

WORKSHOP 5 PROCEEDINGS // JAN 18TH, 2023
THE NATURE-BASED EXCHANGE

Equity in Natural & Nature-based Solutions

The Nature Conservancy 

 SURCULUS



 School of ARCHITECTURE
Resilient Urban Design

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SOUTHEAST ATLANTIC BIOREGION

 Robinson
Design
Engineers

Acknowledgments

Planning Team: This workshop series would not have been possible without the time, effort, and expertise of the planning team. Their countless hours of work led to the formation of a robust workshop series that increased knowledge, spurred discussion, and produced tangible outcomes for South Carolina.

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Contributors: The successful execution of each workshop was due to our amazing contributors, including our speakers, panelists, and facilitators as well as those who worked behind the scenes to help us with planning and logistics, funding, and agenda-shaping.

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*Nature-Based Exchange
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Cover photo: The workshop was held at Penn Center on St. Helena Island, SC, the campus of the former Penn School, one of the nation's first schools for formerly enslaved people. The Penn Center is one of the most significant African American institutions in existence today.

Workshop Series Timeline

There is often a gap between conceptualizing ideas for natural and nature-based solutions (NNBS) and developing practical and solution-oriented plans using them. To close this gap, The Nature Conservancy, Clemson’s Resilient Urban Design Program, and the City of Charleston conducted a series of practical and outcome-based workshops that brought together a variety of local partners to discuss and develop NNBS. The goal was to synthesize existing knowledge and information on NNBS, align it with opportunities and barriers within the state of South Carolina, and create practical and equitable steps for implementation.

There are a total of seven workshops in the series. The first workshop served as a springboard for the rest of the series, offering an introduction to NNBS and gathering input from participants. The information gathered during that workshop informed the focal topics for the remaining workshops. Workshops 2 through 7 focused on one specific topic each to ensure a targeted conversation with produced outcomes.



WORKSHOP 1
Introduction to Natural and Nature-based Solutions
May 18th, 2022



WORKSHOP 2
Common Messaging on Natural and Nature-based Solutions
July 27th, 2022



WORKSHOP 3
Planning for Natural and Nature-based Solutions
September 14th, 2022



WORKSHOP 4
Funding NNBS: Navigating Grants, Risk Assessment, and Costs Benefit Analysis
November 16th, 2022



WORKSHOP 5
Equity in Natural and Nature-Based Solutions
January 18th, 2023



WORKSHOP 6 & 7
Design Standards for Natural and Nature-Based Solutions, Part 1 & 2
March 22nd, 2023
May 17th, 2023

Workshop 5: Equity in Natural & Nature-Based Solutions

The fifth Nature-Based Exchange workshop focused on equity in natural and nature-based solutions. Due to the importance of this topic, this workshop was extended beyond the usual half-day length to incorporate more education and opportunities for discussion. Six experts were brought in to share their perspective on how equity is currently being addressed around nature-based solutions and how it can be better incorporated in the future.

Throughout the day, the speakers reminded us that we must understand how a community sees their space and place before we step in and suggest change and they urged us to prioritize building trust and relationships within the community. We must consider our roles in the systemic injustices within our society, from the organizations we work for to the type of work we do, as well as our role as individuals. As we continue to work in this space, we should ask ourselves:

What learning can we commit to and what actions can we take, both as individuals and as members of society?

Am I the person meant to do this work? Is this the story I’m supposed to tell? Or am I supposed to pass the mic to someone else?

AGENDA ITEMS (10:00 am - 3:00 pm)

- Welcome**
- Introduction to the Penn Center**
- Morning Session**
- Equity in Action: Uniting People & Nature**
 - Economic Resilience by Marilyn Hemmingway, Gullah Geechee Chamber of Commerce
 - Nature-Based Solutions and Equity by Cheryl Cail, Waccamaw Indian People and American Rivers
 - From Land Divided to Land Sustained by Steve Patterson, Center for Heirs’ Property Preservation
 - EJ Strong by Keisha Long, SC Department of Health and Environmental Control
- Afternoon Session**
- Enhancing Community Capacity**
 - Community Capacity Building & Nature-Based Flood Resiliency by Omar Muhammad, Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities
 - Facilitated Group Discussion
 - Call to Action by Latria Graham, Journalist and Seventh Generation S.C. Farmer

Introduction to the Penn Center

The fifth Nature-Based Exchange workshop, Equity in Natural & Nature-Based Solutions, was held at the historic **Penn Center on St. Helena Island, SC**. To begin the workshop, **Dr. Marie Gibbs** provided a brief history of the Penn Center, the first school in the south for formerly enslaved West Africans.

