

PIVOTING TO PRINCIPLED PRACTICE

worksheet

How can you personally apply the Jemez Principles to make a change to your practices, or pivot from the left column to the right column? What can your organization do?

Implementing the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing

In the worksheet below, you will find each of the Jemez principles followed by a column of practices and examples for implementation on the right side column. On the left side column you will find some common practices and examples that are in direct contradiction with the Jemez Principles. This column represents an amalgamation of practices from Tema Okun and Kenneth Jones' work about *White Supremacy Culture*, with characteristics gathered from years of observation, interviews, and conflict mediation sessions with staff members of large, predominantly white environmental NGO's collected by the authors and reviewers of this piece. Further credits listed below.

“Cultural racism is how the dominant culture is founded upon and then shapes norms, values, beliefs and standards to advantage white people and oppress People of Color. Cultural racism is how the dominant culture defines reality to advantage white people and oppress People of Color. Cultural racism uses cultural differences to overtly and covertly assign value and normality to white people and whiteness in order to rationalize the unequal status and degrading treatment of People and Communities of Color.” - Tema Okun.

These practices and examples continue to prevail across the dominant NGO culture in the United States, which is historically based in, and continues to perpetuate racism, classism, sexism, ableism, heterosexism and adultism. In order to practice the Jemez principles, embracing values such as cooperation, caring and sharing are necessary - we believe that it is possible to shift from our dominant NGO cultures of oppressive practice towards such values, and, in fact, necessary if we wish to be part of building a larger progressive movement.

What are the Jemez Principles?

“On December 6-8, 1996, forty people of color and European-American representatives met in Jemez, New Mexico, for the “Working Group Meeting on Globalization and Trade.” The Jemez meeting was hosted by the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice with the intention of hammering out common understandings between participants from different cultures, politics and organizations.” from the [Jemez Principles](#) for Democratic Organizing. These principles were adopted by the Sierra Club Board of Directors in 2014.

They are often regarded as principles that organizations can implement in their relationships with other organizations only. However these principles can be implemented just as well with internally facing work. For example, the first principle, *Be Inclusive* can be interpreted as being inclusive to marginalized people and organizations in the movement, in addition to creating a culture of inclusivity among staff.

The paragraph after each principle is included **as it was originally written**. The table below each principle was designed for large environmental NGO’s generally, and edited for use for the Sierra Club specifically.

Instructions for Reading

1. Skim the whole packet to identify which of the six principles you want to focus more on.
2. Take time with that principle, starring a section when you have either personally experienced, or know about this practice occurring at the Sierra Club *on either side of the document*.
3. For those sections that have stars on the left, add an idea of one thing that YOU can personally do to help make this pivot.

PRINCIPLE #1 BE INCLUSIVE

If we hope to achieve just societies that include all people in decision-making and assure that all people have an equitable share of the wealth and the work of this world, then we must work to build that kind of inclusiveness into our own movements in order to develop alternative policies and institutions to the treaties policies under neoliberalism. This requires more than tokenism. It cannot be achieved without diversity at the planning table, in staffing, and in coordination. It may delay achievement of other important goals, it will require discussion, hard work, patience, and advance planning. It may involve conflict, but through this conflict, we can learn better ways of working together. It's about building alternative institutions, movement building, and not compromising in order to be accepted into the anti-globalization club.

Practices in Dominant NGO Culture	Changes you can make	Principled Practice
BEING EXCLUSIVE	PIVOT	BEING INCLUSIVE
<p>Tokenism Hiring, promoting, inviting to speak or partnering with people and groups whose voice is not genuinely treated with respect, but whose presence provides legitimacy or “cover” for the person who has the actual power and is making the invitation. Example: Inviting an Indigenous community leader to say an opening prayer/bless an event but not inviting them to share their movement vision, political analyses, or participate in strategy discussion.</p>		<p>Radical inclusion Prioritizing the voices, views and needs of those most marginalized (left out) by dominant culture, including women, LGBTQ people, people of color, Indigenous peoples and other minorities. Inviting speakers and input in accordance with the protocols of their respective communities, and paying for people’s time. Recognizing communities living on the frontlines of environmental and ecological crises often are better informed, authentic in their place-based, historical knowledge of their ecosystems, and further advanced in their analyses of the human-made systems that affect them and the health of their ecosystems.</p>

