



WEST MULTNOMAH
Soil & Water Conservation District

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

10 am – 12 pm, Tuesday, October 11, 2022

Any person may attend the meeting, which are held online via Zoom.

A meeting ID and password will be required to access the meeting. Interested participants may request the ID and password by emailing scott@wmswcd.org with the subject line “Request for

Conference ID” no later than 24 hours before the start of the meeting. The meeting can be joined for free directly from the conference link provided. Meeting documents will be available for inspection on the District’s webpage (<https://wmswcd.org/people-places-things/the-west-multnomah-swcd/diversity-and-equity/>)

AGENDA

Minutes keeper: Scott

10:00 am – Welcome/check-in/announcements – All

10:15 am –Review minutes from last meeting – All

10:20 am – Review & provide Input on DEI content for the new website – Laura

11:00 am – With regard to gathering feedback from staff, public, and board on their interactions with the District (welcoming? Etc.): Provide input on what kind of information we should be gathering and what we’ll do with the feedback we receive. - Laura

11:40 am – Check-in on goal to hire DEI intern in 2023-34. If so, make plan for crafting PD and work plan - Mary

11:55 am – Action items review – Scott, Laura/All

12 pm – Adjourn - Next meeting December 13, 2022 – Time 10 AM. Next Minutes keeper: Laura

DRAFT – WMSWCD Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Meeting Summary – DRAFT

August 22, 2022 1:00pm to 3:00pm, WMSWCD Zoom meeting

Attending: Scott Gall & Laura Taylor (Co-Chairs); Ari DeMarco (minutes), Shahbaz Khan, Mary Logalbo, Terri Preeg Riggsby, Jordan DeLawder

Welcome/Check-In/Announcements – Terri shared that she is working to change the director land ownership requirement in a new method and hopes to see that move forward.

Approval of JUNE, 2022 Meeting Summary – Clarification on language from the Education Niche-finding Report: “The City’s Parks and Recreation community garden program were unable to make culturally specific community gardens due to exclusion that would occur by only limiting access to certain parties.” This was clarified to be understood that the City cannot prioritize garden access to specific members of communities in a way that would exclude other community members from access or circumvent their regular waitlist. This is especially in regards to a high demand that Parks can’t currently meet. Minutes were approved with these changes.

How to report on annual spending amounts related to DEI: At last year’s budget committee, participants wanted to see how we were spending our money especially in regards to WBE and MBE (which are two state certifications). We have been tracking our contracts and looking contractors up via COBID. In response to feedback that the certification process itself is a barrier to getting certified, we are also currently tracking contractors who self-identify as MBE or WBE. Contractors also reported that they found applying for MBE cost prohibitive and arduous, but the federal version (Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, which is almost identical) is easier – thus, we’ve decided that we want to report on these three things (WBE, MBE, and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises).

Also, we noted that the District has lots of other funds out besides just contractors, such as materials and supplies, and nonprofit partners, which we haven’t been tracking and may want to start reporting on. Renee and Randi’s ideas are that the general public just wants to know how we’re spending our funds in simple categories, such as: “non-profit partners”, “landowner payments”, “nurseries”, etc. The Education Niche Finding Report found that we should also be prioritizing certain organizations based on being BIPOC led or culturally specific in their services. We have not currently been tracking non-contractors carefully, which limits the type of reporting we can do for this year.

Laura suggested that we should apply MBE and WBE to tracking other forms of spending, as well, perhaps lumping like businesses together into general categories when sharing with the public.

Mary mentioned we could identify categories for just the largest businesses, to save effort this year.

It was agreed that we should include self-identified businesses with COBID-certified businesses when analyzing our spending. Randi can decide if we should include the federal certification mentioned above, as well.

There are other business certifications that we don’t currently track – Emerging Small Business and Service-disabled Veteran Owned Business. The state database records these. Unless there is a fiscal/administrative reason not to track these, we should begin doing so for next year’s report.

The committee was comfortable with keeping this year’s report on WBE and MBE only, and not doing a research-heavy retrospective for this year. and not doing a lot of research

Shahbaz suggested finding representatives within those categories, similar to how we conducted the Education Niche Finding Report, to have the opportunity to hear from them. Besides querying the database, we might do a

more thorough outreach to find out where any disparity may lie - then when we report on them later, the community could know why they're being emphasized as well.

It was noted that since we can't give preference to anyone who has this type of certification without doing a disparity analysis for 3 years, we could start tracking this now for a future disparity analysis.

When deciding what dollars out to show to the public, Jordan reminded the committee that the public (and the District) is likely only interested in "how the money affects people's lives".

