

**2021**  
**RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN**



Ecotrust

Ecotrust's 2021 Racial Equity Action Plan contains five critical goals:

**Support and empower Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) staff**

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**Build equitable leadership teams and develop BIPOC leadership**

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**Ecotrust leaders with the greatest amounts of positional power take on a greater accountability and responsibility for advancing racial justice and equity, resulting in increased accountability for growth, change, and improved racial equity competencies at the highest levels of the organization.**

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**Drive forward organizational, programmatic, and cross-programmatic equity work**

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**Be data driven and utilize results-based accountability**

## **PRIMARY ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

### **GOAL 1: SUPPORT AND EMPOWER BIPOC STAFF**

**LONG-TERM VISION:** Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) staff at Ecotrust have a clear understanding of their career growth pathways and are provided with opportunities to take on new, challenging projects to demonstrate their skills. All BIPOC staff know they will have opportunities to grow with the organization and reach their full potential here.

Ecotrust appreciates and values its BIPOC staff, and the organization takes the feedback of BIPOC staff seriously and responds accordingly. Ecotrust demonstrates its appreciation for BIPOC staff by providing financial resources, a role in strategic decision making, professional development opportunities, mentoring, coaching, and promotional pathways. Pay inequities are addressed and BIPOC staff receive equal pay for equal work.

Ecotrust is a vibrant, multicultural workplace. The organization is a joyful place to work for BIPOC staff and we are able to show up as our full selves every day. Each BIPOC staff person has a community of trusted colleagues they can both lean on for support and to whom they provide support. Ecotrust is known as a great place to work for Black, Indigenous and other people of color in the region, and as a result many BIPOC candidates apply for our open positions and community partners are eager to collaborate with us.

#### **PRIMARY ACTIVITIES IN 2021:**

Working with colleagues across the organization, we will implement new tools,

guidelines, and policies; seek staff feedback; assess the outcomes these tools and policies are producing, and refine over time. Most of this work will take place through the People and Culture Committee.

Activities include, but are not limited to:

1. Create new competency matrix that decenters white dominant characteristics, rewards staff for racial equity competencies, and advances equitable outcomes
2. Launch the Pathways to Institutional Equity (PIE) Initiative
3. Incorporate recommendations from the BIPOC Retention and Promotion Audit
4. Refine and finalize promotion policy
5. Analyze and integrate results of the pay equity audit
6. Create compensation philosophy and guidelines
7. Introduce a new performance management tool “Culture Amp”
8. Train staff and implement “Reporting and Responding to Racism, Microaggressions, and other Interpersonal Oppression in the Workplace” guidelines.

#### **BIPOC RETENTION AND PROMOTION:**

Building on the 2020 Retention and Promotion Equity Audit, Ecotrust will develop career pathways for staff who identify as Black, Indigenous or people of color. We will work with an external consultant to develop tailored time-phased promotional plans, which will include training, skills development, professional experience, and mentorship that supports career development pathways. This work will ensure that BIPOC staff have a clear understanding of their career growth pathways and are provided with opportunities to take

on new, challenging projects to demonstrate their skills. We will also provide equitable professional development opportunities for BIPOC staff, including training, coaching, and mentorship from leaders in the nonprofit and conservation fields. As a result of these efforts, BIPOC staff will have increased opportunities to grow and reach their full potential at Ecotrust and/or other environmental and triple bottom line organizations. This work will contribute to the development of a conduit of BIPOC leaders, thereby supporting transformation within the broader environmental and conservation fields. BIPOC staff members will be well positioned to contribute their technical capabilities, leadership skills and lived experience to guide strategic decision making as it relates to programmatic priorities, the equitable distribution of funds and resources, and the co-creation of meaningful and lasting environmental, social, and economic impacts throughout our region.

