



# **Racial Equity & the Urban Forest**

# Introductions

*Your name, your affiliation, your tenure on the Commission*

*Your sense of why we're talking about equity in the urban forest*

# Ground Rules

*Stay engaged*

*Speak your truth*

*Experience discomfort*

*Expect & accept non-closure*

**To start off...**

*What is race?*



**A Post-Racial America**

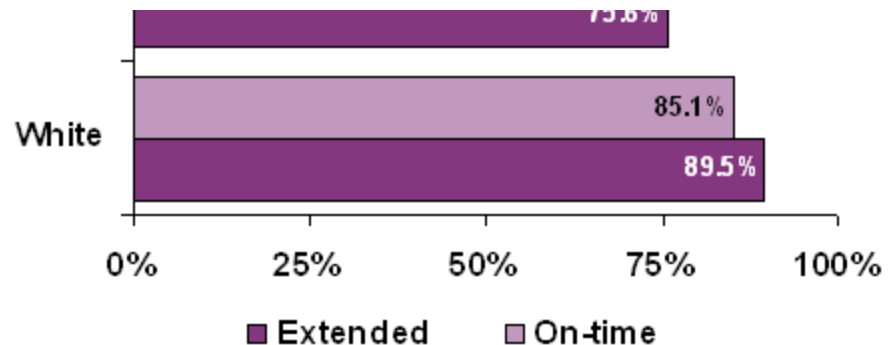
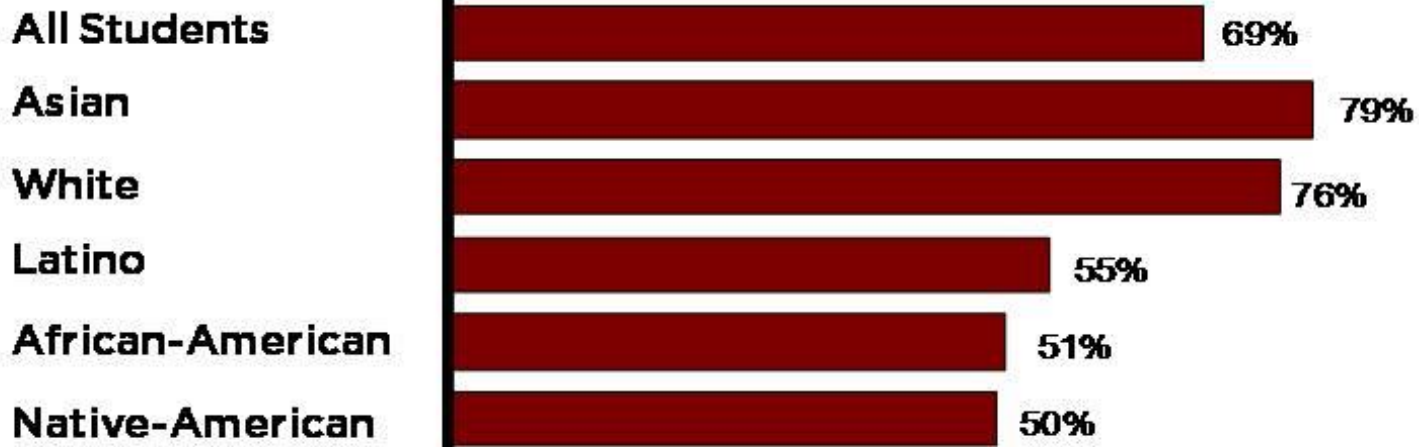
**Big Idea #1:**

*Race matters.*

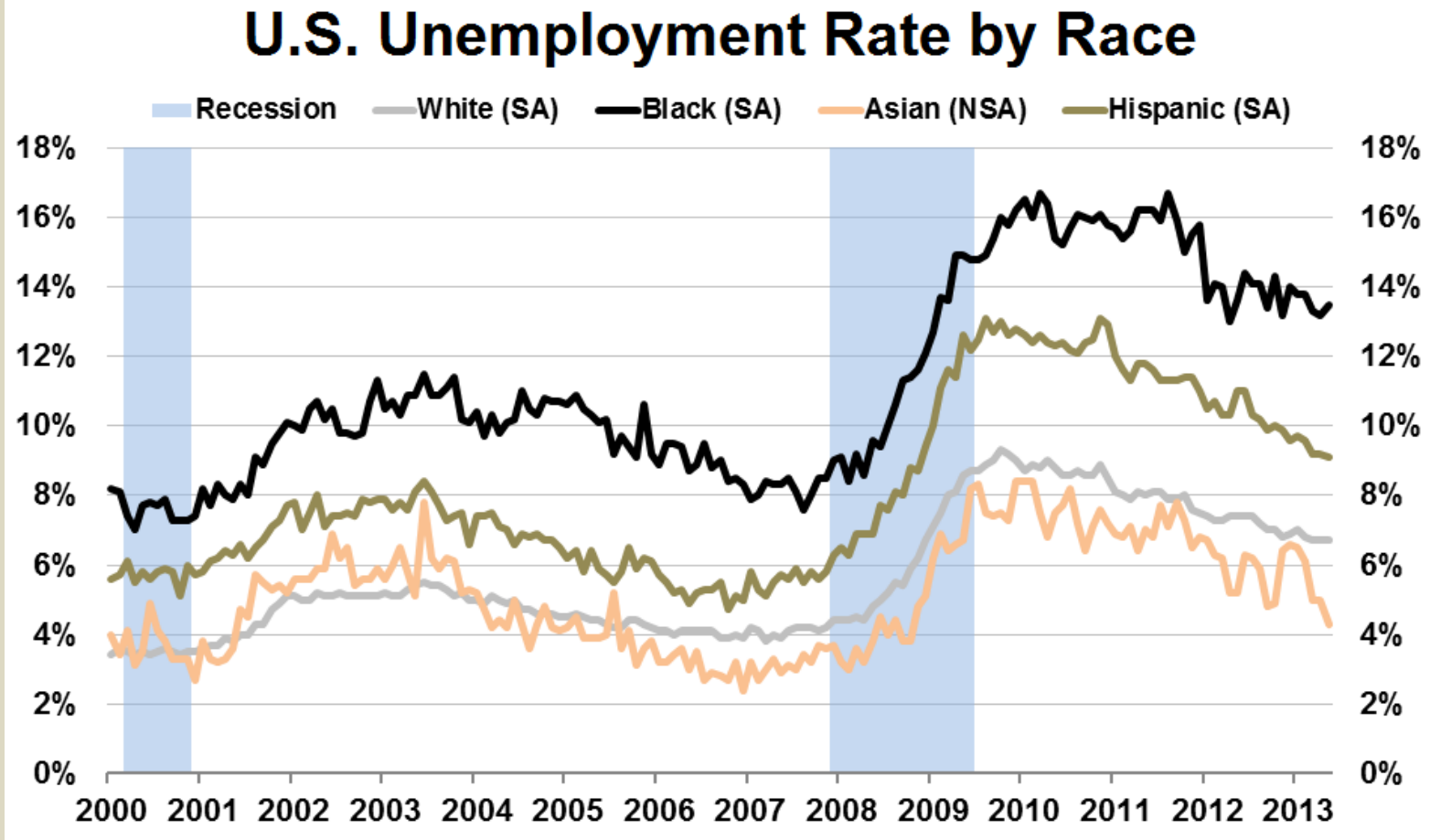
# *...in rates of EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT...*