<p>Individualism Focus is on single charismatic leaders. Working in isolation from each other and in competition with each other and with other organizations. Not being accountable to anyone other than ourselves and our bosses/managers.</p>		<p>Community Working together in collective fashion. Cultivating place-based movements accountable to the communities we live in and where/who we serve. Understanding that fundamental change requires leadership and involvement of the people who are impacted.</p>
<p>Priorities and timelines that perpetuate white supremacy Sense of urgency for funder-driven deliverables overriding community-building or equity work implementation. Driven by production/workplan dates that do not consider the needs of a larger collective or community of practice</p>		<p>Priorities and timelines set for equity and parity Recognizing that privilege allows some people much more time than others, taking steps to ensure that people are provided the space and time to meaningfully engage and respond to matters that are important to address.</p>
<p>Progress defined by bigger, more Focus on quantity over quality; less focus is put on the cost of growth on people, communities and relationships. Media hits and petition signatures are valued more than deep relational ties and volunteer commitments.</p>		<p>Progress is sustainability, equity and justice Cost/benefit analysis includes all costs. Focus is on sustainability, where metrics of justice and equity are critical benchmarks for progress. The quality and depth of interpersonal and organizational relationships and commitments define progress</p>
<p>Superiority of the written word If it's not written down, it is not valued. If it's written down in any way other than "Standard American English," it is seen as incorrect. Superiors "correct," edit and change documents to reflect a particular normalized language for that non-profit. Guidelines for research and information are restricted to the citation of book knowledge.</p>		<p>All forms of knowledge and communication are valued and taken seriously Communication is treated simply as communication, stripped of "right" or "wrong," recognizing that an individual's use of language involves culture, power, field, and geography. Editing focuses solely on communicating more clearly to a particular audience and done with permission of the writer. Interviews, spoken word and gathering first-hand experiences are legitimate forms of data.</p>

<p>Official titles and designations outweigh experience Regardless of someone’s broad skill and experience base, they are treated as though they are only knowledgeable about what is in their job description, and their ideas are valued based on organizational rank. When offering to do more or different work, they are told to “stay in their lane.”</p>		<p>Holistic view of people People’s experience and skills are understood to likely expand beyond what they have been hired to do, and opportunities are offered to contribute more of their wisdom, talents, and skills. . People’s diverse life experiences and backgrounds are valued.</p>
<p>Myopic valuation of intelligence / performance Valuing attributes of dominant culture (left column) over attributes of principled inclusive practice (right column). Verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence treated as superior to other types of intelligence.</p>		<p>Broad appreciation of differences Valuing attributes of principled, inclusive practice (right column). Including niches for work that need musical-rhythmic, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic intelligences.</p>

PRINCIPLE #2 EMPHASIZE BOTTOM-UP ORGANIZING

To succeed, it is important to reach out into new constituencies, and to reach into all levels of leadership and membership bases of the organizations that are already involved in our networks. We must be continually building and strengthening a base which provides our credibility, strategies, mobilizations, leadership development, and the energy for the work we must do daily.

TOP-DOWN	PIVOT	BOTTOM-UP
<p>Lack of transparency and accountability No consultation or transparency in decision-making. No feedback or input solicited.</p>		<p>Transparency and accountability Decision-making and other organizational processes are clear, open for input by affected parties and responsive. Feedback is regularly requested, collected and utilized.</p>
<p>Talking only to people who are “like us” Elitism in day to day interactions, often based on race, class, gender norms and organizational positions.</p>		<p>Fostering camaraderie with people who are different from you Making efforts to bridge existing relational gaps through authentic interactions across traditional divides. Building trust individually and collectively.</p>
<p>Following the leadership of those who hold the most power Entrusting strategic thinking, goal setting, decision-making, storytelling, etc. only to those who are in the highest positions of power - regardless of whether they possess first-hand experience of the problems they are trying to solve.</p>		<p>Following the leadership and organizational culture of front line communities. Understanding that those most impacted by a particular issue (historically, systemically, currently) have the expertise, strategy and long-term commitment necessary to win. Asking what support looks like, and doing that.</p>

<p>Paternalism Taking over colleagues' work, or partners' campaigns. Setting the agenda and facilitating meetings for others with less institutional power. Playing the role of the savior, taking credit for helping/saving the "victim." Assuming we know what is best for others.</p>		<p>Partnership Leadership of colleagues, partner groups and frontline communities is respected. Grassroots and community partners are consulted on press releases, media quotes and other joint communications. Relationships built on trust and mutual solidarity. Ensuring that acts of solidarity truly serve the interest of those we are acting in solidarity with.</p>

PRINCIPLE #3 LET PEOPLE SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

We must be sure that relevant voices of people directly affected are heard. Ways must be provided for spokespersons to represent and be responsible to the affected constituencies. It is important for organizations to clarify their roles, who they represent, and to assure accountability within our structures.

