GRAPPLING WITH UNCONSCIOUS BIAS FOR MORE INCLUSIVE WATER PROTECTION & RESTORATION

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Diversity
Differences between us based on which we may experience advantages or encounter barriers in access to opportunities or resources.

Inclusion
Celebrating, valuing, and amplifying perspectives, voices, styles, values, and identities that have been marginalized (not tolerating, accommodating, or overcoming difference).

Equity & Justice
Equity is the approach to ensuring everyone has access to the same resources or opportunity (such as clean water). Equity recognizes that advantages and barriers exist, and that as a result we all don’t all start from the same place. Justice is the outcome of equity efforts.

Cultural Competence
The ability to interact across various dimensions of diversity; to flex with differences.
Diversity is what we are.

Inclusion is what we do.

Equity is how we do it.

Cultural competence is what we need to do it well.

Justice is an outcome.
Every moment . . .

We receive 11 billion bits of information

We can only process 40 bits

99.999996% is UNCONSCIOUS
UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Unconscious, subtle, involuntary assumptions or judgments we make every day based on our prior experiences and culture
AFFINITY BIAS
Preferences we have for people who are more like us
CONFIRMATION BIAS

Our tendency to interpret information based on a way that confirms our own previous beliefs and experiences.
After scrubbing down, a surgeon walks into surgery for a routine appendectomy. The surgeon greets the patient and the surgical team, tells the patient about the process of the surgery, and then begins the anesthesia process. A surgical nurse assists in the anesthesia process while another continues to organize the surgical instruments. Once the patient is fully under, the surgeon turns to one of the nurses and says, “let’s get started. Scalpel please.”
BIAS THROUGH 3 LENSES

INDIVIDUAL

INSTITUTIONAL

INDUSTRY
HOW DOES INDIVIDUAL BIAS MANIFEST?
STEREOTYPES
Widely held, but oversimplified ideas about a person based on their identities (real and perceived).
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Widely held, but oversimplified ideas about a person based on their identities (real and perceived).
MICROAGGRESSIONS
Unconscious everyday behaviors that often unintentionally disempower someone based on a non-dominant or marginalized identity.
Exposing yourself to diverse voices and perspectives

Don’t rely on people with marginalized identities to educate you

Amplify voices and perspectives less heard; de-center the traditional perspectives

Seek people with like identities to process through your biases

Be open to feedback; it’s a gift
HOW DOES INSTITUTIONAL BIAS MANIFEST?

What institutional policies, practices, procedures, and programs could/do exclude people with certain identities?
**WHERE INSTITUTIONAL BIAS TYPICALLY MANIFESTS**

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UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN THE HIRING PROCESS
LAKISHA JOHNSON

Objective

Experience
Lorem ipsum dolor
Elitam cursus suscipit enim. Donec dapibus enim sollicitudin.

Education
Aliquam dapibus
Nam ut est. In vehicula venenatis dui. Vestibulum ante.

Skills
Suspendisse potenti. Vestibulum rhoncus.

MARY JOHNSON

Objective

Experience
Lorem ipsum dolor
Elitam cursus suscipit enim. Donec dapibus enim sollicitudin.

Education
Aliquam dapibus
Nam ut est. In vehicula venenatis dui. Vestibulum ante.

Skills
Suspendisse potenti. Vestibulum rhoncus.

50% more interviews = 8 yrs more experience
GREEN 2.0 2017 DATA

ALL NGOs

- Fulltime Staff: 27% People of Color, 73% White
- Senior Staff: 14% People of Color, 86% White
- Board Members: 22% People of Color, 78% White

See [www.diversegreen.org](http://www.diversegreen.org) for more information
MITIGATING HIRING BIAS

Create inclusive job descriptions and postings

Black out names of candidates

Establish a diverse hiring committee

Establish a rubric for screening resumes and interviews

Create pipeline programs

For more information see
https://theavarnagroup.com/resources/hiring-practice-better-practices/
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

commensal

parasitic

mutualistic
PARTNERSHIP BETTER PRACTICES

- Ask partners how you can support them
- Avoid paternalistic paradigms (e.g., “service” or “empower”)
- Be aware of power imbalances
- Establish clear goals and expectations (WIIFM)
- Provide mechanisms for feedback from partners
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
BETTER PRACTICES FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Do your homework (beyond demographics)
- Be aware of past projects
- Build rapport with the community and its leaders
- Be clear how community input will be considered
- Make stakeholder input processes accessible and relevant
“What is the Wilderness? …Wilderness is not simply a place or an idea; it is also a political process.”

- James Morton Turner
**WHEN**: What was happening in the US at the birth of the conservation movement?

**WHY**: What was the impetus for the conservation movement?

**HOW**: What processes led to the creation of public land and preservation of natural spaces?

**FOR WHOM**: Whose lives and well-being were and are considered in the conservation movement?

**BY WHOM**: Who were the conservation movement founders?
WHAT'S THE IMPACT?
LOSS OF INDIGENOUS LAND

[Map showing land claims by tribe in the United States]
DISTORTION & ERASURE OF INDIGENOUS PRESENCE
MYOPIC UNDERSTANDING OF “PROTECT & CONSERVE”
MYOPIC UNDERSTANDING OF “PROTECT & CONSERVE”
RELIANCE ON WESTERN SCIENCE

Native Science
Natural Laws of Interdependence

Knowing Home
Braiding Indigenous Science with Western Science
Edited by Gloria Snively & Wanosts’a7 Lorna Williams
NARROW VIEW OF “ENVIRONMENTAL HEROES”
ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL CONNECTIONS
GOOD NEWS!
SOME CONTEMPORARY (AND MORE ETHNICALLY DIVERSE) VOICES . . .

Dorceta Taylor
Carolyn Finney
Gregory Cajete
Lauret Savoy
Laura Pulido
MITIGATING INDUSTRY BIAS

- Investigate and incorporate local land history into your work
- Expand your definition of connecting with and protecting land
- Own by whom, for whom, and for what public lands were originally created
- Form mutualistic partnerships across cultures
- Consider non-Western science (e.g., TEK) in advocacy decisions
RESOURCES

• Take the Implicit Association Test, https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

• Read Mahzarin Banaji & Tony Greenwald, Blindspots: The Hidden Bias of Good People


• Sarah Kaplan, Scientists show how we start stereotyping the second we see a face (Washington Post) http://theavarnagroup.com/resources/the-mind-is-a-difference-seeking-machine/

• PBS’s Black Folk Don’t series, http://www.pbs.org/show/black-folk-dont/


• The Avarna Group Hiring Practices Toolkit https://theavarnagroup.com/resources/hiring-practice-better-practices/