Graduation rates for King County by race  
(2008-09)

## High School Graduates



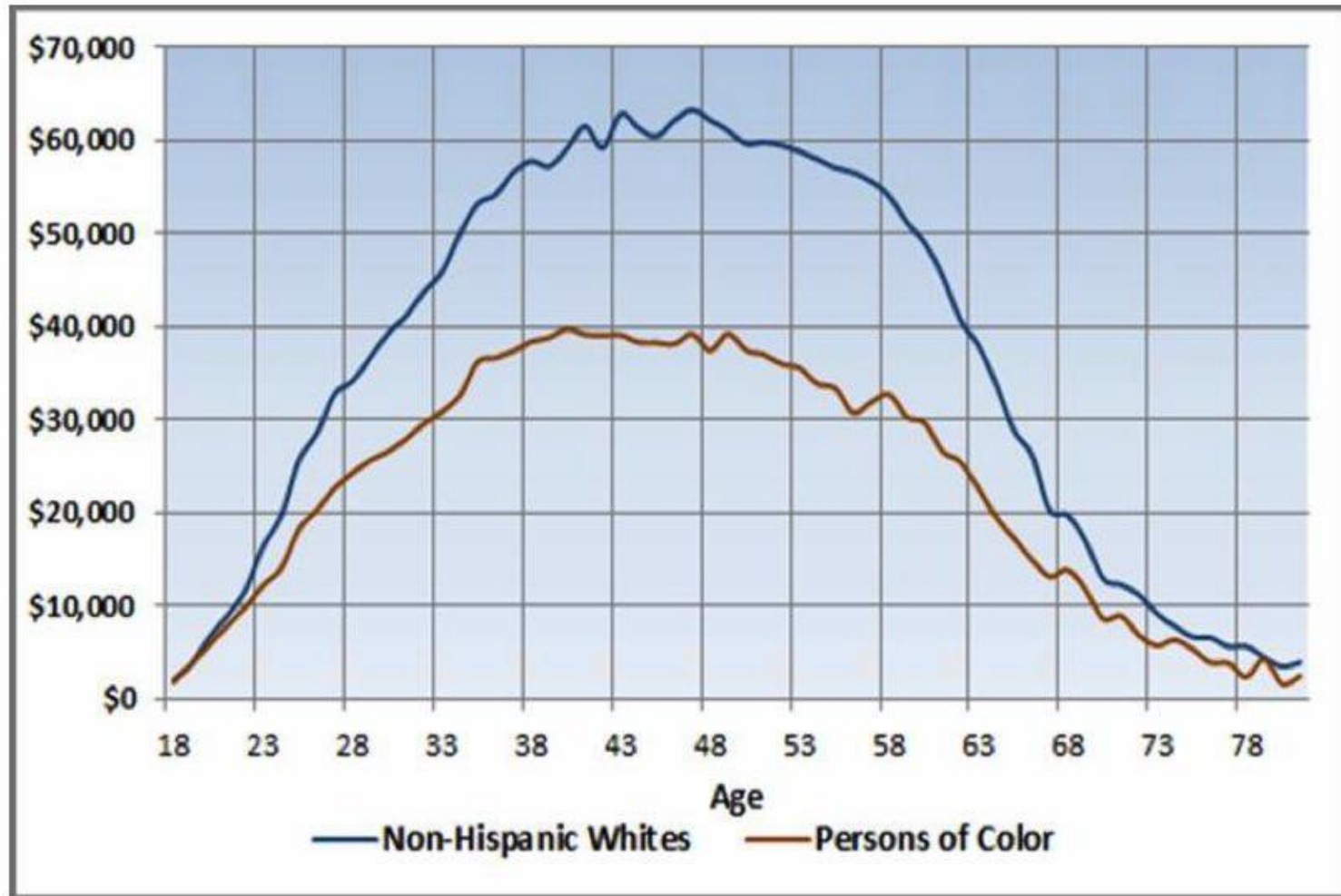
# *...in rates of EMPLOYMENT...*





# *...in INCOME...*

**Figure 1: Earnings per Capita by Age for Males**

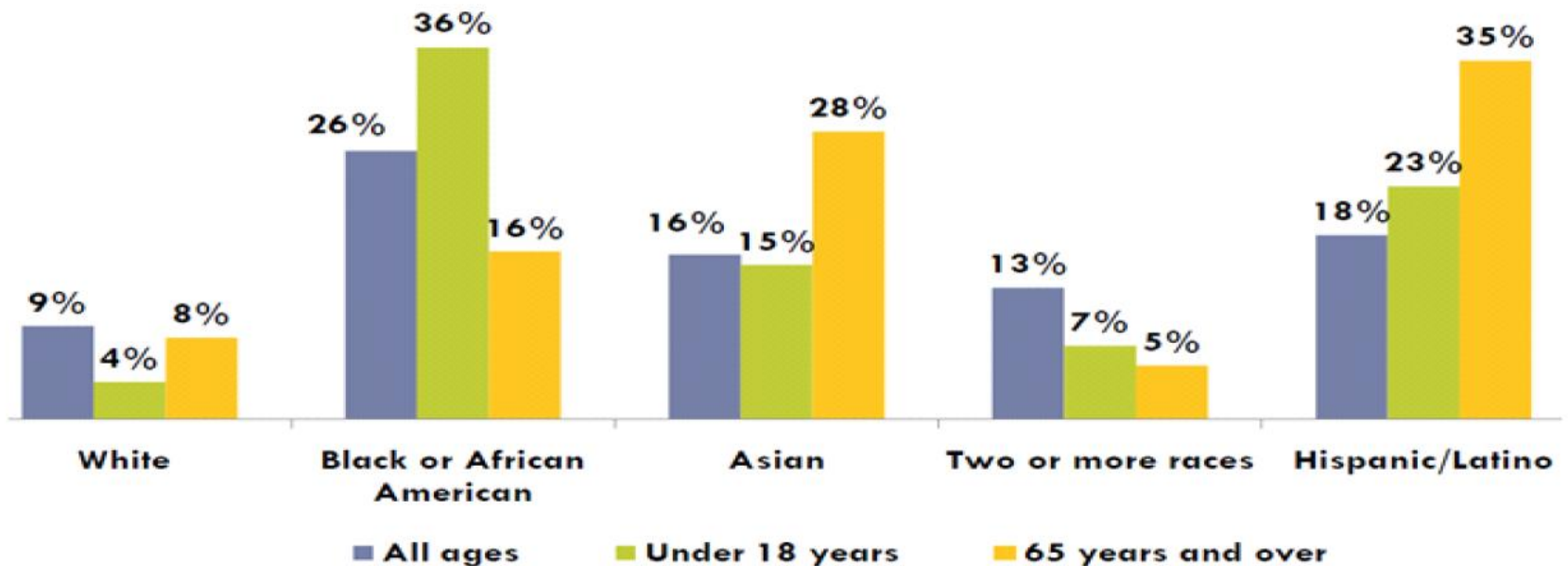


Source: 2011 American Community Survey data.

# *...and in POVERTY.*

## ***Income Disparities:***

### ***Poverty rates for overall population, children and seniors***



Percentage of people living below the federal poverty line.

Source: 2007-09 American Community Survey (ACS). Current data for Native American households is not yet available – we will update this table in 10/11. In 2006 the poverty rate for Native Americans in King County was over 30%.

In the United States, statistically, *race* is the determining factor in these and a variety of other outcome measures...

*(health, wealth, rates of incarceration, etc)*

...and Seattle is not different from this trend.

