



Join Us in This Walk Through
the World Together

In 2015 Sierra Club President Aaron Mair invited our staff and supporters to “join him on this walk through the world together” after our Board of Directors adopted our first multi-year organizational plan, designed to transform the Sierra Club into a more equitable, just and inclusive organization.

OUR VISION

The Sierra Club’s mission statement says we will “enlist humanity” to “protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment.” Environmental activist Gail Swanson put it best when she said, “You can’t enlist all of humanity if you only speak to half the population.” In order to achieve our mission, we must transform ourselves from within.

On the other side of this transformation Sierra Club will be a thriving, healthy organization that attracts, retains and celebrates people from all walks of life. An organization where our growing volunteer base reflects the lived experiences and unique perspectives of every community in which we work, making ourselves a living reflection of the communities we live in and love.

A community of members and supporters who share our vision for the organization and are willing to join us on our path of growth and learning. A place where staff members feel empowered and supported by their managers, and have strong relationships across departments that enable new and creative approaches. A place where staff and volunteers can boldly bring their whole selves and identities with them every day and feel valued for doing so. A place that welcomes newcomers and empowers people to positively shape our organizational culture.



This organization will be a place where no one feels like an outsider; where everyone in our community feels like an ally working for global change as part of a team of people who value equity, justice and democracy. This will be a place where every volunteer, staff member and leader feels a deep personal commitment and responsibility for breaking down inequities, building up justice, learning from the experiences of others and creating welcoming spaces for everyone to become involved. This will be a community made up of people who are empowered to draw on their personal backgrounds and unique experiences to make our organization more inclusive. This Sierra Club will focus on working harmoniously together with partners and communities to lift up successes — not on a single organization’s contributions to a particular goal.

Through this internal transformation process, we will become an organization that has close partnerships — built on mutual trust, accountability and goals — with grassroots and community-led organizations across the globe, working to achieve equitable and just outcomes together.

GOALS TO HELP MAKE OUR VISION A REALITY

The Sierra Club is looking ahead to a future where our organization is more just, more equitable and more inclusive. We will advance three long-term organizational goals in order to make our vision a reality:

- 1. Organizational Culture and Inclusion:** Sierra Club seeks to create and foster an inclusive organizational and workplace culture — a culture that grows, nurtures and retains diverse, engaged teams of staff and volunteers. Sierra Club also seeks to become an organization that is reported as being a welcoming and inclusive place to practice allyship, work, volunteer and enjoy the planet.
- 2. Ongoing Education, Learning, Training, and Skills Development:** The process of developing competency in applying our values and principles of equity, justice and inclusion is an ongoing, welcoming learning cycle across all organizational work. Staff and volunteers consistently develop and apply these competencies to how we engage and operate.
- 3. Foundation of Justice and Equity:** Our programmatic outcomes reflect our commitment to justice and equity. Leadership development and strategic partnerships are core strategies for long-term, sustained success in building Sierra Club and the movement.

THE PRINCIPLES GUIDING OUR JOURNEY

This journey won't be easy, but we know where we're headed, and we have guiding principles to light the way, as well as incredible people to travel alongside.

The three key principles that will guide us on our journey are equity, justice and inclusion. By keeping our focus on these three principles, we will create an organizational culture that values people just as much as processes and outcomes. It is the responsibility of every member of the Sierra Club community, from our volunteer leaders to our Board of Directors, to integrate these key principles into every aspect of our daily work.

This work, at its heart, is all about people. By treating people equitably, we can show that we value them. By centering justice for people in all our efforts, we can ensure that we are building strong partnerships and goals that transcend individual issues or campaigns. By creating a culture that is inclusive of people from all walks of life, we can benefit from the wealth of creativity and insight that is lost when only certain perspectives are at the table.

Our movement is stronger and healthier when we put people first. All people, at the Sierra Club and elsewhere, deserve equity, justice and the feeling of being included.

EQUITY: Equity transcends fairness, creating an environment that ensures equal access and opportunity for everyone - especially those who have suffered the most from pollution, environmental degradation and systemic oppression. In practice, equity means that we are breaking down barriers and addressing imbalances that prevent all people from enjoying the same privileges and opportunities, whether staff, volunteer, or those that we work alongside. It means sharing power, influence, resources, and a commitment to the eradication of all forms of social oppression.

