and discussion of the equitable treatment and involvement of all people, especially minority and low-income populations, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

■ www.liebertpub.com/products/product.aspx?pid=259

From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement. By Luke W. Cole and Sheila R. Foster. New York University Press, 2001.

Scorecard: The Pollution Information Site. Get an in-depth pollution report for your county, covering air, water, chemicals and more.

■ www.scorecard.org.

The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution. By Robert D. Bullard. Sierra Club Books, 2005.

Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty 1987-2007: A Report Prepared for the United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries. This comprehensive publication, a follow up to the landmark 1987 report, available as a free pdf via:

■ www.ucc.org/environmental-ministries/environment/toxic-waste-20.html

ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

Black Family Land Trust works to ensure, protect and preserve the natural, historic, environmental and community resources of African Americans in the United States of America through land ownership.

■ www.bflt.org.

Center for Diversity & the Environment racially and ethnically diversifies the environmental movement by developing leaders, diversifying institutions and building community.

■ www.environmentaldiversity.org.

Center for Whole Communities is an organization that creates a more just, balanced and healthy world by exploring, honoring, and deepening the connections between land, people and community. It identifies a new land movement that integrates conservation, health, justice, spirit and relationship.

■ www.wholecommunities.org.

Community Coalition for Environmental Justice's mission is to achieve environmental and economic justice in low-income communities and communities of color.

■ www.ccej.org

Diversity Matters builds leadership and strengthens organizations working for environmental and social change through the power of diversity and inclusion.

■ www.diversity-matters.org.

Environmental Justice & Health Union identifies tools to help environmental justice activists and environmental health professionals work together to stop environmental disease in low-income communities of color.

■ www.ejhu.org.

Environmental Justice Coalition for Water's mission is to educate, empower, and nurture a community-based coalition that will serve as a public voice and be an effective advocate of environmental justice issues in California water policy.

■ www.ejcw.org.

EJNet is a web-based resource for environmental justice activists, maintained by ActionPA.

■ www.ejnet.org.

Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University is an excellent on-line resource, and offers courses and degree programs through their training institute.

■ www.ejrc.cau.edu.

Environmental Leadership Program inspires visionary, action oriented and diverse leadership to work for a just and sustainable future.

■ www.elpnet.org.

Greenaction mobilizes community power to win victories that change government and corporate policies and practices to protect health and to promote environmental justice.

■ www.greenaction.org.

RESOURCES & REFERENCES, CONT.

Green For All is dedicated to building an inclusive green economy strong enough to lift people out of poverty.

■ www.greenforall.org.

McKenzie River Gathering Foundation pools the financial resources of Oregon's progressive community and distributes it back to grassroots groups working on a variety of social change issues.

■ www.mrgfoundation.org.

National Hispanic Environmental Council seeks to educate, empower, and engage the Latino community on environmental and sustainable development issues.

■ www.nheec.org.

Natural Resources Defense Council has partnered with groups across the country to help protect the health and environment of local communities.

■ www.nrdc.org/ej/default.asp.

Redefining Progress is a policy institute that develops solutions to help people protect the environment and grow the economy. They partner with grassroots communities, labor unions, policymakers, businesses and academics to shift the economy towards sustainable growth.

■ www.rprogress.org.

Sustainable South Bronx is an organization addressing land-use, energy, transportation, water and waste policy, and education to advance the environment and economic rebirth of the South Bronx and inspire solutions in areas like it across the nation and around the world.

■ www.ssbx.org.

The Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative is a diverse coalition of U.S. environmental justice, religious, climate justice, policy and advocacy networks working for climate justice.

■ www.ejcc.org.

The State of Environmental Justice in America Conference addresses environmental justice issues for the state of environmental justice in America annual conferences.

■ www.environmentaljusticeblog.blogspot.com.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has a number of programs that work to achieve "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies."

Environmental Justice Grants and Programs, offered on the community, state and regional level.

■ www.epa.gov/compliance/enviromenatljustice/grants/index.html.

Environmental Justice Resource Guide: A Handbook for Communities and Decision-Makers.

■ www.epa.gov/region09/ej/ej-resource-guide.pdf.

EPA's Urban River Restoration Initiative pilot projects address water quality issues, economic revitalization, and the public use and enjoyment of urban rivers.