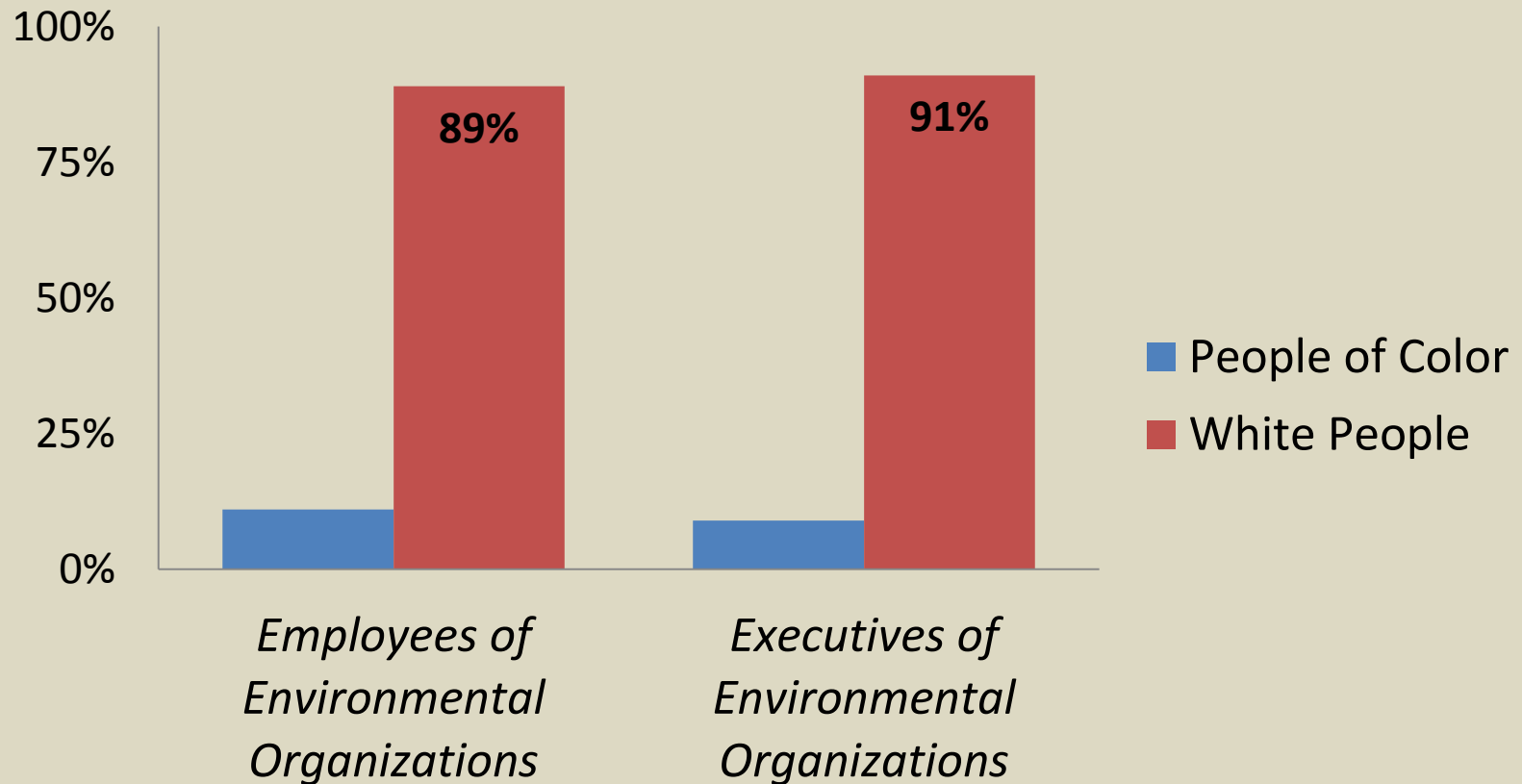


*We'll start  
with a short  
film.*

## Big Idea #2:

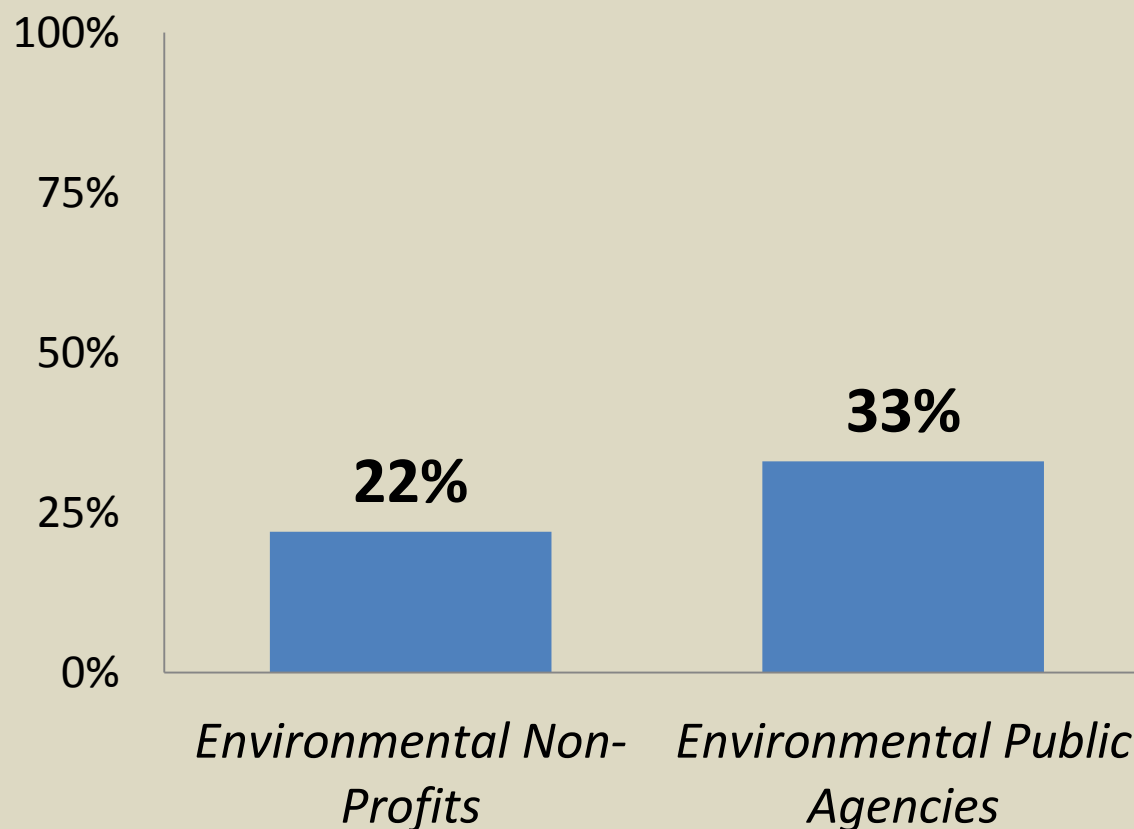
*It's not just the Urban Forest Commission that looks like the world of "The Black Hiker," it is the whole conservation movement.*

