

# Growing The Canopy:

## Racial Justice and Urban Forestry

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“If there is to be a partnership made with the environmental movement, it must be based on equity, mutual respect, and justice. The environmental justice movement of people of color rejects a partnership based on paternalism.”

-The Summit, 1991

# Goals

- Lay the groundwork for an urban forestry coalition that is more reflective of California's population
- Foster an actively anti-racist organizational culture within the ReLeaf Network
- Prepare ReLeaf Network members to work as allies in communities of color

# Topics We Will Cover

- Racism in Individual, Social, Institutional, and Systemic Contexts (Generally & specific to environmentalism)
- A Tale of Two Environmental Movements
- Basic Anti-Racism Vocabulary
- Creating Anti-Racist Organizational Culture

# Why is Racism of Unique Concern in Urban Forestry

- Responsibility
- SB535 Funding
- Racial Disparities in Canopy Access
- Stronger Together



- What is Racism?

# Racism

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# Race Prejudice

+

# Power

(by people, social groups, and  
institutions)



# Reverse racism – An example

[Aamer on Reverse Racism](#)

# 4 Types of Racism

- Individual:
- Social:
- Institutional
- Systemic

# Systemic Racism

- Wealth: People of Color are 2.5x more likely to be rejected for a loan w/ identical income
- Criminal Justice: Black men receive prison sentences that are 20% than their white peers for the same crime
- Employment: Black men w/ clean records get callbacks for job interviews at similar rates to white men w/ felony records. “Black Sounding” names result in nearly roughly 1/3 the interview opportunities with identical resumes.
- Education: Schools serving people of color are underfunded at a rate of double that of their white peers. For every 10% of the student base that are people of color, school funding drops nearly \$100/student



# A Tale of Two Environmental Movements:

The environmental movement is not a “white movement”. It is, largely, a segregated movement.

# Just as Invested

POC often support environmental causes at rates equal to or greater than their white peers:

- Higher rates of “belief” and support for action on climate change.
- Higher rates of support for CO2 being regulated as a pollutant.

Timelines:

Movement Building:

Creating Anti-Racist Organizational  
Culture



The primary cause of lack of representation in much of the environmental movement is the unwillingness of white people in the movement to investigate and correct issues of race and power within ourselves, our organizations, and society as a whole.

# An Incredibly Typical Example:

Within an organization or coalition, an accusation of an racism is levied at an individual or a group, it is usually taken as a charge of **deliberate** foul play and is most often met with defensiveness.

# **An Incredibly Typical Example:**

However, when an action is suspected of being racist, for example, what is under scrutiny is the net effect of the action, not its motive.

# An Incredibly Typical Example:

In the interest of protecting a “fair-minded” identity, the accused organization or person assumes that one’s motives are under attack, instead of exploring the merit of the observation of inequity, likely providing a character resume in defense.

At this moment there is a counter accusation of character assassination, followed by lengthy explanations of their true motives.

# An Incredibly Typical Example:

In defense of the intent, the impact is rarely investigated, leaving the ones bringing forth the observation feeling silenced and frustrated.

# An Incredibly Typical Example:

The one making the original accusation may not have been taking the net effect of the action in question personally. However, the sense of not being heard, silenced, or invalidated is taken personally.

# Create Organizational Standards and Statements

- It is Common Vision's policy that staff and volunteers, individually and collectively, demonstrate maximal respect in attitude and actions to all people of the many culturally and racially diverse communities visited during programs.
- Common Vision is committed to cultivating a living and working environment that intentionally seeks to promote the coexistence of people of diverse background and identity based on mutual respect and integrity. Common Vision requires that the staff and volunteer living and working environments are free from discrimination on the basis of race, class, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

# Know Your History

- Understand the history of systemic racism and how it has affected your stakeholders
- Continue examination of where your work intersects with the legacy of racism in America