## **GOAL 2: BUILD EQUITABLE LEADERSHIP TEAMS AND DEVELOP BIPOC LEADERSHIP**

**LONG-TERM VISION:** We envision a new leadership structure, one based on equity, consent, and collaboration, and that contributes to a truly inclusive and collaborative culture. This leadership structure includes: An expanded Leadership Team, an Executive Director’s Advisory Council, and the Board. Contextually relevant information is shared openly at every level of the organization and teams continuously seek to partner, building synergy and breaking down programmatic siloes. We explore the use of a shared and impacted leadership framework that distributes power throughout the organization and centers the leadership of those who have lived experience with inequities.

Ecotrust is an environment in which ideas at all levels are valued for the positional expertise they represent.

The Leadership Team, the Executive Director's Advisory Council, and the Board better reflect the experiences and perspectives of our region and Ecotrust's increasingly racially diverse staff. The Leadership Team, the Executive Director's Advisory Council, and Board includes members with advanced and expert-level racial equity competencies. The organization has bold, brilliant, and creative Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) staff members in positions of power, making daily and strategic decisions to inform our programmatic priorities, equitably distribute funds and resources, and focus attention on meaningful and lasting impacts through our work.

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#### **PRIMARY ACTIVITIES IN 2021:**

1. The VP of Organizational Equity, an Equity Working Group (EWG) representative, and a BIPOC Affinity Group representative are Leadership Team members and participate fully in all Leadership Team activities. The VP of Organizational Equity will also serve on the Executive Director's Advisory Council.

2. With support, the Executive Director builds and maintains a pool of BIPOC board candidates, specifically with Black and Latinx representation. Support, as needed, in onboarding new BIPOC board members.

### **GOAL 3: ECOTRUST LEADERS WITH THE GREATEST AMOUNTS OF POSITIONAL POWER TAKE ON A GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADVANCING RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY, RESULTING IN INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY FOR GROWTH, CHANGE, AND IMPROVED RACIAL EQUITY COMPETENCIES AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE ORGANIZATION**

**LONG-TERM VISION:** Ecotrust is an anti-racist organization in which leaders with positional power are committed to both supporting and leading ongoing transformational change. Ecotrust's leadership shares accountability for ensuring our programmatic work advances racial justice. And internally, leaders share responsibility for forming and sustaining a vibrant, multiracial Ecotrust in which BIPOC staff have clear and supported pathways to professional growth and advancement.

Ecotrust's leaders interrupt oppression as it happens and work collaboratively to dismantle racism at multiple levels (internal, interpersonal, institutional and systemic). Our leaders cultivate awareness of their privilege and power and have practices to address privilege and power in the context of interactions and decision-making. A desire to continually assess and adapt leadership structures for more equitable outcomes grows from this awareness. Ecotrust's leaders actively

participate in collaborative processes to reshape structures in the organization so that power, influence, opportunity, compensation, and recognition are equitably distributed.

Ecotrust leaders believe the experiences of BIPOC Ecotrust staff and community members, recognize when repair is needed, and participate in processes that facilitate healing and transformation.

#### **PRIMARY ACTIVITIES IN 2021:**

1. Formally adopt an equity vision statement specific to leadership.
2. Form a Racial Equity Competency Discussion Group for Leadership Team members to build individual racial equity competencies and practice productive group conversations about race.
3. Leadership Team members host “lunch and learn”-style sessions about a topic related to racial equity in an area of their areas of interest and growing expertise.
4. The Leadership Team will use the three anti-oppression questions prior to consensus votes on decisions.
5. The Leadership Team will take actions to increase transparency and intentionally and thoughtfully share power.
6. The Leadership Team will create opportunities to discuss and help define a vision for collective leadership at Ecotrust.

## **GOAL 4: DRIVE FORWARD ORGANIZATIONAL, PROGRAMMATIC, AND CROSS-PROGRAMMATIC EQUITY WORK**

**LONG-TERM VISION:** Ecotrust is an organization that serves as an active, transparent advocate that listens first, shares power, and shifts resources. Each Ecotrust employee has a toolbox of knowledge, skills, and actions to draw from in order to contribute to a more diverse, inclusive and equitable organization whose collective work advances racial justice outcomes across the region. All committees and working groups (e.g. climate), as well as important gatherings (e.g. LT and board meetings/retreats), have a rich variety of BIPOC voices and perspectives.