# Diversity in Major Environmental Organizations



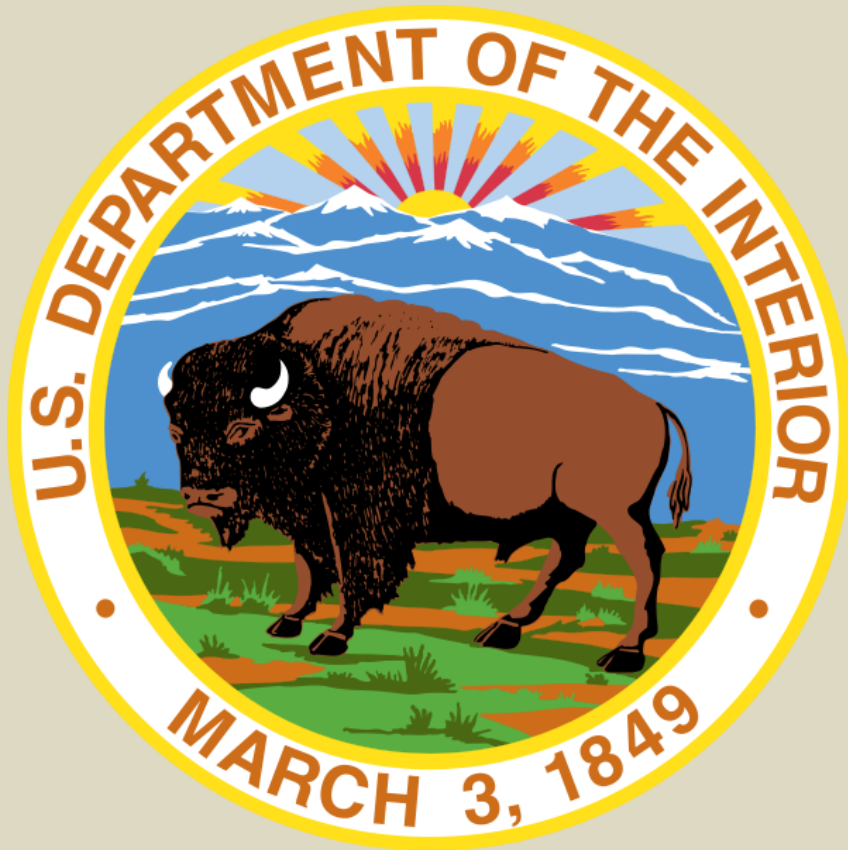
Source: Stanton, Robert. 2002. *Environmental stewardship for the 21st century: opportunities and actions for improving cultural diversity in conservation organizations and programs*. Washington, DC: Natural Resources Council of America.

