

Creating Balance: *Diversity is Our Job*

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Who am I?

- Eureka City Councilperson - Ward 3 Councilmember
 - Humboldt Transit Authority rep for Eureka
- U.S. Coast Guard Reserve - Marine Science Technician first class/ Ensign-select
- Redwood Community Action Agency (501c3) - Senior Planner in Natural Resources Services division
- Klamath River Restoration Corporation (501c3) - Current board member, Gubernatorial appointment
- Humboldt Roller Derby skater! Derby name Brawn Luc Picard
- *Former AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project member (CA Conservation Corps and Mattole Salmon Group), Salmonid Restoration Federation board member, Humboldt Trails Council board member / President*



*Foundational thoughts:
In the sciences/ resource management world..*

- (1) We mean well and want to do good.
- (2) We are ALL leaders, and need to lead in every way we can.
- (3) We exist in a field historically rooted in white supremacy.

“Ok, I’m on board. Now what?”

Some best practices to help you to...

- Change your outreach approach
- Show respect in a meaningful way
- Refresh internal processes within your organization
- Know your assets... and sometimes, just get out of the way 😊

Change your outreach approach

- Current: “Hi, we made a plan and now it’s done. It’s written in all the best technical language. What do you think? We will put your comments in the appendix.”
- Try this:
 - Go to where people already gather, in accessible places
 - Example: Alternatives to evening stakeholder meetings at hotels and community centers, like festivals, cookouts, parent play groups, the mall, ESL classes.
 - What do social services organizations do in your community?
 - Acknowledge, include and contact affinity groups and leaders... but don’t pass off all the burden. Not expecting people to come to you is key. A seat at the table is different from someone bringing you that welcoming cup of coffee and speaking one on one/ in small group.
 - Connect your message to the everyday lives of people you are serving - research shows BIPOC communities consistently prioritize a safe and healthy environment!

Outreach methods

- **Social media and e-news formats that include your neighbors**
 - Describe photos and videos in text for more accessibility across all platforms and abilities
 - Normalize Spanish-language (+ Hmong, Tagalog, etc) outreach in your community
 - Consider lower-bandwidth options - alternatives to video, html, etc.

- **Alternatives for rural communities and less tech-connected neighborhoods**
 - Outdoor, distanced pop-ups in neighborhoods and roadside turnouts
 - Trail-side or transit based outreach

Outreach approach - working in translation

➤ Allocate resources:

- Interpretation (verbal) and translation (written) takes time and is a unique and specific skill needing adequate compensation

➤ Up your level of awareness and sensitivity to the context:

- Ensure that terms can be understood by your interpreter in English to convey in another language
- Allow a cushion of time to be sure that people receiving interpretation are with the group
- Nip any ignorance, confusion or annoyance in the bud with ground rules
 - Example: explain why an interpreter is there in inclusive language and that people will need to adjust to a different flow of a meeting and additional sounds in the background

Show respect in a meaningful way

➤ Care to learn about cultural values:

- Don't just invite people to the table, ask key contacts how to structure the process so it's culturally responsive. Hint: sometimes this is a staffperson/ support person and not an overburdened leader
- Learn to receive information without offense and in a receptive way. Example: Del Norte County Hmong community shellfish harvesting and communication norms.

➤ Acknowledge Tribal sovereignty:

- Language around working with Tribes often lists them last or is awkward or different. Use language that acknowledges the sovereign status of recognized Tribal governments, akin to the US federal government.

➤ Who are you lauding as experts?

- Invite BIPOC experts, women in science, queer-identifying scientists to step to the front. Who are your guest speakers? Whose research are you sharing? Is TEK part of the equation?

Building positive relationships = showing respect

➤ Developing key relationships:

- Go directly to the trusted BIPOC leaders in your community and be concise (caveat: this is culturally dependent)
- Ask what they really want and need, and be open to unforeseen opportunities
- Follow through on small but meaningful actions to start with... prove you can be trusted

➤ Celebrate respectfully, don't just tell about the trauma:

- Showcase BIPOC people who are doing great things. How to avoid tokenizing? Simple: involve people in telling their own story/ deciding how they want to be represented.
- Examine and replace terms like “underserved” - be specific about the problem and what needs to be solved, as you would frame anything else in your work.
- Be sure to talk about Tribal nations as extant, modern people.
- Question and avoid repeating narratives like “our community is so predominantly white...”

Refresh internal processes within your organization

➤ Create values statement(s):

- Develop and adopt them with your team
- Work with those who agree to them (project partners, consultants)
- Make them part of your contracting/ MOUs, partnership interviews, etc.
- Create an inward-facing set of statements and goals for staff, and an outward-facing criteria for partnership

➤ What pandemic benefits can you preserve?

- Actual sick time benefits for all employees
- Work-from-home flexibility for those with families, long commutes, caregiving needs

Know your assets... and sometimes just get out of the way

➤ Affinity groups in action:

- Many agencies have formed a Black Caucus, Latinx Leadership groups, API Caucus, etc.
 - Do you identify as part of the affinity group? Rad! This your space. Power in numbers matters.
 - Are you white? Let it be a space for people to find solace and peer support. Support but don't dominate, and avoid passing off work that you can/ must do to these volunteers exclusively. Ask for input with a goal of getting it and implementing it. Be ready to take meaningful actions. Also, try to make space for affinity-group-only events if your organization can do so.

➤ Know your stuff:

- Know EEO rules in your organization and learn current best practices!
- Know what will happen if someone needs to make a report

Bonus content: Engaging local elected officials

- **Local agency (City/ County) elected officials are an outreach asset**
 - Know their community intimately
 - Familiar with BIPOC community and organizations
 - Public meetings are watched and followed, creating an already-existing outreach platform
- **Many will support and partner on restoration projects**
 - How is your work contributing to environmental justice and economic benefit? Spell it out for us!
 - Letters of support are more infrequently requested than you would think
 - Viable partners for non-profits who need a government agency applicant