



Equity & Justice

2020 Strategic Plan

The National Wildlife Federation believes that in order to save wildlife and ourselves, we need to ensure that all Americans have access to clean air and water, safe communities, easy and equitable access to nature, and protection from the ravages of climate change.

These basic needs, equally necessary and urgent for all people, are foundational to bringing the conservation movement and ethos into the 21st century.



When communities are healthy, wildlife will flourish too.

The National Wildlife Federation believes that when people come together across difference to confront the challenges of a changing world, both wildlife and people will thrive. When differences keep us apart, when we are disconnected from each other and from the natural world, our ability to restore wildlife and wild places suffers. We must overcome these challenges that separate us. Only by working together can we change, grow, and learn to become a 21st century wildlife organization, ensuring people and wildlife thrive in a rapidly changing world. Join us.

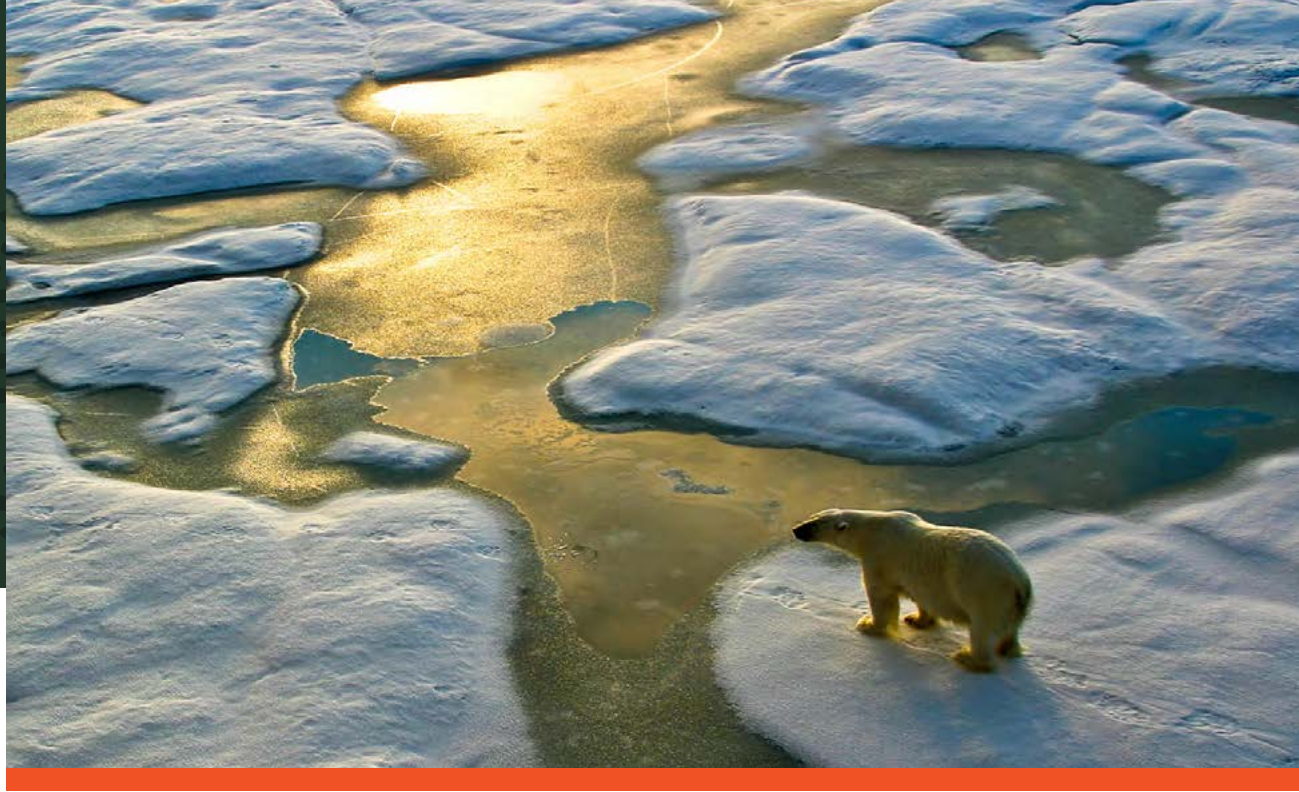
Healthy habitats and healthy communities go hand-in-hand. Too often communities are suffering from pollution, disinvestment, or other challenges that separate people from the natural world. When human communities suffer, wildlife suffer as well. Polluted rivers and streams prevent fish from thriving. Dirty air and polluted land make it hard for wildlife to live healthy lives. Disconnected and fragmented forests, fields, streams, and deserts make it harder for complex ecosystems to flourish. And when people are disconnected from one another—whether through historic injustices, racism, or lack of resources to live full lives—healthy communities and healthy habitats cannot reach their potential. Only by overcoming these barriers and biases by confronting them head-on will we be able to fully engage in wildlife protection with one another. Only by coming together across difference will we be able to meaningfully and effectively achieve our conservation goals.