# Environmental Organizations with *no* People of Color on staff



Source: Stanton, Robert. 2002. *Environmental stewardship for the 21st century: opportunities and actions for improving cultural diversity in conservation organizations and programs*. Washington, DC: Natural Resources Council of America.

**The Federal Agency with the highest percentage of White staff?**





*Why do you  
think this is?*

## **Big Idea #3:**

*In the United States, race has always been a potent driver of how groups of people relate to the natural world.*





# *Pre-Contact Native People in the Northwest*



# ***What did the European Immigrant Experience Look Like?***



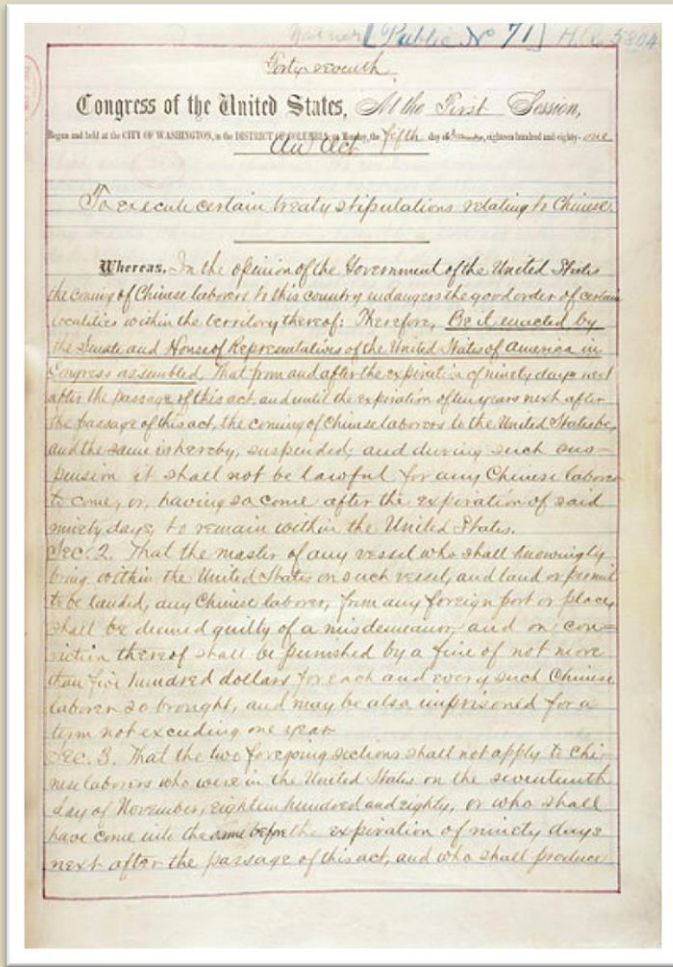


# *What did the African Immigrant Experience Look Like?*



# *What did the Asian Immigrant Experience Look Like?*





**1882:**

**Chinese Exclusion Act barred further Asian immigration**

**1922:**

**In Ozawa vs. United States, the Supreme Court rules that Asian immigrants could not become citizens**





Property of Museum of History & Industry, Seattle

# ***What did the Latino Experience Look Like?***





# Residential Segregation

## Neighborhood restrictive covenants

### **Greenlake neighborhood:**

**“No person or persons of Asiatic, African, or Negro blood, lineage or extraction** shall be permitted to occupy a portion of said property or any building thereon except a domestic servant or servants who may actually and in good faith be employed by white occupants of such premises”

### **Laurelhurst neighborhood:**

**“No person other than one of the White Race** shall ever be permitted to occupy any portion of any lot in said plot or any building at any time thereon, except a domestic servant actually employed by a white occupant of such building”

### **Broadmoor neighborhood:**

“No part of said property hereby conveyed shall ever be used or occupied by any **Hebrew or by any person of the Ethiopian, Malay, or Asiatic race** ...excepting only employees in domestic service...”

### **Queen Ann neighborhood**

“No person or persons of **Asiatic, African or Negro blood, lineage, or extraction** shall be permitted to occupy a portion of said property”

### **Ballard/Sunset Hills neighborhood**

“No part of said property hereby conveyed shall ever be used or occupied by any **Hebrew or by any person of the Ethiopian, Malay or any Asiatic Race.**”

# *Remember, race matters...*

**For 200+ years, race was *the* primary criterion used in the legal code to determine:**

- Who had rights to own land, and who could be dispossessed of it
- Who could be forced to work the land as slaves or quasi-slaves, and who could gain value from that slave labor
- Who could live where they chose, and who could not
- Who could participate in democratic institutions to determine environmental policy, and who could not

## **Big Idea #4:**

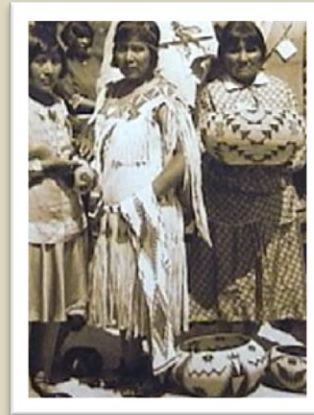
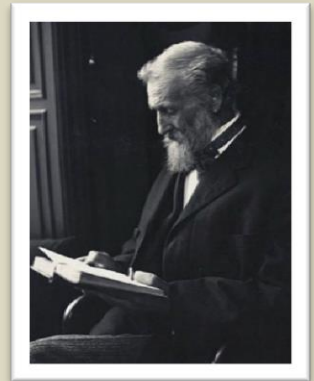
*The environmental movement and the field of conservation emerged from this history, and are not undamaged by it.*