We might consider that if we show the contractors etc. w/ BE distinction, maybe we shouldn't include nonprofits in the pie chart unless we want to also split them out by BE

Other items to decide on that come up with this topic were:

- Operating costs
- Landowner reimbursements (likely we can just look up what contractor a landowner paid)
- Nonprofit partners is bundled into program areas spending, and next year Mary will ask partners to report on leadership and service community. The Education Niche Finding Report encouraged us to focus on BIPIC led, *as well as*, culturally specific organizations.
- Friends of Tryon Creek example – now has a Title 1 school focus but also serves the general public.
- When in doubt, ask those partners who we funded how they identify

Actions –Make changes for how we collect this type of information moving forward, but keep it research-light for this year. Mary will meet with Randi to follow up. Begin tracking Emerging Small Business and Service-disabled Veteran Owned Business certifications.

DEI content for website: Renee is thinking of displaying things like our racial equity statement, DEI principles, and "Whose Land" report under the "About Us" section - maybe the "Conservation Priorities" could have a quick DEI statement that then links to the full DEI page.

The committee agreed that its good to have a dedicated space for DEI on the site, but also wants to imbed it within program pages as well. "Our Commitment" page was suggested. The committee agreed that Renee's plan is good. The focus is: easy to find, + a standalone page where all the info is gathered.

Review physical requirements for internship program for inclusion of disabled persons: This is part of a continuing conversation about looking for guidance on how to go about increasing accessibility for our field internship program. Technical staff suggested various options for accommodating different physical needs, though since accessibility is so personal, it seems difficult or impossible to promise any sort of accessible condition for an individual. Ideas included seasonal work, offering exclusively office-based positions occasionally.

Another question on accessibility is benefits, and when the District is required to offer them.

Technical staff agreed that at least one intern needs to be available to work in the field, based on our current staffing model. We also discussed the benefits of an intern being able to conduct both field and office work.

Terri reminded us that our current positions can accommodate many types of disabilities without much change, so she doesn't feel that we need to put much pressure on ourselves in this regard at the moment. She also reminded us that constituents voted to pay us to deliver on the ground conservation work and we have to stay committed to delivering that.

The LSAMP internship also provides a way for someone with a disability to get involved with the District.

Regarding the language in the job description, putting a “reasonable accommodations’ qualifier in front of “accommodations” seems very subjective, but without it, we may be promising things that we can’t do.

Terri shared with the committee that there are lots of people in the disability community who don’t want to be known by their disabilities, but by the work that they’ve done. There aren’t job lists to target folks like this! People will just look for the jobs that they want and know they can do, which is perhaps a different type of community than we are accustomed to seeing with the BIPOC community. Terri also shared that she is happy to connect with us on this either personally, or with someone who knows more.

Consider what a secondary plan would be if someone who does need accommodation applies for a field internship position. We could also post a GIS project at PCC or PSU where we could be hosting internships that aren’t our typical ones, still have 2 field interns, and also open up other opportunities to intern with us.

Actions – reach out to spring/fall tech staff and see what the field needs actually are. Also see if we have the office work capacity to do a full office-only internship. Consider being more specific/descriptive within the “job conditions” section of the announcement (be sure to be clear both positions include field *and* office work) to help folks self-identify their own capacities. Consider being more clear about what accommodations can or cannot be made.

Start working on an accommodation plan.

Action Items Review

See above

Next Meeting: Tuesday Oct 11th, 10am-12pm

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (Page will be included in the “About us” section)

We believe all people deserve improved quality of life through clean water, healthy soil, and diverse habitats. We seek to welcome, engage, and better serve communities of color and other historically and presently marginalized groups in all facets of our organization, activities, and programs. By working proactively and deliberately to be equitable and inclusive, we will be more successful in our work.

Why we pursue diversity, equity, and inclusion

- Environmental health impacts all, and engaging and welcoming all stakeholders is crucial to ensuring success in the District’s mission.
- District programs may not engage many racially diverse audiences and we lack the demographic information to track whether we are reaching all constituents.
- The current make-up of our board and staff is not as diverse as it could be.
- Having diverse perspectives in organizational decision-making would increase our District’s overall strength and relevance.
- The District will be better able to identify and address the priorities of underserved communities of color if it works directly with them to ensure messages and programs are meaningful and accessible.

Our goal is to become fully equitable and inclusive by holding ourselves accountable, utilizing an equity lens, addressing disparities, and sharing our experiences in this pursuit. We have made progress toward this goal and we still have a long way to go.

