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Webinar Logistics

Everyone should be connected via Audio Broadcast upon entering the webinar. You do not need to call in & you are automatically muted.

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Please submit any questions you have for the presenter in the Q&A section.

If you are having trouble with any aspect of the broadcast, use the Chat section to message the Host directly.
Sarika Tandon

- Adjunct Faculty Member, Antioch University New England
- Principal, Sarika Tandon Consulting- Race Equity and Environment
- Advisory Board Member, Vermont Coalition for Ethnic and Social Equity in Schools
- Co-Senior Editor, North America Cities’ Field Guide to Conservation in Cities.
RACE AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT: HISTORY AND LEGACIES

What are the historical underpinnings of race and racism and the ‘lack of diversity’ in the US Environmental Movement?

What are the stories that are told in the field of environmental studies?

What are the stories that are not told?

WHY?
4 WINDOWS INTO RACIAL EQUITY & THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE US
WINDOW 1 - RACE AND THE HISTORY OF THE US CONSERVATION MOVEMENT

Image credit: https://www.ross-macdonald.com/fathers-of-conservation
CELEBRATED US CONSERVATION LEADERS

JOHN MUIR
1838-1914

THEODORE ROOSEVELT
1858-1919

MADISON GRANT
1865-1937

Renowned conservationist, helped to found Save the Redwoods and the Bronx Zoo, considered the father of wildlife management
ATTITUDES ABOUT RACE

JOHN MUIR
1838-1914

THEODORE ROOSEVELT
1858-1919

MADISON GRANT
1865-1937

Interpersonal racism, disdain

Institutional and Structural Racism

Strategies for Genocide

For more information read: Environmentalism’s Racist History by Jedidiah Purdy, The New Yorker
GRANT’S VIEWS ON RACE

• White supremacist
• Major proponent of scientific racism
• Influencing exclusionary immigration act of 1924-policy limiting of Eastern and Southern Europeans, Africans, Jews, and baring Asians
• Advocated for anti-miscegenation laws
• Segregating ‘unfavorable’ races in ghettos
• Advocated successfully for eugenics- improving population gene pool- through the forced sterilization of certain groups of people
• Roosevelt praised the work, as did Hitler
‘PURE’ NATURE

Early 20th century conservation ideals overlapped and interconnected with ideas about racial superiority, eugenics and scientific racism.

Image Source: Orion Magazine
The Yosemite Valley was inhabited by Southern and Central Miwok Nation people going back around 4,000 years. After colonialists came west, multiple communities including the Mono Lake Paiute, Mission Indians Chukchansi Yokuts, Western Mono also lived in the valley. The Ahwahneechee lived in the valley.

Source: https://www.nps.gov/yose/learn/historyculture/their-lifeways.htm
In the Yosemite Valley, California state militia troops
• Forcibly removed and displaced Native American communities at least four times between 1851-1969
• Took food stores, burned down villages
• 1851 killed Ahwahneechee people for refusing to sign treaties to be relocated
SEGREGATION IN CONSERVATION SPACES

In 1936, the park board established racially segregated beaches and facilities at Miller Park. Whites had exclusive use of the Lake's Negro Beach and Cleaver Waters, while the "colored" beach was located in the park's smaller section and was open to African American visitors, as one black resident later described it.

This segregation arrangement did not go unchallenged. Local officials argued that they had the right to provide separate facilities and services. However, the NAACP, led by the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., organized protests and campaigns to end segregation in public facilities. In 1967, Miller Park's segregated beaches were closed in response to public pressure.

The park is now open to all, and the signs commemorating its history serve as a reminder of the struggle for equality and justice.
"Four aspects of race relations that had considerable impact on the transformation of the environment:

- appropriation of Native American land and resources
- the enslavement of blacks
- the seizure of Latino territories
- the containment of Asians"

-Dorceta E. Taylor, The Rise of the American Conservation Movement

Conservation spaces in the US were intended for the benefit of privileged whites and not for the benefit of people of color or the poor.
Threats of physical violence for communities of color

- Possibility of encountering hostile white people
- Displacement
- Sexual assault/violence
- Lynching and other fatal forms of racial terror/torture

“I…highlight the limitations of an environmental narrative that does not consider the historical lineage of pain and prejudice experienced by African Americans…”

Dr. Carolyn Finney

(And indigenous communities, and other communities of color)
National Park Visitors More White Than U.S.