***“...no right place in the landscape...”***



**John Muir**

*Founder of the Sierra Club*

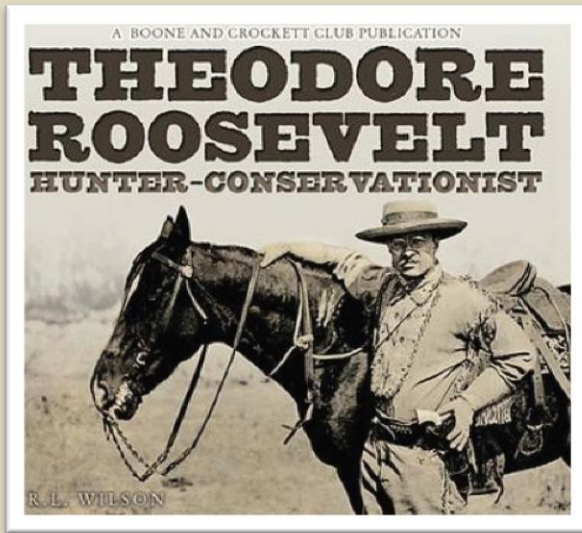


**The Mono Indians**

*Original inhabitants of  
Yosemite Valley, expelled at  
gunpoint in 1872*

**“...mostly ugly, and some of them  
altogether hideous...”**

**“...they seemed to have no right  
place in the landscape, and I was  
glad to see them fading out of sight.”**



**“In its original guise, conservation amounted to regulating hunting and fishing in ways that restricted poor people’s access to nature.**

States mandated the purchase of licenses, prohibited gear favored by people who depended on fish and game for subsistence, and restricted the spaces and times of harvest.

Some measures did protect wildlife, but **their intention and effect was also to reserve the best of nature for the best of people.”**

*-Environmental Historian Matthew Klinge*



***“...setting aside wildlife for the wealthy...”***



# “...to the physical and social margin...”



## The City Beautiful

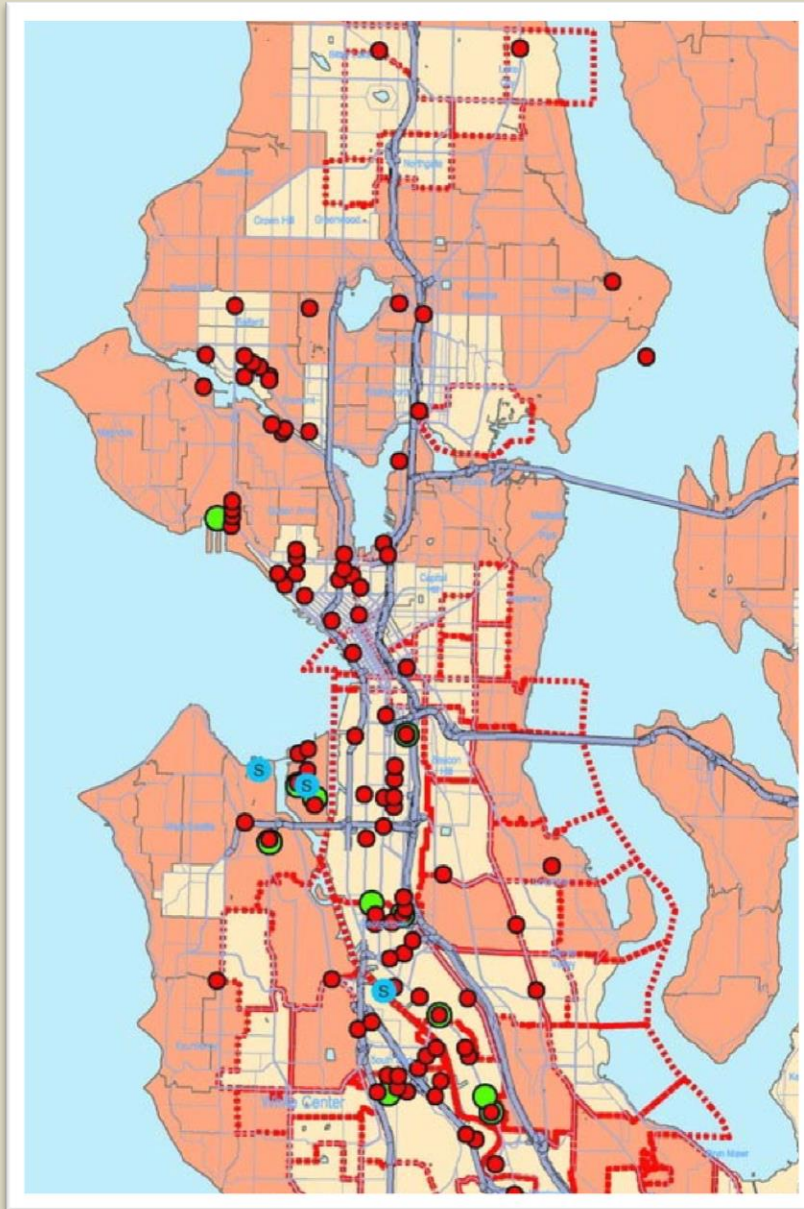
*A design movement that inspired great parks and exclusionary zoning*

“...modern zoning laws and technological systems made cities more habitable by driving noxious industries such as tanneries, slaughterhouses, fish canneries, and foundries **to the physical and social margins.**

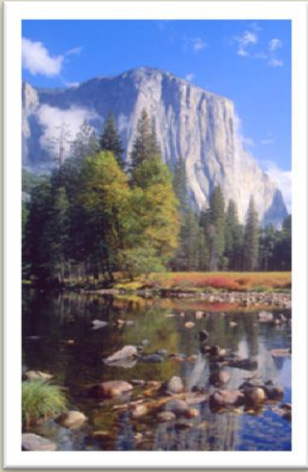
...yet waste, including smelly and noisy businesses, had to go somewhere. **All too often that meant poor and minority neighborhoods.**”  
(Kling)







***Race, Income,  
& Pollution  
in Seattle***



**Preserving  
Landscapes**



**Conserving  
Biodiversity**



**“Beautiful”  
Cities**

***“...the land suffers because, in part, people without power suffer...”***

**Racism and poverty have driven a wedge  
into the environmental movement.**

**1**

*Race still matters.*

*The environmental movement and the field of conservation as a whole lack racial diversity.*