When the Civil War started, plantation owners abandoned their land, leaving behind many slaves who sought to be free, own land, and become educated. This dream became a reality in 1862, one year after the war began. That year, the Penn Center was established to educate the newly emancipated people on St. Helena Island, and for many years it was the only school in the state where Blacks could receive a high school diploma. As the Civil War raged on, the government continued to require cotton and they paid the newly freed slaves to pick it for them. From their earnings, the people were able to buy land for their families. They recognized that land ownership is power, and that owning land has a lasting effect for future generations. They also recognized the importance of using the land well and valuing nature; this knowledge was expressed in the ways they recycled natural materials and replanted trees. Their legacy, as well as their values and knowledge, continue to live on in their descendants (who are known today as the Gullah Geechee).

“What we do here, we grow our own... We are proud of the work we’ve done in our community... Penn Center was our beginning.”

- Dr. Marie Gibbs





Marilyn Hemingway

CEO & President, Gullah Geechee Chamber of Commerce

Marilyn L. Hemingway, CEO/President and Founder of the Gullah Geechee Chamber of Commerce, is passionate about Social Entrepreneurship, business development and economic vibrancy in her beloved community.

A native of Georgetown, SC, Hemingway's maternal family hails from Beaufort, Hampton,

Bamberg, Charleston counties and her paternal roots are found in Horry and Georgetown counties. She is a lover and student of her roots and culture.

Hemingway brings an extensive amount of experience in marketing, communications, broadcasting and political campaigns. She is founding partner of the The Hemingway Group, a public relations, advertising, marketing and political advocacy firm. She most recently served as Public Relations and Fund Development Coordinator with Fetter Health Care Network. Marilyn was a vital part of re-branding the Community Health Center which recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary providing healthcare services through 21 locations in four counties in the Lowcountry.



Economic Resilience

Equity is tied to many facets of our society, including economics, culture, and the environment. We cannot have economic success without understanding the culture, and we cannot have economic justice without having environmental justice.



The Gullah Geechee are environmentalists. When their ancestors were brought over from Africa, their existence relied upon their knowledge of how to control water and manage the land. This knowledge and relationship with nature shaped the culture and work of the Gullah Geechee – from their food and medicine to their stories, music, and spiritual practices. Their rich culture and heritage have the potential to bring in \$34 billion in tourism annually.

This vast potential led to the creation of the Gullah Geechee Chamber of Commerce and the affiliated Gullah Geechee Chamber Foundation who work to bring global awareness, profitability, and sustainability to African American businesses and to support educational programs. To accomplish this, the Chamber works to create local ecosystems, connecting and organizing existing entertainment, education, experiences, and services to the local Gullah community.

Challenges to equity can make this work difficult. A growing disconnect from Gullah Geechee culture, impacts from climate change, a lack of infrastructure, little access to financial capital, and cultural appropriation are barriers that limit the growth of economic success. The Chamber is working to overcome these challenges by creating infrastructure, addressing environmental issues, and offering education. Examples of this work include environmental and energy programming, such as focus groups and an annual conference, culturally embedded business courses offered through Gullah Geechee University, and the Gullah Geechee Seafood Trail. For the Gullah Geechee, improving equity is tied to environmental justice and economic resilience. As education, collaboration, and infrastructure grow, all three elements will benefit



Cheryl Cail

Associate Director, Southeast Conservation, American Rivers

Cheryl joins American Rivers with a long history as an advocate for clean water and healthy communities. She is a strong voice for equity focusing in the areas of race, gender, and cultural equity. She is a member of the National PFAS Contamination Coalition and has been a grassroots organizer for Clean Water South Carolina. She is the Vice Chief of the Waccamaw Indian

People and Chairperson of SC Idle No More; a committee under the SC Indian Affairs Commission, which focuses on protection of the environment, cultural preservation, and indigenous sovereignty. She has been working with communities across the SC North Coast to improve their resilience to climate change especially working to address flooding issues that many of the communities are faced with.