Some choice words on Humanism

# Build Ally Culture

- Training for leadership, staff, and volunteers
- Do not rely on people of color within the organization to create a culture of diversity
- Break Silence - always interrupt racism
- Continue the Conversation
- Recruit for PAID Positions

“This is the next and more profound stage of the battle for civil rights. We seek not just freedom but opportunity—not just legal equity but human ability—not just equality as a right and a theory, but equality as a fact and as a result.” - Lyndon B. Johnson

# Resources

## Cultural Appropriation:

- [Don't Cash Crop My Cornrows](#)
- [Why Discussing Cultural Appropriation Isn't Just Being Told What You 'Can't' Do](#)
- [Last Week Tonight with John Oliver: Dressing Up As Other Races \(How Is This Still a Thing?\)](#)

## General:

- [Leverage Privilege: Cracking the Codes: Joy DeGruy "A Trip to the Grocery Store"](#)
- [The scientific way to train white people to stop being racist](#)
- [How White People Sound When They "Disagree" With PoC About Racism](#)
- [Getting Called Out: How to Apologize](#)
- [Kinda Racist? Try Diet Racism!](#)
- [Are you racist? 'No' isn't a good enough answer](#)
- [TED Radio Hour: Beyond Tolerance](#)
- [Guidelines for Being Strong White Allies](#)
- [Black Man Explaining RACISM, WHITE PRIVILEGE, And SUPREMACY To White Man](#)

## White Privilege:

- [UNDERSTANDING WHITE PRIVILEGE Francis E. Kendall, Ph.D., 2002](#)
- [The Ultimate White Privilege Statistics & Data Post](#)
- [If You Have To Tell Your Kids This Stuff, Then You Probably Aren't A White Person](#)
- [17 Deplorable Examples Of White Privilege](#)
- [10 Examples That Prove White Privilege Protects White People in Every Aspect Imaginable](#)
- [Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person](#)

## Local History

- [Nisenan History: Richard B. Johnson Interview](#)

## Microaggressions:

- <http://www.microaggressions.com/>
- [21 Racial Microaggressions You Hear On A Daily Basis](#)

# Systemic Racism

## Criminal justice

- One in six black men had been incarcerated as of 2001.\*
- African Americans are incarcerated at nearly six times the rate of whites.\*
- African Americans are incarcerated at nearly six times the rate of whites Together, African American and Hispanics comprised 58% of all prisoners in 2008, even though African Americans and Hispanics make up approximately one quarter of the US population.\*
- Black men receive prison sentences that are 20% than their white peers for the same crime.\*

\* [Source NAACP criminal justice fact sheet](#)

# Systemic Racism

## Wealth

- POC are 2.5x more likely to be rejected for a loan as compared with whites with identical income
- Blacks and Latinos pay an average of 3.5 percent more for homes than whites.\*
- Relining policies from 1930's - 1970's greatly impaired wealth acquisition for POC.
- The median wealth gap difference between a white family and a black family is \$80,000.\*\*
- The average net worth of black households is \$6,314, compared to \$110,500 for the average white household

\* [\(2013\) National Bureau of Economic Research](#)

\*\* [\(2009\) Race, Wealth, and Intergenerational Poverty](#)

# Systemic Racism

## Education

- Schools serving POC are under-funded at a rate double that of their white peers. For every 10% of the student base that are POC, school funding drops nearly \$100/student
- In about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of school districts, the teacher salary gap between high schools with the highest concentrations of black and Latino students and those with the lowest is more than \$5,000 a year.\*

\* [\(2014\) Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights](#)

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# Systemic Racism

## Employment

- Applicants with white-sounding names are 50% more likely to get called for an initial interview than those with “black” sounding names.\*
- Black women make 64¢ for every white male dollar, and Latina women make 53¢ for every white male dollar.\*\*

\*["Are Emily and Brendan More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal?"](#) 2002 (U Chicago)

\*\* [US Census Bureau \(2014\)](#)