

# Institute for Applied Ecology

## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice Action Plan

Updated: April 20, 2021

### Background

The mission of the Institute for Applied Ecology is to conserve native species and habitats through restoration, research and education. Our vision is a world where all people and wildlands are healthy and interact positively, biological diversity flourishes, and environmental challenges are met with a social commitment to solving problems with scientific principles.

At IAE we believe that diversity makes us strong and equality is in our nature. We are passionate about inclusion across gender, race, age, religion, identity, and experience. We know that people enrich our organization and accomplish our mission. Just as biological diversity makes ecosystems resilient, human diversity gives us power, creativity, and adaptability. We empower everyone to bring their authentic selves to work, and we strive for a workplace that reflects our communities.

IAE was part of The Confluence, a visionary collaborative of six environmental conservation organizations, launched in 2016 to explore innovative solutions to sharing physical office space, grow collaborative programming, and deepen our mission impact throughout our communities. With the generous support of Meyer Memorial Trust (MMT), the Confluence partners facilitated 2-years of equity impact work within each organization. This included support from Capacity Building Partnerships to help guide our Training, Assessment and Planning work. As part of that process, each organization completed organizational DEI Assessments (filled out by all Staff/Board) and reviewed the reports with their Staff/Board. The Assessment included: Where each organization is in its journey towards more equitable outcomes based on Meyer Memorial Trust's Spectrum Tool); and Organizational cultural and practices and how DEI is or isn't showing up.

IAE formed a small committee made up of individuals who received training through the Confluence MMT grant (Change Agents), plus several additional staff. An interim action plan was made following the Assessment findings. With the conclusion of the MMT grant, the IAE DEIJ committee has re-visited the interim action plan, and narrowed the focus to three key areas to focus on to build capacity, support, and awareness across IAE.

## Current DEIJ Challenges:

The following challenges and issues were identified by the DEIJ Committee in March 2021 as the most pressing barriers and challenges to DEIJ success.

1. Time and capacity is limited across the organization, and particularly DEIJ
2. Funding to engage across the organization and build capacity
3. Structure, continuity, and leadership isn't clear, supported, or consistent (work in general, committee). Lack of engagement.
4. Prioritize meaningful, non-transactional relationships with community groups, and groups involved in (directly and indirectly) and impacted by our mission.
5. COVID

## DEIJ Goals:

We identified the following six goals to drive our DEIJ work moving forward. They are listed in order of priority.

**DEIJ Goals for 2021-2022:** *IAE DEIJ Committee and Leadership Team will focus on Goals 1-4 during 2021.*

1. **DEIJ COMMITTEE:** define purpose, role, and decision-making authority.
2. **AWARENESS RAISING:** provide awareness raising opportunities to staff on an ongoing basis.
3. **DEFINE AND BUILD COMMUNITY:** define who "our community" is and how this ties to our mission, vision, and outcomes. Explore, discuss, and learn about how to build relationships with "our community". Choose a few community groups to intentionally support.
4. **POLICY & IMPLEMENTATION:** review HR policies and practices and implement changes that support DEIJ. Create process and plan to learn, review, and update ongoing. Apply an equity lens to upcoming policy, HR and program decisions.

**Future on Ongoing Goals:** *important goals for future focus and ongoing consideration.*

5. **SECURE FUNDING:** Create a funding strategy that allocates internal resources and identifies additional funding to support DEIJ work for IAE.
6. **CULTURE CHANGE:** define the culture we want to have that address stress, resistance, and COVID transition. Work towards building that culture.

## Year 1 Priority Goals and Actions:

The following three goals are the organization's DEIJ priorities for the next year. The DEIJ Committee will steward, track, and update these goals. DEIJ goals will be stewarded by small workgroups that include staff and board outside of the DEIJ committee.

The DEIJ Committee will meet MONTHLY on the 2<sup>ND</sup> TUESDAY of each month for 1.5 hours. The DEIJ committee for 2021 includes: Staff & Board Members.

Workgroups will meet MONTHLY for 1.5 hours between DEIJ Committee Meetings to make progress on goals. It is anticipated that the work of the workgroup is completed during the meeting.

1. **DEIJ COMMITTEE Workgroup**
2. **AWARENESS RAISING Workgroup**
3. **DEFINE AND BUILD COMMUNITY Workgroup**
4. **POLICY & IMPLEMENTATION Workgroup**

## Decision Making & Authority

### DEIJ Committee

The DEIJ Committee will work to make decisions by consensus. Fist of Five will be used to test consensus. Decisions will move forward only when at least 5 committee members are present to vote and votes are all 3 or above. A decision will not move forward with any fist votes. If any 1 or 2 votes exist, the group will take time to consider changes that would move those votes to at least a 3.

- Five Fingers = I full and enthusiastically support this decision how it stands. I would consider taking the lead.
- Four Fingers = I support this decision how it stands and will work on it.
- Three Fingers = I am not in total agreement but I feel comfortable enough to let this proposal pass without further discussion.
- Two Fingers = I would like to discuss some minor issues and changes before moving forward.
- One Finger = I have major concerns and do not want to move forward.
- Fist = BLOCK the decision. It cannot move forward as is. A fist triggers review of group norms and further discussion.

The DEIJ Committee will bring it's recommendations to the Management Team when implementing actions that will impact the broader organization.

### Workgroups

Workgroup's purpose is to meet, discuss, and propose actions that further the goal. Workgroups bring ideas to the full DEIJ committee for consideration and can work on implementing actions after approved by the committee.