She is also a small business owner (Coastal Carolina Signings, LLC) providing notary services in the North Coast. She is a leader on the Indigenize SC Education Task Force and a tribal consulting member of SC State Museum project which endeavors to be more inclusive of all Native Americans in the state.

Below: Colonial map of South Carolina, 1711 (Photo credit: Library of Congress)



Nature-Based Solutions and Equity

To understand equity in the context of resilience, it is important for us to consider our history – including the history of indigenous peoples – to learn how we got here. Issues with equity can be traced back to the roots of this country when the early proprietors and colonial financiers came to America with the concept of a business project. These individuals soon enacted exclusionary tactics which displaced the indigenous people, causing food insecurity and a disruption to their livelihood, culture, and heritage. Trade rules and sanctions were established, and the indigenous people were told which lands they could access and reside on (and which they could not). Colonization, with its roots in racial and religious ideologies, caused unequal treatment and created barriers that the indigenous people could not overcome. The inequalities they faced birthed inequities, and those inequities continue to persist today.

Resilience can be thought of as doing something in spite of something else; it is the ability to adapt in the face of adversity. Nature is resilient. In the face of adversity, nature learns and adapts, thus becoming resilient. As humans, however, we tend to forget or manipulate our knowledge and history, which causes us to fail at using wisdom to learn from the world around us. If we want to find strategies, we should look to nature. We've been operating in a way that does not support the ecosystem and this has caused imbalances between humans (creating inequity), and between humans and nature.

Indigenous cultures recognize that we are not independent of nature, but a part of nature. We must rethink how we engage with nature, and we must adjust our actions to bring balance back to realign our relationship with nature. Once we right this balance – improving our relationship with nature – then nature-based solutions will follow. When we treat nature-based solutions as a way of life as opposed to a project, we will become better stewards and caretakers of nature, we will reduce inequities, and we will become more resilient.

Indigenous Nature-based Solutions Says...

Relationships are key and systems must be interconnected

- Spirituality
- Land
- Water
- Air
- Social Structures
- Law and Policy
- Governance

What does a healthy relationship look like?

- Non-dominating
- Non-exploitive
- Respectful
- Grateful
- Balanced
- Responsible



Steve Patterson

Director of Forestry Services, Center for Heirs' Property Preservation

Steve was raised in Athens, Georgia where he received a Bachelor of Science in Forest Resources (Timber Management) from the University of Georgia, followed by a Master of Science (Forest Soils) from the University of Florida. Steve then moved to the South Carolina Lowcountry, where he worked in the forest industry for 38 years. While with the forest industry, Steve's work involved research and technical support focused on soil management and silvicultural practices to improve sustainable forest productivity.

Steve joined the Center as a forester in July 2016 where he helped landowners manage their family land sustainably to build generational wealth. He was promoted to his current position as Director of Forestry Services in June 2018.

Steve is a Registered Forester in South Carolina. He is a member of the Society of American Foresters (Edisto Chapter), the Soil Science Society of America, and the Forestry Association of South Carolina.

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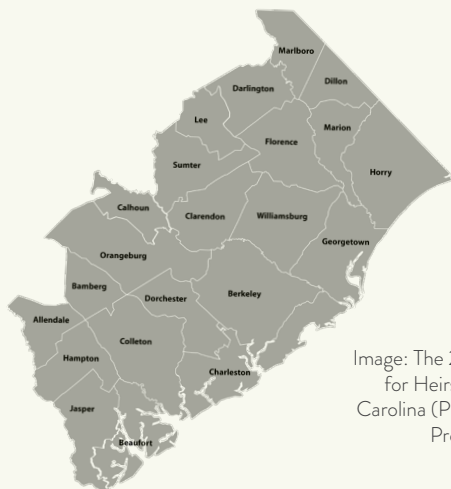


Image: The 22 counties where the Center for Heirs' Property works in South Carolina (Photo credit: Center for Heirs' Property Preservation)

From Land Divided to Land Sustained

The Center for Heirs' Property works daily in the combined space of equity, nature, and resilience. They recognize that land ownership is huge and powerful, and they offer numerous services to local landowners that build knowledge and trust between families, forestry consultants, and attorneys.