Each team at Ecotrust has shifted its stance, orientation, and strategies toward centering racial equity, recognizing that while the values are consistent, their expression will vary depending on the body of work. Every staff and board member has a strong foundational analysis of why equitable transformation is critical to Ecotrust’s mission and strategy. As the organization diversifies, its programs are increasingly led by and centered on BIPOC communities—recognizing those who are the most impacted offer the most effective solutions. The organization is a valued partner that exchanges skills, knowledge, and capacity with BIPOC-led efforts throughout the region. We work collaboratively across teams and with partners to build restorative, transformative, community-aligned forestry, food, and economic solutions to cool the planet, regenerate soil, build livelihoods, and sustain cultural diversity. Creating a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts, Ecotrust’s nonprofit programs and for-profit investments work together in synergy to build wealth and economic security for BIPOC communities, shift resources and power,

contribute to community resilience and healing, and advance upstream, systemic change.

### **PRIMARY ACTIVITIES IN 2021:**

#### **Board engagement:**

1. Present updates at board meetings and retreats as needed. Work with ED on new and potential board member development.
2. Board EDI Committee and EWG meet quarterly.

#### **Organizational equity:**

1. At least one member of the EWG or staff person trained in equitable hiring sits on all hiring teams and contributes a racial equity perspective in all stages of the hiring process from internal posting, recruitment, interviews, candidate selection, and onboarding. Tasks include reading and suggesting edits to every position description, supporting equitable outreach on open positions, participating on hiring teams, and completing equity orientation with every new staff and board member. Meet monthly with the People & Culture team to inform their work plan.
2. Review, research, and inform new processes, policies, communications, systems, decision-points, etc. to hold equity at the center.
3. Work with the CFO and Director of People and Culture to inform new workplace policies and/or procedures related to equity, diversity, inclusion.
4. Ensure BIPOC staff are included in the composition of all committees and working groups, as well as important gatherings such as LT and board meetings/retreats. This will allow for a rich variety of BIPOC voices and perspectives. EWG members serve on committees and working groups,

and participate in board meetings/retreats, as needed.

5. Lead internal communications and engagement around the Racial Equity Action Plan to keep staff updated on progress. Update equity resources on Sharepoint. Curate and share EDI events and trainings and culturally-specific community events. Write once monthly email updates. Write board book updates (quarterly). Work with communications to create and update the Ecotrust website “Equity” page.
6. EWG Admin and Ops: manage the equity budget in AI. Take and share notes from EWG meetings. Schedule weekly meetings. Other administrative tasks as needed. EWG team members meet with ED monthly.

#### **Programmatic equity:**

1. Chief Impact Officer leads on advancing racial equity through our program work.
2. Make existing equity lens tools accessible for programs and project managers to reduce racial disparities and advance social equity in our region.

## **GOAL 5: BE DATA DRIVEN AND UTILIZE RESULTS-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY**

**LONG-TERM VISION:** We measure and report out key metrics related to equity. We communicate our progress toward goals internally and externally. We have accountability mechanisms that ensure we meet measurable targets in our pursuit to become a more equitable organization.

### **PRIMARY ACTIVITIES IN 2021:**

1. Measurement and Evaluation (M&E) team works with program leads and EWG to set benchmarks and track progress in meeting

annual programmatic SMARTIE goals that are team generated.

2. M&E team works with EWG to develop an equity dashboard with metrics (procurement, operations, and programmatic), which once complete will be shared internally and externally every 12 months.
3. CFO and Office & Technology Manager leads the development of an equitable

procurement policy that prioritizes businesses with a strong track record of equitable practices and businesses owned by women and BIPOC for all contracts and purchases over \$5,000. The new accounting system will be set up to track demographic information for all vendors, which will allow Ecotrust to report its spending on women and BIPOC owned businesses.