We know we have work to do, and we are ready to do it. For 83 years the National Wildlife Federation has been bringing people together in a big tent to collaborate for wildlife. In order to open our tent up to the full diversity of experiences that represent this country, we are committed to creating an inclusive internal culture and reaching out to new partners. We know from experience that collaborating across differences is a strength.



Our commitment to collaboration has already led to change. This commitment to deep and wide collaboration for people and wildlife has led to the formation of an Equity and Justice Steering Committee, which provides input and advice to leadership regarding the overall approach to our work. We have a new position—the Director of Equity and Justice—who connects the work going on across the national organization and ensures we move forward with purpose. And visionary work that began many years back has become a cutting edge model for the organization as a whole including:

- The Urban Initiatives and Environmental Justice program, led by Simone Lightfoot, works to engage African-American communities in urban areas throughout the United States to lift up shared challenges and opportunities.
- Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting, and the Outdoors, led by Camilla Simon, brings together Hispanic voices to advocate for public lands and wild spaces.
- The Tribal Partnerships Program, led by Garrit Voggesser, works nationwide with tribes to protect wildlife, advance land stewardship, safeguard water resources, provide environmental education, and combat climate change.
- The Sacred Grounds Program, led by Manja Holland, recognizes congregations, houses of worship, and faith communities who both create wildlife habitat and actively link faith practices and caring for the environment.
- The Women in Conservation Leadership Program, led by Elizabeth Lillard, works toward stronger conservation through fostering and developing women leaders of all ethnicities, races, and cultures within the conservation community.



And collaborative work across difference is needed now more than ever.

We know our work is urgent. With wildlife populations declining rapidly over the last few years, direct action is needed to save species. Climate change is causing chaos in ecosystems, with temperatures and rainfall less and less predictable and more extreme. Many communities have experienced disinvestment, are faced with unsafe drinking water, and unclean air. We know that healthy communities mean healthy habitats for fish and wildlife. But our work is harder because our country is growing farther apart at the very moment we must work closely together. The environmental movement as a whole has not yet done its part to bring people together, especially across race. Conservation organizations like the National Wildlife Federation are over-represented by white staff and leadership when compared to our cities, towns, and our country as a whole. To be representative of and relevant to communities we work with requires intentional change and growth. And we know we will be most successful when we are able to bring people together, diversify the people speaking up for wildlife, and support the interdependent needs of people and wildlife.

With the formation of our Equity and Justice Steering Committee and the hiring of our first-ever Director of Equity and Justice, we have now developed the following goals and accompanying strategies to advance this crucial work.

Goal

By 2021, create a culture of excellence where staff, affiliates, and Board members of the National Wildlife Federation embody equity and justice to better advance our conservation goals.



Indicators of Success

- Do we create equitable hiring practices that are utilized consistently across the organization?
- Does the diversity of our staff more accurately reflect the communities with which we work?
- Do staff with marginalized identities report indicators of psychological safety?
- Does the number of staff with marginalized identities in leadership roles increase?
- Do staff report an increase in commitment to equity and justice work?

Strategy 1

Increase and enhance hiring and retention of staff by advancing inclusive and equitable practices and policies to advance our equity and justice goals.

Actions

- Develop equitable hiring processes and ensure all staff utilize these processes. This includes job description best practices, interview processes and rubrics, candidate screening practices, broadening the hiring pool, expanding our reach when circulating jobs and developing oversight processes to ensure we are accountable.
- Ensure racially diverse staff are increasingly co-defining the culture of the organization.
- Through trainings and resource sharing, ensure all staff increasingly understand our commitment to equity and justice, and their actions reflect their commitments.
- Provide more resources to staff with marginalized identities to ensure success. This includes programs like Employee Resources Groups as well as prioritizing psychological safety.
- Create a system to receive consistent feedback from staff, particularly staff with marginalized identities.

Strategy 2

Increase capacity and competency of staff to understand and advance our equity and justice goals.

Actions

- Increase awareness and knowledge of our staff around equity and justice issues by sharing resources and tools, communicating across the organization about our equity and justice work, and hosting events to raise awareness of these issues.
- Increase the competency of our staff by providing educational opportunities, such as trainings on unconscious bias, anti-oppression, and inclusive hiring.
- Build a safe and trusting work environment where we have policies for safe spaces and staff feel comfortable elevating equity and justice related issues.
- Empower staff to act and model equitable and just behaviors and actions.



Indicators of Success

- Are staff participating in equity and justice related activities?
- Are we providing organization-wide learning opportunities?
- Do staff include equity and justice in personal and professional performance goals?
- Are staff modeling equity and justice behaviors and actions?
- Is equity and justice being embedded in program planning across the organization?

We understand the urgency of this work and recognize the ongoing changes necessary to more comprehensively incorporate equity and justice into our structure and values to fulfill our mission.



National Wildlife Federation | Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice

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