The Center started as a legal service nonprofit in 2005 helping landowners protect their family property by resolving the title issues that made them vulnerable to land loss. In 2013, a special sustainable forestry project was initiated because it was recognized that historically under-served landowners were not realizing the full economic potential of their land. Sustainable forestry was an ideal land use for most of their landowners given the limited management input required and the excellent tree growing conditions reflected in forestry's \$23 billion economic impact in the state. Wood markets are well established, and properly managed forests yield four times more wood than unmanaged forests and return as much as six times the value.



The challenge is to help families build generational wealth by educating landowners about land tenure and sustainable forestry practices. The Center does this by providing free in-house forestry support and by increasing the landowner's knowledge of partner organizations, particularly federal and state agencies, that are a valuable source of technical and financial assistance. One of the Center's goals is to have all landowners develop a Forest Management Plan that incorporates the family's objectives for owning the land into a plan outlining the management steps to achieve those goals. The Center has grown from a service area consisting of four counties around Charleston to 25 counties covering the coastal plain and extending into the midlands. Over 500 families representing almost 40,000 acres have participated in the forestry program during their first 10 years



Keisha Long

**Environmental Justice Coordinator,
SC Department of Health and
Environmental Control**

Keisha Long is the Environmental Justice Coordinator for the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). She is an advocate for vulnerable communities and is responsible for helping environmental justice communities build capacity, identify resources, and establish collaborative partnerships.

Keisha has been with DHEC for over 20 years. Previously, Keisha worked as a DHEC Project Manager in the Superfund program and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act program (RCRA). Keisha holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Clemson University, is an active Toastmaster, and is a former co-Chair on the advisory board of the ITRC (Interstate Technology Regulatory Council).

Below: Hazardous Waste: Cleanup and Prevention (Photo credit: USGS)



EJ Strong

EJ Strong: Strengthening Communities for Disaster Risk Reduction, Response and Recovery in SC is a project funded by the EPA under the State Environmental Justice Cooperative Agreement (SEJCA). The purpose of the SEJCA program is to support and/or create model state activities that lead to measurable environmental or public health results in communities disproportionately burdened by environmental harms and risks.

EJ Strong hosts workshops, field practicums, and virtual classes to educate community members on how to identify concerns and vulnerabilities within their community and how to respond when hazards strike. With a focus on collaboration, resilience, and capacity building, EJ Strong seeks to empower communities to plan for disasters before they happen, respond while they happen, and rebuild after they have passed. Doing so will result in a community-managed response to a hazard and an increase in community (and individual) resilience.

Through their work thus far, the EJ Strong team has identified the need for two paradigm shifts in how we define and determine vulnerability:

1. we must recognize and consider the capacity that already exists in communities when determining their disaster risk; and
2. we must view vulnerability in terms of where you are located, not how much money you have.



When we think about nature-based solutions in terms of equity, vulnerability, resilience, and hazards, it is important to remember that when a hazard strikes, many people are thinking about how to solve the immediate problem in front of them in a way that is quick, known, and effective; they are not brainstorming new approaches that use nature to solve the problem. If we want to prioritize nature-based solutions, they need to be included in future community plans and planning efforts so that communities reach for those solutions before and after a disaster.

Facilitated Group Discussion

Facilitated by Dr. Amanda Guthrie, South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium

During the facilitated group discussion, attendees were asked to consider their role in the projects they currently work on and for the organization they work for. Then they were asked to consider how equity fits into those roles. Lastly, they were asked to identify steps they can take within their current formal and informal roles to advance equity. Participants were encouraged to spend time reflecting and brainstorming with those at their table.

