January 7, 2020

DEIJ Listening Tour Conversation with Landscape Conservation

Moderator: Mike Evans

Participants: Mark Salvo, Phil Lu, Mary Pfafko, Pasha Feinberg, Rupak Thapaliya, Aimee Delach, Joy Page, Vera Smith, Lauren McCain, Pete Nelson

1. **Questions for me**?

Do we have funding for DEIJ initiatives?

1. **What are the current DEIJ-related efforts that your team is working on**? **How is DEIJ integrated in Landscapes work?**

Advocacy considerations - awareness of cultural sensitivities

* e.g. farm bill work aware of programs that benefit underprivileged communities
* At least one or two opportunities per year where we advocate for tribal funding
* Rupak working with another group as part of renewable energy planning in Oregon to consider tribes early in process

Renewable energy team will no longer take unpaid interns because it is an inclusion issue

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

Adopt a dedicated funding source for interns like renewables has across the department.

e.g. TNC doesn't take unpaid interns

Some participants pushed back against eliminating unpaid internships altogether, because unpaid opportunities could still provide a niche for remote, students. For instance, we should stay open to semester credits. There may be some situations where you eliminate opportunities and we don't want to do that.

Environmental community is wealthy, elitist, and coastal - we need to do a better job connecting with rural communities

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

Training/Awareness

We need training on sensitivity - folks are learning on their own but Defenders should take this up organizationally

Even simple desktop reference for correct terminology when writing would be helpful

Pronouns on email signatures

Need to think about a broader definition of 'diversity' e.g. autism, neuro-typical

Where can we find resources for managers to help navigate the above

Need to evaluate and, if necessary, adjust salaries because otherwise we are an organization of privileged people. If we pay below market-rate salaries, we can only hire people with safety nets

Mission statement about the 'inherent value of wildlife' may be problematic for an inclusive organization because if used unconscientiously it can marginalize communities that have a more utilitarian or exploitative relationship with wildlife.

* Some members pushed back against this perception and felt ‘inherent value of wildlife’ as central to Defenders mission. It may not need necessarily conflict with communities with an antagonistic relationship with wildlife.

Annual tracking of diversity numbers, attitudes, perceptions and publicizing these results

* Is the organization doing good mentoring?
* So important to have a baseline and measurement and evaluation

 Mentorship programs either internal to Defenders or with external 'youths'

Recruitment/Hiring Process

Aggressive recruiting and rules have to be part of hiring practices - diversity requirements

Studies have shown all sorts of simple ways to eliminate bias e.g. scrub names from resumes

Sensitivity training for hiring process, what questions you can/can't ask - we currently have no sense of what is even legal, let alone sensitive

Promotion/Compensation

Salary transparency – former HR employees have mentioned this is a major issue, we can't see what someone at a given level is making

At the very least, could HR do an analysis of gender, racial disparities in salary

* Could pull together stats, distributions, mins, maxs, medians per position

NRDC does 'levels' within tracks with clearly defined responsibilities, promotion goals, and salaries. Defenders may want to think about overhauling our system to fall in line with this kind of thing.

* Director of HR should be instituting these steps

Ideas for working group:

Advice to the DEIJ group - Women's group got blown up from how are women doing in the office to how we can change the landscape of conservation, which wound up paralyzing the group from doing anything useful. Lets be careful about this with DEIJ

We might look disingenuous if we scream about cultural issues for some ulterior motive

It might be problematic to co-opt underserved entities for political purposes

'Chapters' initiative a couple of years ago fizzled out, because of lack of funding

What are current initiatives that we can attach DEIJ to that might lower the inertia of starting a new initiative? E.g. is Jamie's 'buddy' system something that we can incorporate DEIJ mentorship into? Create diverse pairings