A survey of national park visitors in 2008-2009 found that park visitors are disproportionately white and non-Hispanic.

- **White, non-Hispanic:**
  - National Park visitors: 78%
  - U.S. population: 63.7%

- **Hispanic, any race:**
  - National Park visitors: 9%
  - U.S. population: 15.3%

- **Black:**
  - National Park visitors: 7%
  - U.S. population: 12.6%

- **Asian:**
  - National Park visitors: 3%
  - U.S. population: 4.8%

- **American Indian or Alaskan:**
  - National Park visitors: 1%
  - U.S. population: 0.9%

Notes

The survey excludes some racial and ethnic categories with a small number of respondents, such as respondents who identified with more than one race, so numbers do not total 100 percent.

Source: National Park Service survey conducted by phone of 4,103 adults from April 2008 to March 2009, 2010 U.S. Census

Credit: Katie Park/NPR
AND THE MAINSTREAM MOVEMENT DOESN’T TELL ALL STORIES

Harriet Tubman
WINDOW 2- RACE AND DIFFERENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Environmental Racism Is Nothing New

Race is the most significant predictor of a person living near contaminated air, water, or soil.

- 56% of the population near toxic waste sites are people of color.
- Have seen 95% of their claims against polluters denied by the EPA.
- Have 38% higher nitrogen dioxide exposure.
- Are 2x more likely to live without potable water and modern sanitation.

Image Credit: (Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn / The Nation. Shutterstock images from Lorelyn Medina, Agusto Cabral). Source Credit: The Nation
RACE AND PARTICULATE MATTER EXPOSURE

“Results at national, state, and county scales all indicate that non-Whites tend to be burdened disproportionately to Whites”

“disparities for blacks are more pronounced than are disparities on the basis of poverty status”

Echoes a pattern demonstrated in the landmark study Toxic Wastes and Race that demonstrated a direct correlation between the placement of toxic waste facilities and communities of poverty and/or color.

Disparities in Distribution of Particulate Matter Emission Sources by Race and Ethnicity - 2018 EPA Study
WINDOW 3: RACE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN
A poll from the International Joint Commission showed differences between indigenous and non-indigenous perceptions of threat to the Great lakes. 4,000 people were polled, 300 were Native American or other indigenous groups.

Percentage of respondents answering "Don't know"

Are you concerned with health and water quality of the Great Lakes?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage answering &quot;Don't know&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Indigenous</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where does your drinking water come from?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage answering &quot;Don't know&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Indigenous</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: The Great Lakes Water Quality Board, IJC.org

I am concerned with the health of the Great Lakes region

Indigenous

Non-Indigenous

Percentage of respondents willing to take political action (protest, lobby, vote) to protect the Great Lakes

Don't know

Data source: The Great Lakes Water Quality Board, IJC.org
71 percent of Asian Americans consider themselves environmentalists—which is about 30 points higher than the national average—according to the series of National Asian American Surveys (NAAS)—a landmark effort to collect data about the policy views of Asian Americans, started in 2008 and led by political scientists, Karthick Ramakrishnan, UC Riverside, and Taeku Lee, UC Berkeley.
LATINOS

“Latinos are much more engaged with the issue of global warming than are non-Latinos….

Are more convinced global warming is happening and human-caused,

Are more worried about it, perceive greater risks,

Are more supportive of climate change policies…”

Source: Yale Center for Climate Change Communication- Climate Change in the Latino Mind
AFRICAN AMERICANS

- African Americans express greater desire for action on global warming than adults do nationally
- 3 in five African Americans rate global warming and air pollution as serious problems, 60% of see global warming as an “extremely” or “very serious” problem


On Capitol Hill delivering 10,000 Black Church leaders’ signatures in support of abating climate change- Rev. Jesse Bottoms, Bishop James Walker, Bishop Carroll Baltimore and Rev. Brian K. Brown
WAS ANYONE SURPRISED BY THAT DATA?

“most Americans underestimate just how concerned minorities and lower-income people are about environmental threats…even minorities”

Source: Diverse Segments of the US public underestimates the environmental concerns of minority and low-income Americans, Proceedings of the National Academy of Science
WINDOW 4 - RACE AND DIVERSITY IN ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
THE STATE OF DIVERSITY IN ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Includes data from over 300 environmental organizations including:

• 191 environmental non-profits,
• 74 government environmental agencies
• 28 leading environmental grant making orgs
• Confidential interviews of 21 environmental leaders from diverse backgrounds and experience.
SEVERE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF PEOPLE OF COLOR

Staff Diversity in Environmental Organizations

- Ethnic minorities and multi-racial backgrounds comprise about 38% of the US population
- Environmental organizations are made up of less than 16% people of color
- The science and engineering workforce is made up of 29% people of color

https://www.diversegreen.org/the-challenge/
# THE GREEN CEILING

Data show that people of color are concentrated at the lower ranks of environmental organizations.