During this session, Amanda Guthrie reminded participants of two important facts: 1) **good intentions don't always mean good projects**; and 2) **incorporating equity into our work is both a personal and professional journey, but none of us are in it alone**. This kind of work does not happen overnight; it is a journey both for us as practitioners and for the communities we are trying to engage.

Attendees were encouraged to read "The application of reflexivity for conservation science" by Beck et al. 2021 and to reflect on the supplementary handout when considering equity for future projects.



<p>Understand Your Purpose</p> <p>What are my motivations for conduction this project and how do i benefit from it?</p> <p>How might I describe my personal conservation agenda to various to other people?</p>	<p>Have I shared my values with my teammates?</p> <p>What can I do to build trust with stakeholders?</p>	<p>Establish Real Connections</p> <p>Do I share the same philosophical assumptions as my teammates?</p> <p>In what ways have I considered diversity, equity, and inclusion in my work?</p>
<p>What actions do I hope to inspire with my work?</p> <p>What mistakes did I make during this project that others could avoid in the future?</p>	<p>How does my own unique identity impact every aspect of the scientific process?</p>	<p>How could my actions perpetuate stereotypes, maintain negative power dynamics, or cause harm to community members or research subjects?</p>
<p>Inform and Transform</p> <p>What specific policies or management initiatives can my work support?</p> <p>What will change if my recommendations are implemented?</p>	<p>How might different audiences interpret my results based on past and current cultural contexts?</p>	<p>Learn From the Past</p> <p>What are the histories of local and indigenous people in my study area?</p> <p>In what ways are social conditions unavoidably impacting my project?</p>

Scan me to view



the handout!

Graphic above: Adapted from Beck et al. 2021. The four tenets of reflexivity for conservation science, with example prompts.



Omar Muhammad

Executive Director, Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities

Omar has worked as a community advocate and activist since 2007 as a volunteer for the Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities (LAMC). He has served as LAMC's web-site content coordinator and community engagement liaison. Currently, he serves as LAMC's Executive Director. Omar completed a 9 month training with the United States Environmental Protection

Agency (US-EPA) Region IV's Environmental Justice Academy and was selected Valedictorian for the inaugural class. He is also a past participant in a joint EPA Region IV and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control Leaders in Environmental Action Pilot (LEAP) inaugural class.

Omar has successfully lead efforts to engage the LAMC communities through various outreach strategies. Omar has successfully funded community research initiatives to train residents, conduct a community-based health survey to assess health service gaps at the community level, conduct a zoning analysis for Environmental Justice communities and several other Citizen Science projects. Omar has been instrumental in leveraging relationships with academics and governmental agencies.

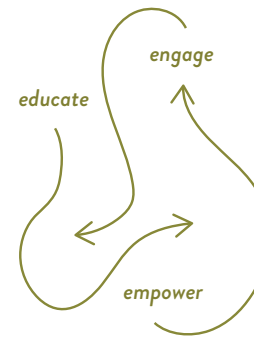


Graphic above is adapted from Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities (LAMC)

Community Capacity Building & Nature-Based Flood Resiliency - Omar Muhammad

To overcome problems with equity and environmental justice, we must have meaningful engagement with low-wealth communities. We must recognize these communities have value and that their residents are knowledgeable experts on their community. They do not want us to talk to them or at them; rather, they want to see us act on their behalf and include them in the entire process, from planning through evaluation. At the Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities, their goal is to empower communities – to tap into their existing power and capacity and use it to advocate for the community's best interest. In communities such as Rosemont, in Charleston, where residents feel forgotten and overlooked, empowerment can result in more community action, such as through science and data collection, and participation in community planning and design.

When beginning work in a low-wealth community, we must first listen to the residents so that we can understand how they see their space and their place. To ensure meaningful engagement, we must meet them where they are and schedule meetings that consider factors such as:



- Time of day – Is the time of day chosen accessible to community members based on their work and family schedules?
 - Location – Is the meeting held at a location that is convenient and accessible for the community, such as in their neighborhood or near a bus stop?
 - Childcare – Is childcare available?
 - Compensation – Is there money available to pay the residents who attend for their time and expertise?

