



### Statement of Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

Contemporary carbon cycle science and the fate of terrestrial ecosystems are crucial to study, in part due to anthropogenic influence on earth's carbon cycle and climate. All terrestrial ecosystems are both directly (e.g., deforestation) and indirectly (e.g., global climate change) impacted by the actions of humans. While these actions have global consequences, the decisions behind these actions have been made by a select group of people. For example, over 70% of all anthropogenic emissions can be traced to a small number of fossil fuel corporations<sup>1</sup>, who have worked to create global economies based on fossil fuels and exploitation of natural resources. At the other end of the spectrum, movements by Indigenous peoples across the world have resisted such actions. These movements are often against colonial or neo-colonial practices of land grabbing, but also have broader consequences. For instance, a recent report estimated that Indigenous resistance movements have averted 25% of all U.S. and Canadian emissions<sup>2</sup>. This is a rare example of research that offers an Indigenous perspective on carbon emissions, underscoring the need for diversifying the earth sciences. It is also not peer-reviewed, which excludes it from earth science scholarship. Earth sciences, which includes contemporary carbon cycle science, continues to exclude large parts of society through its systems and biases<sup>3</sup>.

The lack of diversity in Earth Sciences is attributed to the hostile environments<sup>4</sup>, racism<sup>5</sup>, and the lack of mentors<sup>6</sup>. As I develop my scholarship and teaching on contemporary carbon cycle science, I want to be conscious about my own positionality, and work on creating a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment. I am an upper caste South Asian male residing in the U.S., which brings a set of privileges as well as a range of experiences of being othered. As an international student, I often felt a sense of exoticism, often by well-intentioned people and colleagues. I had to quickly formulate strategies to assimilate, relying on perceptions and occasional pieces of advice. I also realized that I was not alone, that many international colleagues were also doing the same thing. We also felt underrepresented even in conversations about diversity, inclusion and equity (DEI). During my PhD, I was part of a student-led initiative called the "Diverse Perspectives in Forestry Group" where we held discussions on DEI, invited speakers and organized events. By supporting each other through this group and informally, we were in-fact doing a lot of the "DEI- work", even as the DEI infrastructure around us was often oblivious. Kuheli Dutt notes "Diversity and inclusion cannot exist without a sense of belonging"<sup>5</sup>, and I will strive to create a sense of belonging for students and colleagues in my lab, and in the department.

I will work towards creating an anti-racist<sup>7,8</sup>, anti-ableist and anti-queerphobic research group, in part by organizing discussions in my group. I also plan to organize graduate seminars on these topics, or join one that exists. Some examples of focused reading are recent work by Robin Wall Kimmerer on incorporating Indigenous perspective in ecological research<sup>9</sup>, and by Max Liboiron on conducting research with anti-colonial values<sup>10</sup>. Lastly, I think this is an important and exciting time as conversations on and beyond DEI are gaining momentum and including people who can actually offer diverse perspectives. I aim to sustain these, in my research group.

#### References:

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