Source: https://www.diversegreen.org/the-challenge/
ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS INTERVIEWED FELT THAT:

‘The dominant culture of the organizations is alienating to ethnic minorities, the poor, the LGBTQ community and others outside the mainstream’

Diversity equity and inclusion should be core values that are in the mission statements of these organizations

There are a significant number of talented ethnic minorities that are willing and able to work in environmental organizations but hiring practices can be discriminatory

Taylor, Dorceta. The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations, 2014, p. 9
WHO IS LEADING THE MAINSTREAM ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT?

Collin O’Mara, National Wildlife Federation
Carter Roberts, World Wildlife Fund
Annie Leonard, Greenpeace
Michael Brune, The Sierra Club
Gina McCarthy, Natural Resource Defense Council
Jennifer Morris, The Nature Conservancy
Abigail Dillen, Earth Justice
David Yarnold, Audubon Society
Annie Leonard, Greenpeace
Jamie Rappaport, Defenders of Wildlife
Fred Krupp, Environmental Defense Fund
WHO IS LEADING THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT?

Peggy Shepard - WEACT for Environmental Justice
Winona LaDuke, Honor the Earth
Kim Wasserman-Nieto - Little Village Environmental Justice Organization
Miya Yoshitani - Asian Pacific Environmental Network

Jacqui Patterson, NAACP

Dwaign Tyndal, Alternatives for Community and the Environment
Tom Goldtooth, Indigenous Environmental Network

Lois Gibbs, Center for Health Environment & Justice
Elizabeth Yeampierre - UPROSE - Climate Justice Alliance
Environmental Grantmakers Association data show that out of over $6.8 billion spent by U.S. foundations on environmental giving 2007–2013, only $85 million (12.5%) was dedicated to the Health & Justice category, which included the subcategories of environmental justice, toxics, environmental health, and indigenous populations/communities.

This was the Environmental Grantmakers Association’s smallest funding category.

Tracking the Field: Analyzing Trends in Environmental Grantmaking, Volume 5 Summary, Canfield, Henderson, Li 2015
FIGURE 1. EGA MEMBERS’ GRANTMAKING BY PRIMARY ISSUE AREA, 2009–2015

A SUMMARY FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTMAKERS ASSOCIATION’S

TRACKING THE FIELD: VOLUME 6
ANALYZING TRENDS IN ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTMAKING
“We essentially have a racially segregated environmental movement, we’re too polite to say that. Instead, we say we have an environmental justice movement and a mainstream movement.”

~Van Jones, co-founder of the nonprofit Rebuild the Dream and a former adviser on green jobs to the Obama administration. The Washington Post March 2013
Racism/white supremacy is part of the foundation of the US conservation movement, and it’s legacy is alive today.
ACKNOWLEDGING THE LEGACY

Essential Questions Revisited-

What are the historical underpinnings of race and racism and the ‘lack of diversity’ in the US Environmental Movement?

What are the stories that are told in the field of environmental studies and environmental education?

What are the stories that are not told?

Why?
A CALL FOR RECKONING & RECONCILIATION
THANK YOU

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Questions?
Join us as we launch a new webinar series that will present activists and scholars leading solutions to environmental problems through advocacy.

Environmental Advocacy Webinar Series

The Path to Environmental Justice is Local
Wed., June 10, 2020 – 12:00-1:00 PM

Presenter: Elizabeth Yeampierre
Executive Director of UPROSE, Brooklyn’s oldest Puerto Rican community-based organization.

When Kids Fight for Environmental Justice, Words Have Power
Thursday, June 11, 2020 – 12:00-1:00 PM ET

Presenter: Jaysa Hunter-Mellers’ dynamic speeches at rallies and her testimony at City Hall helped shut down the coal-fired power plant that was causing her asthma.

Her story is told in the short film, “Words Have Power”

Registration open for both webinars at www.communityresilience-center.org/environmental-advocacy-webinar-series/