We must remember that this work is a give and take process; we learn from the residents as they learn from us, and we should compensate them for providing that knowledge. We must also respect their interests and concerns, not just ours. This means addressing the problems that are impacting them, such as housing, economics, and education in addition to concerns of flooding and climate change. This work can be challenging and time-intensive, but it can have huge impacts when done thoughtfully and equitably.



Latria Graham

Storyteller, journalist

Latria Graham is a journalist and fifth generation South Carolina farmer. Her work stands at the intersection of food, social justice, sports, and culture. She's written longform pieces about everything from NASCAR to chitlins. She is a graduate of Dartmouth College, and later earned her MFA in Creative Nonfiction from The New

School in New York City. She is a three-time Best American Sports Writing notable for her stories on athletes in places of tension – primarily Standing Rock, ND and Flint, MI. She received a Bronze level CASE Aware for her reporting on immigration policy that stemmed from 2017's Executive Order 13769, often referred to as the “travel ban.”

After years of traveling the country to cover systemic injustice in underrepresented communities, she recently decided to turn her focus to small towns in the American South at risk of disappearing due to gentrification and Southern expansion. In 2019 she was awarded the Great Smoky Mountain Association's Steve Kemp Writer-in-Residence position, and for two years she has been in and out of conservation spaces, intent on unearthing long forgotten Black history that she finds crucial to the narrative we tell about the American South.

She was the University of Montana's 2022 Kittredge Distinguished Visiting Writer, and is currently in Augusta, Georgia serving as Augusta University's Faculty Inclusive Excellence Initiative Visiting Professors. A contributing editor at Garden&Gun and Outside Magazine, she is the writer behind Garden&Gun's This Land column, which uses time, place, and memory to document and investigate the lesser known or rapidly disappearing aspects of the natural world in the South. Her work has been featured in the NYT, LA Times, The Guardian, ESPN, Southern Living, and The Atlantic.

You can find more of her work at LatriaGraham.com

Call to Action

Stories are an important tool that we can use to influence and connect with others, no matter what industry or role you are in. Latria Graham proved this by sharing her own story of growing up in South Carolina, moving to New York, and traveling the country as a writer and reporter. Her story is one of choices and dreams; opportunity and access; policy successes and failures; family and culture. As she so eloquently stated, “I am the story of South Carolina, but I am also the story of America, in many ways. And the things that have happened to me in my life say something about our world.”

Latria's story is unique to her, yet it also shines a light on the universal topics of race, class, access, and equity. Her story reminds us of some important things:

- National stories can also be local stories; what we view as a “national” issue may be affecting one of our neighbors in our city or in a neighboring town.
- The way we talk about race, class, access, and equity on both large and small scales can impact how people see themselves and how they move in the world.
- We can feel trapped into becoming who society tells us we should be or who we are allowed to be. Rather than being defined by the world, we should create a culture where we can all feel empowered to follow our own dreams and become who we want to be.

As a closing exercise, Latria asked attendees to draw or imagine their world – their day, their commute, their existence. After one minute, attendees were asked to reflect and think about who is missing from the world they envisioned and why. When we talk about access, resources, how we define nature, and how nature makes us feel, we must also talk about geography and find ways to intentionally address inequities that are place-based.

As we continue our work with nature-based solutions, Latria urged us to consider this last question: “Am I the person meant to do this work? Is this story meant for me to tell? Or am I supposed to pass the mic?”

Check out these resources mentioned in Latria's presentation:



- *Born Bright: A Young Girl's Journey from Nothing to Something in America* by C. Nicole Mason (memoir)
- *The Tradition* by Jericho Brown (book of poems); suggested poem: “Foreday in the Morning”

Definitions of Important Terms

When we approach resilience and nature-based solutions through the lens of equity, our definitions of these terms can look a little different. An equity lens encourages us to see resilience and nature-based solutions as more than nature and science and ecological fixes; we are encouraged to humanize these ideas and see that people are integral to this equation.

Equality¹

Equality occurs when each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities, regardless of their circumstances.