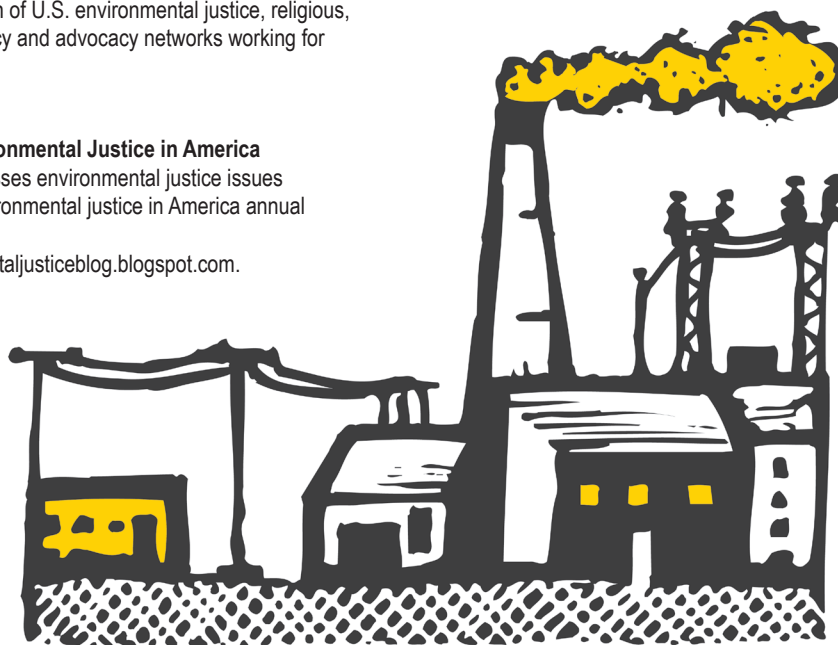
■ www.epa.gov/landrevitalization/urbanrivers.

Verde seeks to improve the economic health of disadvantaged communities by creating environmental job training, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities, fostering the connection between economic vitality and environmental protection and restoration.

■ www.verdenw.org.

WE ACT for Environmental Justice (West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc.) is a non-profit, community-based, environmental justice organization dedicated to building community power to fight environmental racism and improve environmental health, protection and policy in communities of color.

■ www.weact.org.



Let River Network Help You Keep Your Head Above Water!

The Partnership is Growing!

For more than 21 years, River Network has supported grassroots organizations in achieving healthier rivers and watersheds. To continue to serve our Partner groups, we are expanding the benefits and services we offer so that our value to you can be even greater!

How can we grow and strengthen our collective network?

Please consider introducing your fellow organizations and collaborators to River Network—they can request additional information or a phone consultation on how we could strengthen their efforts (simply fill out the request for information below). Additional information on our current list of Partner benefits can be found at www.rivernetwork.org/partner-benefits.

How can River Network better serve YOU?

If you have not already, please provide us with feedback on your needs and the services we could provide via our Partner Survey. Visit it online at www.rivernetwork.org/forms/partner-benefits-survey.

☐ I'd like more information ☐ I'd like to join ☐ I'd like to renew

I am a/an: ☐ Organization ☐ Agency ☐ Tribe ☐ Individual

Name _____ Phone _____

Org/agency Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Website _____

☐ My check or money order (\$100) is enclosed.

Please make your check out to River Network and return this form to:
River Network, 520 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1130, Portland, OR 97204.

☐ Please charge \$100 to my cc: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Card number _____ Exp. date _____

Signature _____



**Annual Partner Dues
are \$100**

WHO IS YOUR RIVER HERO?

National River Rally

May 21-24, 2010 at Snowbird, Utah
(near Salt Lake City)



River Heroes
*Celebrating Rivers and
Those Who Protect Them*

2010 River Heroes Awards

River Network is seeking nominations of individuals who exemplify watershed stewardship. Awards will be presented at the 2010 River Heroes Awards Banquet on Sunday, May 23, 2010 at the 11th annual National River Rally.

*Nomination materials and criteria can be found online at:
www.rivernetwork.org/rally or contact Deb Merchant at
dmerchant@rivernetwork.org, 503-542-8392.*

Nomination packets must be postmarked by Friday, February 19, 2010.

Inspiration Education Celebration