**2**

**3**

*In the United States, race has always been a potent driver of how groups of people relate to the natural world.*

*The environmental movement and the field of conservation emerged from this history, and are not undamaged by it.*

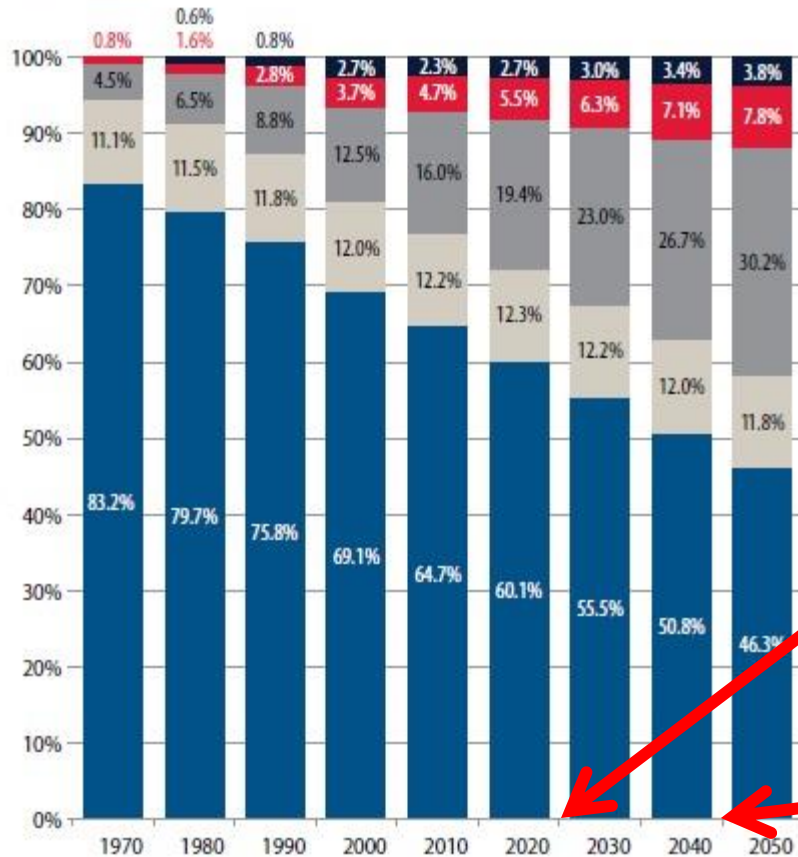
**4**

## **Big Idea #5:**

*Our demographics are changing,  
but our movement has not changed  
along with them.*

# *Our nation is becoming increasingly diverse...*

The racial and ethnic composition of the United States, 1970–2050



**2025**

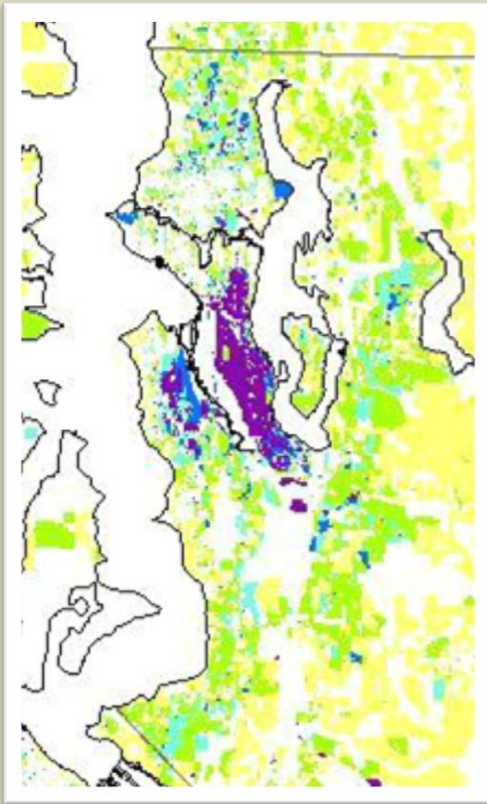
The year that children of color will be the majority of the United States youth population

**2042**

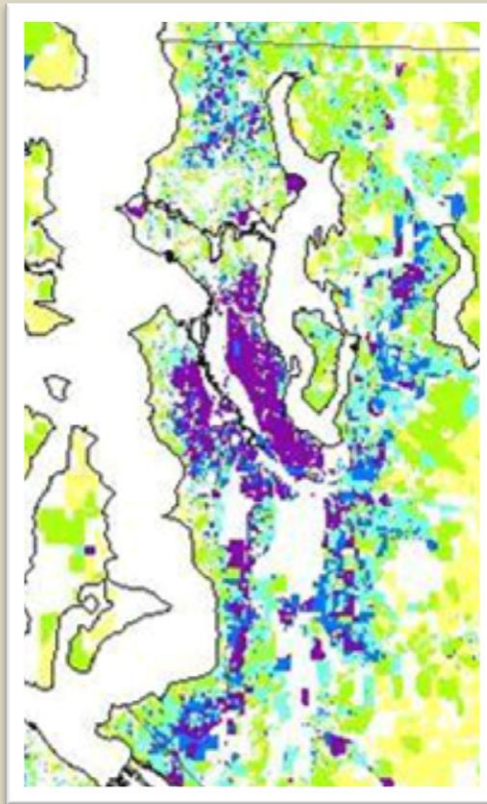
The year that white people are projected to be a minority of the United States population



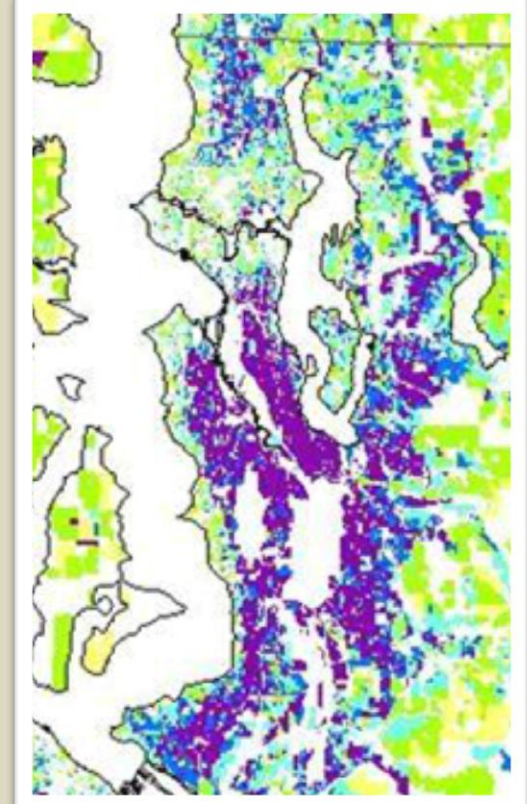
***...and the same is true of our region.***



**1990**



**2000**



**2010**

While Seattle's population grew by 8% over the last decade, its populations of color grew by 13%.