SPEAKING FOR OTHERS	PIVOT	PEOPLE SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES
<p>False representation Telling or interpreting the stories of directly impacted people through websites, art, communications, and media, without their informed consent. Assuming a spokesperson can represent a group of people simply because they share characteristics of that group.</p>		<p>Authentic representation People directly affected by an issue are heard. Support is offered to legitimate spokespersons to represent their own constituencies. Organizations and movement formations (alliances, networks, coalitions) are invited to delegate their own spokespeople.</p>

<p>Competing for Personal Gain Claiming credit for achievements without acknowledging other team members. Claiming the victories of others, taking full credit for wins. Coopting local organizing efforts or the work of other staff. Not giving credit to key allies when talking to funders, donors or the press. Putting forward/nominating one's own organization for a public award. Seeking promotion without supporting advancement of others.</p>		<p>Collaboration for Collective Benefit Acknowledging the importance and roles of others, allies, partners, and colleagues in other departments. Taking time to build relationships based on trust. Focus is on "building a bigger pie" instead of fighting over a slice. Mutual support and promotion of each other's campaigns and issues. Nominating allies for prestigious awards.</p>
<p>Participating in Spaces Where Others Do Not have Equitable Access Speaking at strategy meetings, conferences, media events, funder briefings where local groups, frontline community leaders and grassroots experts have been excluded or are unable to afford the cost of participation.</p>		<p>Creating Space for Allied Voices Supporting allies to attend and speak at events where they presently do not have access, especially where their voices are central to the issue.</p>

PRINCIPLE #4 WORK TOGETHER IN SOLIDARITY & MUTUALITY

Groups working on similar issues with compatible visions should consciously act in solidarity and mutuality while supporting each other's work. In the long run, a more significant step is to incorporate the goals and values of other groups with your own work, in order to build strong relationships. For instance, in the long-term, it is more important that labor unions and community economic development projects include the issue of environmental sustainability in their own strategies, rather than just lending support to environmental organizations. Communications, strategies and resource sharing is critical in order to help us see our connections and build on these.

WORKING IN SILOS / FOR SELF	PIVOT	WORKING TOGETHER
Transactional Goals Transactional deliverables are prioritized over meaningful engagement. Quantifiable objectives over qualitative goals. Pressure to achieve numbers in short timeframes. Metrics of success based on narrow bandwidth of parameters.		Transformational Goals Working towards meaningful engagement with depth and quality, prioritizing popular grassroots and community goals, in addition to whatever deliverables a foundation is asking for. The timeline for deliverables Includes enough time for quality. Success is measured across multiple facets and criteria of progress.

<p>Either/Or Thinking Believing people are racist or not racist, good or bad. Seeing incidents of discrimination as isolated events. Issue specialization that leads to polarizing binary such as “Jobs vs. Environment.” So focused on single-issue problems, we do not have time to consider other possibilities, especially where there are no apparent connections between the symptoms (surface attributes).</p>		<p>Systems Thinking Understanding context and intersectionality. Seeing patterns, holding contradictory thoughts and feelings simultaneously. Seeking to understand issues more holistically from different perspectives, and building on areas of common cause and synergy. Looking at the big picture that is linked to any issue, and seeking the root causes that connect multiple issues. Moving away from false binaries such as “Jobs Vs. Environment” and towards systemic approaches such as “Jobs for the Environment,” or creating an economy that works for people and the planet.</p>
<p>Trade-offs Made for the environment at the expense of social and economic justice. For example, where a land conservation area is designated that violates the territorial jurisdiction of an Indigenous nation.</p>		<p>Solidarity Action Where we take a stand; how we act in support of the causes and concerns of our friends and allies. Also where we refuse to make compromises that harmfully impact our friends and allies.</p>
<p>Myopic View of Nature - separate from Humanity Perpetuating myths that nature and humans are separate - and that humans don't breathe air, drink water or rely on a stable climate, too. Prioritizing the preservation of charismatic megafauna and ancient forests over humans.</p>		<p>Humans as Integral Part of Nature Understanding the interdependence of all social and environmental struggles. Seeing the protection of human health, wellbeing and traditional resource rights as central to protecting the earth and all life forms.</p>

