**December 17, 2019 – Rockies and Plains DEIJ Listening Session**

Facilitated by: Caitlin Cattelino

**What are the current and/or near-future DEIJ-related efforts that your team is working on?**

Partnering with indigenous tribes in the northern Rockies and northern plains

Important to honor those projects without tokenization or for the sole benefit of Defenders; Important to not “use” tribes

Defenders has both *approached* tribes for collaboration and *been approached by* tribes

Attended tribal wildlife conferences/meetings as support

Partnership with Fort Lewis College in Durango

Not treating partners different than anyone else, this is where the issue,

Mantra – “we will work with anyone, including people who don’t like bears and wolves”

Inclusion – all stakeholders at the table

Balancing the need to work with tribes with our priorities (and within our capacity)

Some tribal project locations may not be where we work or on the species we focus

Ask ourselves – “Are we identifying projects for the sake of DEIJ or are these projects important for Defenders?”

**Where do you see opportunities for DEIJ-related growth in your department and its goals and efforts?**

Hire a tribe-focused staff member who is a Native American

Example: NWF 🡪 Tribal Bison Coordinator who is from the Wind River Reservation)

Example: WWF (their tribal employee left after a few months)

Wolf Efforts in CO

More outreach necessary to indigenous communities, Latinx communities

Coexistence work

Sheep ranchers tend to be non-white; ranch owners tend to be white

More opportunities for relationships with underserved communities

Work more comprehensively with tribes

More outreach/education necessary

Tabling; representing Defenders at events; kids programs

Work with underserved communities

How can Defenders better help fund tribal projects?

Grants tied to DEIJ that would allow us to better support tribes?

New donors

Making Defenders a safe place for tribes

Don’t want to fall into the trap of “it’s too hard” to work with tribes

**Where do you see opportunities for DEIJ-related growth at Defenders as an organization?**

Paid internships; or more paid opportunities for students

More outreach - How do we grow our DEIJ values without investing in staff who are directed go out and talk to people?

Connecting youth with big, overarching environmental concepts like open space, wildlife

Important to learn/understand/recognize that how some cultures define and support wildlife may be different than Defenders’ programmatic approach

Even though our mission is clear – we defend wildlife, not humans – coexistence means more than avoiding human-wildlife conflict

Defenders can’t remain on the sidelines in the fight for social justice in the name of wildlife when the communities that we are partnering with are not all white and privileged.

**Other feedback**

What does “Justice” look like for Defenders?

Showing up for Latinx communities

Not tokenizing groups or individuals

How far is Defenders willing to go to support justice values?

Will we be middle of road? Or all in? Boundaries?

For example: can we protest/volunteer in the name of Defenders on social justice issues?

Example: Dakota Pipeline 🡪 Defenders didn’t take a strong position

We work on “stolen land” – weighing in on environmental policy on appropriated land

Times where values at odds

Example: Flat Head Reservation – bison game range

Tribe wants this land for bison restoration

Federal legislation to transfer land to tribes

Defenders opposes it because it’s giving back federal lands (national wildlife refuge)

How can we influence the role of universities in building diversity in the field of wildlife biology?