What we have done

(Note to DEI Committee: The bulleted list below is Renee’s first go at capturing recent/ currently ongoing activities. Each will need more elaboration – a sentence or two max – and be placed in preferred order.)

- Tracking percent of contracts awarded to Minority and Women Business Enterprises, and contracting with diverse suppliers whenever possible
- Developed a land acknowledgement in collaboration with...
- Equitable hiring practices...
- Use of equity lens...
- Annual DEI budget, spent on staff and board trainings
- DEI guiding principles from LRBP?
- LRBP SD1... Holding ourselves accountable: Goals within Strategic Direction 1 include measures for progress. Annual staff work plans (link to where?) and DEI Committee work plans (anchor link to below) outline concrete actions that staff will complete during the year. All staff members are expected to dedicate time for personal and programmatic development to ensure DEI is embedded in our work (link to LRBP SMART goal) and will be evaluated on their progress each year.
Intended outcomes: Strategic Direction 1 of our 2021-2025 Long Range Business Plan helps guide the intended outcomes of this work: Embed equity and inclusion in all that we are and all that we do.

Commented [RM1]: This is draft language from a review & incomplete update of the DEI page in 2019

- Project milestones: Connect SW PDX, Produced and promoted *Whose Land is Our Land?* publication...
-

Commented [RM2]: Any updates on peer review process/progress?

Racial equity statement

Vision – The West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District is a culturally inclusive organization that welcomes and engages people of color in all facets of our organization, activities and programs. The Board and staff of the District, the customers we serve, the contractors we hire and the people who benefit from our work resemble the racial diversity found within our service territory. The District reaches out to communities of color to determine their conservation priorities for the purpose of enhancing livability through healthy soil, clean water and diverse habitats. We willingly share with others our experiences in pursuing racial equity.

Need – Our District has taken the initiative to review the history of racial disparity in Oregon, and how this history persists in the form of unconscious biases and cultural barriers that contribute to disparities in how we work, whom we work with and whom we serve. We recognize that gaining the perspectives of, and working with, communities of color will increase our organization’s overall strength. By working proactively and deliberately to be equitable and inclusive, we will be more successful in our work.

Accountability – We will hold ourselves accountable to racial equity by addressing disparities when found, and by developing, implementing, tracking and reporting on Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound racial equity goals. Priorities include fully understanding the demographics of the communities we serve, developing new and lasting partnerships with communities of color and organizations that represent them, and recruitment and retention of persons of color on our Board, staff and supporting committees.

Non-discrimination statement

We do not discriminate based on any class or identity including age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and veteran status. We are an equal opportunity employer and service provider. We make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities and special needs to provide access to our events, materials, and services. If you have requests for accommodations or complaints about discrimination, harassment, inequitable treatment, lack of access to District events, materials or services, or for any questions at all, please contact us at info@wmswcd.org or (503) 238-4775.

Anti-harassment policy

Text here

Publications

Whose Land is Our Land?: Spatial exclusion, racial segregation, and the history of the lands of western Multnomah County

Abstract: West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District has resolved to pursue diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as integral parts of our conservation mission. We face the challenge of doing so in a territory that has inherited roughly two centuries of legal, institutional, and economic factors that have inequitably distributed land and natural resources. By synthesizing existing historical scholarship in a literature review focused on western Multnomah County, we identified how barriers to property ownership for Native Americans, Asian Americans, Black Oregonians and other people of color were created and reinforced through the 19th and 20th centuries. These systemic barriers have consistently made this region's land and natural resources available to white communities while withholding them from communities of color, a pattern of inequity which persists today; the color of one's skin remains a strong predictor of whether one owns land in our district and of the environmental resources and hazards one shares a neighborhood with. In examining our own policies and activities, we found that the District's work has reflected and reproduced these patterns of racial segregation. By focusing our efforts on privately owned larger properties and the people who own them, we have been investing in and led by predominantly white communities while missing opportunities, needs, and voices present in historically diverse neighborhoods. These findings will inform the District's strategy as we build DEI into our next long-range business plan, and we hope that they may foster critical inquiries around race, land, and equity in our broader professional community.

Please note, this publication has been submitted for peer review and is currently in draft form.

(Links to [Review Draft Executive Summary](#), [Review Draft Literature Review Report](#))

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

The Committee typically meets bi-monthly. Members of the public are invited to attend. Meeting agendas are posted below. Contact us at info@wmswcd.org for upcoming meeting dates.

Annual DEI budgets and work plans past 3 years...

Meeting minutes and docs from 2021 – 2022...

Contact us to request information from past meetings.