People of color are 32% of Seattle's total population, but 50% of Seattle's children.

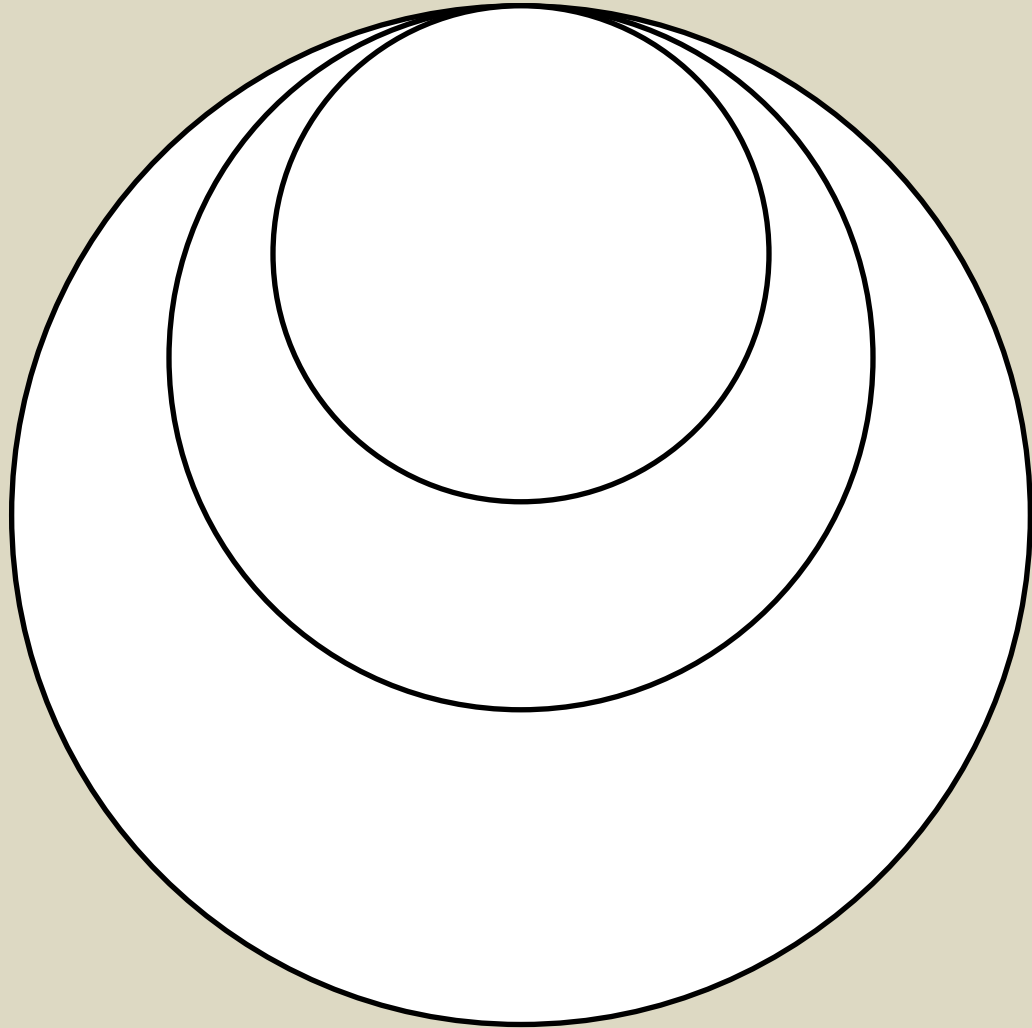
*If the environmental movement does not find a way to enfranchise people of color and low income communities, we will not be relevant in the near future.*

*We are not equitably sharing the benefits of the environment – in terms of ecosystem services, careers, and appreciation.*

# What does this mean for the UFC and for the Urban Forest?

*First your thoughts,  
then mine!*





*Who is in the room?*

*Who are we  
listening to?*

*Are we getting  
to equity in the  
landscape?*

# **Sphere One: *Who is in the room?***

## **Racial diversity on the Commission**

- Is there / should there be a specific goal? A Commission that reflects the community?

## **Don't think of your constraints as an excuse**

## **Recruitment is step one—what about retention?**

- Getting people in the door is one thing—keeping them in the room by identifying and removing cultural barriers is the harder work.

# Resources



*[Center for Diversity and the Environment](#)*

# **Sphere Two: *Who are we listening to?***

## **Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement**

- Even with diverse people in the room, a few folks can't possibility represent the community
- Truly inclusive outreach is difficult and resource-intensive, but it matters
- Learning opportunities—an example from the Parks Legacy Plan

**Are you satisfied with your public engagement around the existing plan?**

**Can you start now to set yourself up well for the next round?**



# Resources



[Inclusive Outreach & Public Engagement Guide](#)

## **Sphere Three: *Are we getting to equity in the landscape?***

**Is there a racial divide in the opportunity of residents to enjoy the benefits of the urban forest?**

- How would we know? Do we measure this? How would we?
- If we discovered there was, what kind of conversations would we have?

# Resources



[\*Racial Equity Toolkit\*](#)

# Environmental Education in the Duwamish River Valley



*Programming based on community need*

*Partnering with Community-Based Organizations*

*“Being There”*

*Accountability to Community*