JUSTICE: A commitment to justice means doing what is just, even when it isn't easy. A just world is one where all people are treated with dignity and respect, have their basic human needs met, and have the freedom and self-determination to make choices for themselves without fear of persecution, discrimination or violence. Our commitment to justice means that we are creating goals for ourselves that are based on collective thinking and collaboration with those who share our values. Together we are working actively every day to make that just world a reality, by examining the impacts and outcomes of our work through a justice lens.

INCLUSION: True inclusion means that we don't just accept people for who they are - we embrace and celebrate each person because of who they are. By treating each person touched by our organization with compassion and kindness, we will create a community that draws people in and invites them to stay — a community where everyone feels a sense of belonging. Inclusion is the feeling someone experiences when they are seen and valued as their full self.



JEMEZ PRINCIPLES

As part of our DEI multi-year plan, Sierra Club has committed to operating according to the [Jemez Principles](#), which have been formally endorsed by our Board of Directors as a set of guidelines designed to help people from different struggles and communities to work together in solidarity. In order to live up to the Jemez Principles, we must examine our own work and relationships with a critical eye, always striving to put justice first.

Jemez Principles:

- Be Inclusive
- Emphasis on Bottom-Up Organizing
- Let People Speak for Themselves
- Work Together In Solidarity and Mutuality
- Build Just Relationships Among Ourselves
- Commitment to Self-Transformation

VALUES THAT BUILD UP EQUITY, JUSTICE AND INCLUSION

We're going further than just naming equity, justice and inclusion as our guiding principles. We are also committed to living out values that build up equity, justice and inclusion in every facet of our work. As people, we all have the ability to convey attitudes of mercy, compassion, love and kindness. We can show and hold respect for others and work to protect or restore the dignity of everyone around us. As people, we know what it means to feel respected and to offer respect. We all know the feelings of humility, patience and accountability that come with learning new things and making personal growth a constant goal. We know the sense of belonging that comes with collaborating and being a part of safe communities. We know the trust that is freely given when fairness and relationship-building are at the center of every discussion. At the end of every day, we know that people are our most precious resource and that the principles of equity, justice and inclusion are more than just an acronym or initiative. These principles are about people and our humanity.

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The essence of our humanity is our ability to empathize with others, to convey warmth, respect, and love. Our collective humanity as an organization is only as great as the sum of our parts. Each of us has a role to play in making these values the framework for how we treat one another and the communities we engage. By embodying these values in our day-to-day lives and interactions, we contribute to our collective humanity as an organization and to our overall happiness and health.

REALIZING AND LIVING OUR VISION: THEORY OF CHANGE

To become a more just, equitable and inclusive organization we will work to:

- 1.** Create a welcoming and inclusive organizational culture for all people
- 2.** Provide continued education and support to help our staff and volunteers build goals and partnerships that value and embrace people from all walks of life
- 3.** Create goals, partnerships, and mutual accountability at every level of our organization that reflect our commitment to equity and justice

There are lots of different steps along this journey we're taking. We'll never be done learning, or growing. But all begins with the hard work of living our values - of learning to treat one another with respect, kindness, love and humility. By doing so, we will create an organizational culture that is welcoming and inclusive for all people. This inclusive culture, informed by training and ongoing support, will naturally lead to radically different goals and partnerships, ensuring that our work at every level is a true reflection of our commitment to equity and justice.

This is a challenge that will take all of us to achieve. This work is the responsibility of everyone at the Sierra Club, from the board members who committed us to this transformation, to the volunteer leaders who are often the first point of contact for new members. Every staff person and volunteer leader at Sierra Club has access to learning resources, to help us grow and advance our own personal journey toward equity, justice and inclusion. We can begin by taking advantage of those resources, and following up on the conversations they inspire.



It is up to each of us to welcome people into the Sierra Club, to celebrate each other's personal identities and to treat each other and our partners as valued individuals. Some of us work in coalition with partner groups, or directly with volunteers, with tools like the Jemez Principles to help guide our work. Some of us have internal-facing roles, where opportunities to put our principles and values into practice aren't quite as obvious. But we can all look for ways to make our workplace a more inclusive and welcoming environment by treating the people we work alongside with dignity and compassion.

All members of the Sierra Club community, from local volunteer leaders to our national staff, are invited to study, understand, and embrace these principles. When our Board of Directors prioritized this commitment to transform our organization, they charged everyone at the Sierra Club with a responsibility to make these goals a reality in our everyday work.

By living up to these values every day we will become an organization that is stronger, healthier and better able to realize our vision. By working together to create an equitable, just and inclusive environment, we will build a Sierra Club that welcomes, attracts and values the contributions of all people.

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