Different Shades of Green

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Overview

As the US population becomes more ethnically diverse, our challenge is:

• how do we engage the changing demographic in more outdoor activities and conservation careers

• how do organizations who support and are engaged in natural resource conservation activities become relevant to this growing population and maintain it’s current participants and supporters
There is an intrinsic appreciation for nature and the outdoors in all of us.
The History of the Texas Hill Country is the history of us all.
Native Americans in the Hill Country
Comanchería:

The territory of the Comanche
Late 18th to early 19th century
European Arrival
African Americans in the Hill country
Freedman Towns in the Hill Country

- Wheatville
- Masontown
- Clarksville
- Burditt’s Prairie
- Southside Community
- Kincheonville
The Texas Underground Railroad
Hispanics and Latinos in the Hill Country
Spanish Texas
Our population is growing & changing

Among the fastest-growing states in the 10 years ending July 2018, Texas ranked number two.

Adding people at more than twice the median rate. (Pewtrust.org Feb. 2019)
People Diversity is a Social resource that we cannot afford to ignore.
What is Texas Parks and Wildlife doing to create a more welcoming environment
Inclusion in Careers

• Self-Examination
• Become comfortable being uncomfortable
• Evaluation of requirements (Don’t lower, adapt)
• Be intentional
• Mentor/Internships
• Inclusive images
Why is Inclusion and Belonging Important to Us?
What is Belonging?
"HECHO: Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting, and the Outdoors"
Recruitment of Volunteer Interpreters & Partners
Non-Traditional University Partnership

- Increased Volunteers
- Increased Diversity
- Increased Conservation awareness
- Increase diverse Talent for agency
- Decrease cost of engagement
Inclusive in print Images
Inclusive Social Media
How many State Parks in the Hill Country
Texas Hill Country Conservation Network
2019 Texas Hill Country Gender Demographics

50.26% Male

49.72% Female
2019 Texas Hill Country Racial Demographics

- **White**: 47.53%
- **Hispanic**: 39.59%
- **Black**: 2.33%
- **Asian**: 3.69%
- **Other**: 6.60%

2022 THCCA
Challenges

- Urbanization
- Changing demographics
- Ground Water overuse
- Lack of Protection of Outdoors spaces
- Nature deficit disorder
- Availability of Natural Resource Practitioners
- Mistrust of Government
- Increased air pollutants
- Expanding conservation challenge (everyone’s issue)
- Climate Change
- Relevance/Value of Conservation organizations to the changing demographic (Legislative/ Funding)
- Over development in rural areas
Why Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Conservation?

• Strengthens the environmental and conservation movement.
• Make conservation relevant to a much wider constituency.
• Drives political and financial support from a broader spectrum of society.
• As the demand for environmental and conservation workers grow, organizations must utilize the full spectrum of talent available.
• Conservation depends on support from urban voters, urban donors, and urban communicators.
• People will value nature only if they care about nature where they live.
How Inclusive are your agencies?
Courageous and Compassioned Conversations are a good start, but that shouldn’t be the end.
“We tried, but we just can’t fine a good fit.”
Outreach must go two ways. We need to teach others about us and learn about them. There has to 
reciprocity for relationships to be sustainable.

There is no universal story. My experienced with nature is different then yours. It should not be assimilation.

We have to examine our biases about what we do. Examine your risk and willingness to become uncomfortable.

Do you want to be comfortable or better?
IF IT DOESN'T CHALLENGE YOU, IT DOESN'T CHANGE YOU.
In the absence of a clear plan and effective communication what happens?
Questions to ask

- Why is this important to our mission?
- How really inclusive are we today?
- What progress are we making?
- What have we done that has given us the best results?
- What should we stop doing?
- How is this going to support our relationships internally and externally?
- What help do we really need?
- What does success look like? (Measures)
Organization Assignment

• Define the Why for your organization?
• What's one thing you're going to do?
• Write it down.
• Timeline around it - date and time to connect and commit.
• Who do you need to help you make this happen?
  • Commit to something outside of the emotional priority in the moment
• Follow up on implementation.
"If retention does not receive equal attention as recruitment, the result will be a 'revolving door,' where expensive recruitment efforts are always at full peak, due to a disproportionately high attrition rate."
Questions
You Should Avoid

- Treated as an afterthought
- Failure to connect with the organization's mission and goals
- Too much focus on how people feel and not how they act
- Lack a communication strategy that’s internal and external

- Trying to replicate best practices from others even when it’s evident that it won’t work for your organization
- Too much focus on educating leaders
- Focused on increased numbers instead of relationships and value
- It’s the right thing to do without connection to why

- One and done