<p>Siloed view of Climate Change Climate change impacts polar bears first and worst; is caused by people driving or using too much electricity; and can be solved by people driving less, changing light bulbs or shutting down individual pollution points.</p>		<p>Systems view of Climate Change Climate change impacts everyone in different ways. Working with all who are impacted by destruction of land, air, water and climate, especially those hit first and hardest by storms, floods and droughts ,and by the “dig, burn, drive, dump” industries causing these events. Slowing the rate of warming requires transforming the institutions, industries and systems that use and support the digging, burning, driving and dumping of greenhouse gases.</p>
<p>Competition Treating one’s own work as more important than that of one’s colleagues. Treating one’s core campaign, program, department’s issues as more important than issues other people are working on. Neglecting the important contributions of key allies and grassroots groups.</p>		<p>Collaboration Valuing the work of colleagues in other departments. Valuing and supporting the work of key allies, especially grassroots, community groups with less privilege and access.</p>
<p>Working with no historical context Operating with the assumption that environmentalism was started by “some nice white guys” and is the domain of the most funded groups.</p>		<p>Recognition of all of our histories Awareness that environmentalism isn’t owned by, nor started by middle class white people. Participation by “Big Greens” in the the broader environmental movement is done with humility.</p>

PRINCIPLE #5 BUILD JUST RELATIONSHIPS AMONG OURSELVES

We need to treat each other with justice and respect, both on an individual and an organizational level, in this country and across borders. Defining and developing “just relationships” is a process that doesn’t happen overnight. It must include clarity about decision-making, sharing strategies, and resource distribution. There are many skills necessary to succeed and we need to determine the ways for those with different skills to coordinate and be accountable to one another.

RELATIONSHIPS BASED ON DOMINATION	PIVOT	RELATIONSHIPS BASED ON JUSTICE & RESPECT
<p>Transactional Relationships Detached “professional” communication for the purpose of completing a transaction. Minimal time is allocated to these transactions.</p>		<p>Transformational Relationships Building relationships over time, internally and externally, that are based on trust, understanding and shared commitments.</p>
<p>Taking relationships for granted Taking people’s time, energy or resources for granted, assuming that everyone is as enthusiastic about your work as you are and wants to volunteer their time and expertise.</p>		<p>Honoring the time and energy of others. Appreciating, recognizing and compensating people’s time, energy or resources of colleagues, volunteers and partners.</p>
<p>Assuming partnership Believing a partnership exists because someone was friendly and seemed interested in partnering. Making assumptions about the leadership structure and protocols when attempting to partner with an organization or community.</p>		<p>Clear, Mutually Agreed upon Partnerships Partnerships established with clear agreements about how you will and won’t work together. Protocols for working together to be decided by specific and appropriate leadership when the partnership is with an organization or community.</p>

<p>Acting with Impunity Rarely soliciting feedback, or if solicited, not providing sufficient time, resources or follow-through with those being asked for input.</p>		<p>Acting with Accountability Formal and informal consultation processes are established with clarity and mutual agreement of the time and labor being asked of those who are willing to provide consultation. Those providing consultation can actually represent the community or organization they represent and are not tokenized. There is recognition that someone's ability to credibly represent their community may shift over time.</p>
<p>Parachuting and co-opting Working in a community as an outsider without following local protocols or establishing relationships of solidarity and accountability. Making decisions in isolation that impact people there. Supporting local activists only when they work under your banner and follow your strategies.</p>		<p>Resourcing and supporting local leadership Resources are provided (without strings) for people to do the work that they want to do, who are accountable to the community they are in.</p>
<p>Over-working as unspoken Norm Encouraging people to work through weekends and into the night (directly or passively by setting up work plans that are unachievable in a 40 hr week). Ignoring how black and brown people have been historically and systemically requested to take on physically taxing work by white bosses.</p>		<p>Self Care/ Community Care Actively encouraging a culture of self-care and community-care in which people care about each other's physical and emotional wellbeing, support time boundaries and are considerate of time zone difficulties, parental needs, personal health issues etc.</p>
<p>Competition Prioritizing one's own fundraising and career goals over others.</p>		<p>Collaboration Supporting others, including colleagues, partner groups and community groups, to gain similar access, resource support and recognition</p>

