

The Meaning of Juneteenth

Juneteenth, a celebration of Black resilience and Black liberation, centers Black people's unique contribution to the struggle for justice and equity in the United States—a struggle that persists today.

One year ago, The Sierra Club marked the occasion by announcing its full support for [reparations for Black people](#), affirming that it is impossible to create a healthy, safe, and sustainable planet without acknowledging and materially addressing the past and present economic, cultural, psychological and spiritual impacts of racism.

As the climate crisis continues to disproportionately harm Black communities, it is up to us to build an intersectional climate justice movement that ensures a habitable planet for all people. We cannot create that movement without demanding reparations for Black people -- a community that is burdened with deep trauma stemming from a legacy of colonialism, genocide, land theft, enslavement, racial terror, racial capitalism, structural discrimination, and exclusion.



This year, Juneteenth, a day of celebration, was also a reminder that we must confront systemic racism directly, in all spaces and at all times, so that we can collectively restore the right of all people to clean air, clean water, and a sustainable, healthy climate. Polluting and extractive industries are only able to exist because they can offload the burden of their impacts onto people of color, perceived as disposable. Therefore, Black liberation is key to solving the global climate crisis.



We are calling for racial justice in the environmental movement because our people, communities and planet can no longer tolerate idle silence.

Chapter Chair Carole Mintzer on duty at the NAACP's Juneteenth celebration in SLO's Mission Plaza. Photo by Gianna Patchen.