How our speakers defined equality:

Equality gives us all equal access or opportunity. It says that all people are treated the same and it fails to recognize our differences.

Equity²

Equity is the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment.

How our speakers defined equity:

- Equity recognizes there are barriers to opportunities and access for some people and not for others and works to overcome those barriers.
- Equity recognizes that imbalances exist between us and nature and says that adjustments are needed to bring balance between the two.
- Equity is born from inequality.

Environmental Justice³

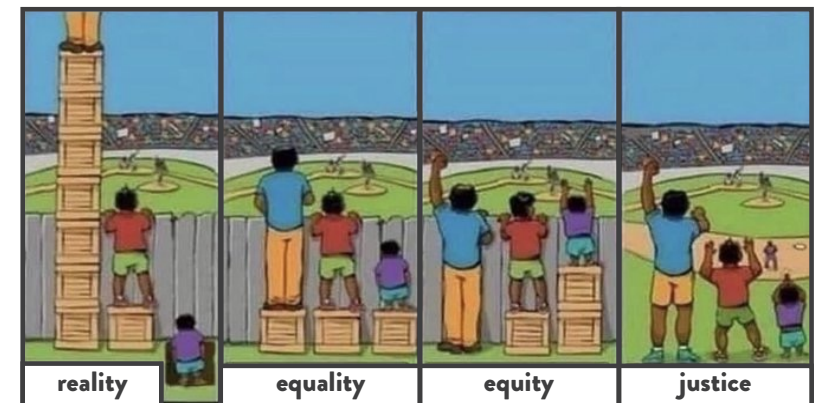
Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, gender, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies including but not limited to:

- Equitable protection from environmental and health hazards;
- Equitable access to decision-making processes;
- Equitable opportunity for disadvantaged communities that have been historically marginalized.

How our speakers defined environmental justice:

- Environmental justice is the meaningful engagement of communities and the fair application of laws, rules, policy, and funding in communities that are disproportionately impacted.
- Environmental justice is when external players enter a community and act to solve the problems that exist there by including the residents, not by talking to them or at them.
- Environmental justice removes the barriers that prevent equality, recognizing that a systemic change is needed. (see graphic below as reference)
- Environmental justice is a doorway that allows for economic justice. Without environmental justice, we cannot have economic justice.

Below: While this workshop focused on Equity, many speakers pointed out that the ultimate goal is Justice. This graphic has been adapted from the original version. We do not know the original artist of this illustration to properly credit them. If you do, please reach out to us.



reality
One gets more than is needed, while the other gets less than is needed. Thus, a huge disparity is created.

equality
The assumption is that everyone benefits from the same supports. This is considered to be equal treatment.

equity
Everyone gets the support they need which produces equity.

justice
All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.

Definitions of Important Terms

Nature-Based Solutions⁴

Nature-based solutions are actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural and modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously benefiting people and nature.

- Nature-based solutions address societal challenges through the protection, sustainable management, and restoration of both natural and modified ecosystems, benefiting both biodiversity and human well-being.
- Nature-based solutions are underpinned by benefits that flow from healthy ecosystems.
- They target major challenges like climate change, disaster risk reduction, food and water security, biodiversity loss and human health, and are critical to sustainable economic development.

How our speakers defined nature-based solutions:

- Nature-based solutions are not a project but a way of life.
- Nature-based solutions are a relationship between humans and nature. This relationship should not be dominating, exploitative, or extractive but rather respectful, grateful, balanced, and responsible.
- Nature-based solutions are an interconnectedness of systems – land, water, air, governance, spirituality, social structures, law, and policy – working together for the benefit of humans and nature.

Resilience⁵

Resilience is the capacity of social, economic, and environmental systems to cope with a hazardous event or trend or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure as well as biodiversity in case of ecosystems while also maintaining the capacity for adaptation, learning and transformation.

How our speakers defined resilience:

- Resilience is . . . in spite of . . . (fill in the blanks).
- Resilience is about people's ability to adapt in the face of ecological, social, and economic adversity. Resilience means addressing issues of climate change and flooding alongside issues related to housing, economics, and education.
- Nature is resilient.