<p>White mediocrity/Male mediocrity People of color, women and gender non-conforming staff are given extra work and are overly scrutinized, held back from promotion or given unequal performance evaluations while white staff and/or cisgender male staff are given a pass, or promoted.</p>		<p>Fair evaluations and just promotions Promotion decisions take into account unconscious and structural biases. And are based on a broad range of competencies.</p>
<p>Perfectionism Mistakes are seen as personal, reflect badly on the person - the person is seen as inadequate. Little time for learning.</p>		<p>Appreciation Mistakes are valued as opportunities for learning. People express their appreciation for one another.</p>
<p>Skeptical management As new hires slowly learn their job, it is subtly or directly communicated that they “must prove themselves,” setting them up to hide mistakes or face discipline.</p>		<p>Supportive management As new hires slowly learn their job, they are supported, given leeway to make mistakes and to learn from them.</p>
<p>Fear of Open Conflict Right to comfort. Politeness is valued over honesty. White or male fragility goes unchecked. Those who cause discomfort are scapegoated.</p>		<p>Direct and constructive feedback/ Growth and Learning Fostering a safe and supportive work environment where peers can challenge each other’s ideas, call each other in and continuously learn from each other.</p>
<p>Relying on targets of oppression to fix the harm that you helped cause When someone experiences interpersonal or institutional oppression, following norm of complacency and disconnection, denying culpability and focusing burden on the target. Offering support only in hindsight and avoiding addressing what is happening in the moment.</p>		<p>Allyship Continual practice of actively allying with each other based in real relationships and open communication. As white people, asking what support looks like for people of color; as men, asking what support looks like for women; as able-bodied people, asking what support looks like for disabled people, etc.</p>

PRINCIPLE #6 COMMIT TO SELF-TRANSFORMATION

As we change societies, we must change from operating in the mode of individualism to community-centeredness. We must “walk our talk.” We must embody the values that we say we’re struggling for. We must be justice, be peace, and be community.

PAYING “LIP SERVICE”	PIVOT	BEING THE CHANGE
<p>Equity washing Signing on to big lofty values, but not enacting them. Hiring people of color but not supporting a culture shift to retain them. Focusing on inclusion internally while the field work perpetuates inequities.</p>		<p>Being the change we wish to see in the world Focussing on all dimensions of the organization. Aligning the vision and values we express externally, with the internal practices of the organization.</p>
<p>Avoiding Aligned Action Continual research and writing that leads nowhere. Creating multiple reports, groups, and committees that work in isolation and don’t build on each other’s work. Vision, values and goals that no one can remember nor easily refer to in a meeting.</p>		<p>Clarity & Alignment for Action Simple and shared. Vision, values and goals are acted upon.</p>

<p>Defensiveness Nowhere to air grievances. Focus placed on protecting power instead of addressing harms. Naming intention instead of acknowledging impact.</p>		<p>Vulnerability Give and receive feedback non-defensively, have a clear structure to hear and meaningfully address grievances. Skills are supported in being both self-critical and self-loving. Active, courageous listening.</p>
<p>Cultural Arrogance: Imposing cultural habits everywhere Assuming that because your culture is “the norm” it’s fine to impose and prioritise your preferred way of connecting, communicating, handling conflict, setting pace, offering appreciations etc. to everyone around you all of the time.</p>		<p>Cultural Humility An ongoing practice of critical self-reflection and learning that honors different ways of being and doing. Being open to cultural identities, expressions and behaviors that are important within a community or group. The cultural “norm” is to learn about communities, ask about preferences, and avoid making assumptions. Learning how to work with communities in respectful and non-offensive ways.</p>
<p>Feigned Neutrality Belief that inaction and staying quiet when problematic things are happening is better than speaking up and risking a mistake (see perfectionism). Based in an idea that the world is basically just and good, but a few people, in ways unrelated to you, sometimes experience discrimination.</p>		<p>Be Justice: no one can stay neutral on a “moving train” Understanding that the “moving train” we are on is racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, ageist, anti-immigrant, eco-cidal and so on. People actively work to transform oppression in their spheres of influence and transform business as usual by supporting conditions for justice and equity to thrive.</p>

SOURCE

Adapted by Partners for Collaborative Change based on the Jemez Principles, incorporating ideas gathered from years of observation, interviews, and conflict mediation sessions with staff members of both Environmental Justice organizations and large, predominantly white environmental NGO's by the authors and reviewers of this piece. Other sources include notes from the Just Transition Solidarity Summit organized by Jayeesha Dutta, "White Supremacy Culture" by Tema Okun and Kenneth Jones, Love, Race and Liberation, Open Source Leadership, Challenging White Supremacy, Rockwood, and the White Noise Collective.