¹ Taken from United Way of the National Capital Area, <https://unitedwaynca.org/blog/what-is-equality/>

² Defined by Executive Order 13985, as mentioned by National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/bulletin/request-comments-noaa-fisheries-draft-strategy-advancing-equity-and-environmental>

³ Taken from National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/bulletin/request-comments-noaa-fisheries-draft-strategy-advancing-equity-and-environmental>

⁴ Taken from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

⁵ Taken from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report ([Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability](#))

Workshop Takeaways

When we think about equity in the context of nature-based solutions, many associated terms come to mind, including environmental justice, resilience, and vulnerability. This can lead us to think about actions, such as capacity building, collaboration, education, engagement, and empowerment. As we ponder these actions, we realize that nature-based solutions do more than help the ecosystem, they also help people. And while our relationship with nature is vitally important, solving economic and social issues are also needed to enhance the resilience of our communities and ourselves.

- There are many barriers to equity, but there are also **opportunities for solutions**, particularly around infrastructure, environmental issues, and education.
- **Relationships matter** – how we relate to each other and to nature. Equity recognizes that imbalances exist in these relationships. If we can find a balance between us and nature, then nature-based solutions will follow.
- To improve the imbalances inherent in equity issues, we must also **grow our collaborations, resilience, and capacity building**. We must plan effectively for all communities before disasters strike and we must respond and rebuild promptly after the disaster passes in both high- and low-wealth communities.
- Resilience is more than just water and flood mitigation. Resilience is recognizing the **inherent strengths of a community** and restoring and enhancing those strengths in the face of adversity.
- Social and economic characteristics – including housing and education – must be considered when we do resilience work.
- When we talk about nature and how it makes us feel, we must also think about access and location.
- Environmental education must be connected to cultural education.
- Community engagement should be done in a meaningful way where we **educate, empower, and engage**. We must learn from community members as they learn from us.
- Building knowledge and trust is key to improving equity. Accomplishing this requires spending time with individuals within their community – observing what their lives are like, learning about the problems they see, and learning what solutions they support.
- It's important to understand how a community sees **their space and their place**. As outsiders, we need to learn how they value their community before we start offering solutions. If we truly value their input and ideas, we must offer ways for them to fully participate by considering the time, location, childcare needs, and cost of attending a community meeting. If we consider them experts, we should pay them like experts.
- We cannot have economic justice without environmental justice.
- We must be **patient**. This kind of work does not happen on a rigid timeline, nor does it happen overnight.
- We must consider our roles in the systemic injustices within our society, from the organizations we work for to the type of work we do, as well as our role as individuals. **What learning can we commit to and actions can we take, both as individuals and as members of society?**

To equitably engage the community in your project, consider these elements (as well as others) in your planning process:

- **Is it at a time when community members could attend?**
 - Is the meeting scheduled during typical work and school hours?
 - Is the meeting scheduled during work hours for the target group?
 - Is the meeting scheduled during events that are often attended by the community (such as church events, sporting events, or community events)?
- **Is the location accessible to community members?**
 - Is the location walkable?
 - Is there ample free parking at the location?
 - Is the location close to a bus stop?
 - Is the space large enough to accommodate everyone?
 - Does the location have cultural, historical, religious, or political significance that could limit who is willing to attend?
- **Is childcare available?**
- **Is a fair honorarium available for those who attend?**
- **Is there time allowed in the agenda for community members to discuss their needs and concerns on topics unrelated to the goal of the meeting?**

Thank you to our attendees...

Thank you to everyone who attended the workshop. These individuals contributed their thoughts, energy, and enthusiasm to the exchange and are responsible for the ideas and content produced in this compendium.

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Mark Belton	Thrive Environmental (representing NFWF)	Latria Graham	Writer/journalist, SC farmer, visiting scholar Augusta University	Cody Matthews	Charleston Children's Museum	Amy Scaroni	Clemson
Jeff Benavides	Jacobs	Chaquetta Greene	DHEC	Grant McClure	Coastal Conservation League	Kate Schaefer	Open Land Trust
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