Tema Okun's partial bibliography: Notes from People's Institute for Survival and Beyond Workshop, Oakland, CA, spring 1999. Notes from Challenging White Supremacy Workshop, San Francisco, CA, spring 1999. Beverly Daniel Tatum, Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? NY: HarperCollins, 1997. Derrick Jensen, A Language Older Than Words, NY: Context Books, 2000. Paul Kivel, Uprooting Racism, PA: New Society Publishers, 1996. Anne Wilson Schaef, Living in Process, NY: Ballantine, 1998. For complete bibliography, see complete notebook for dRworks Dismantling Racism process. dRworks is a group of trainers, educators and organizers working to build strong progressive anti-racist organizations.

IMPLEMENTING PIVOTS

worksheet

1. Circle which Jemez Principles you will work on implementing.

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|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Be Inclusive | 4. Work together in solidarity and mutuality |
| 2. Emphasize bottom-up organizing | 5. Build just relationships among ourselves |
| 3. Let people speak for themselves | 6. Commit to self-transformation |

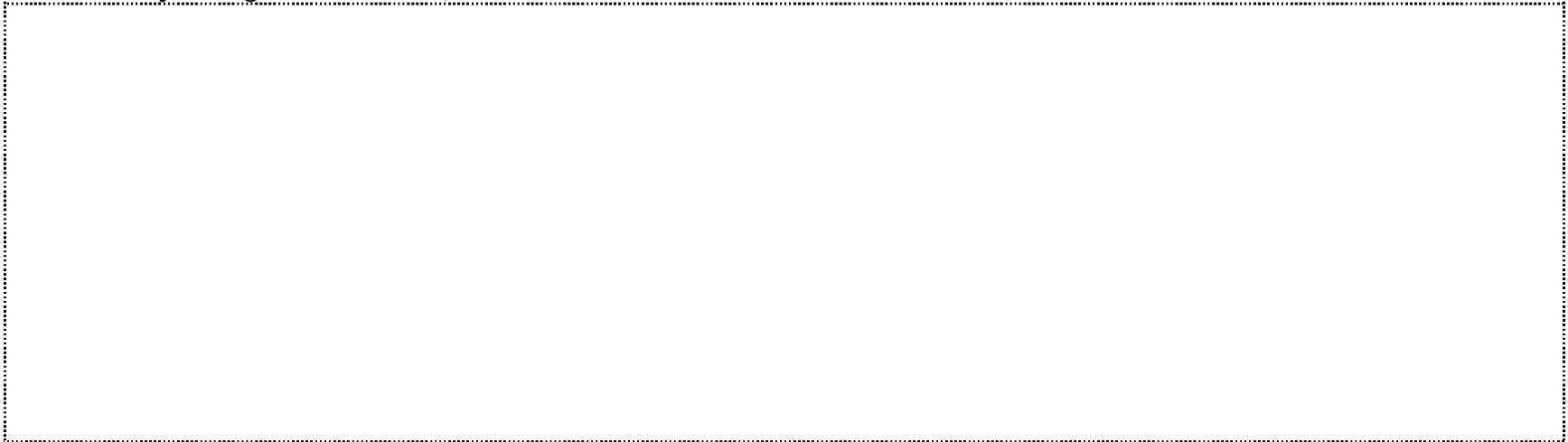
2. Based the conversations today, what ideas do you have for what you can do to help implement the Jemez principles at the Sierra Club?

Individually and in my relationships with others

Within internally facing organizational culture and systems (include potential adjustments for your workplan if you are an internally facing staff member)



With externally facing programs or movement building work (include potential adjustments for your workplan if you are an externally facing staff member)



3. From what you wrote above, pick at least three concrete actions you will take and circle them. *Include a simple action - something you could achieve easily or practice regularly.*

4. List out the most concrete actions below, by when you will complete them, and who you might collaborate with.

Actions	By When (or ongoing)	Collaborators