

*Listening, learning, and acting in solidarity*  
*June 19, 2020*

To our stakeholders,

Oregon Sea Grant's vision is one of thriving coastal communities and ecosystems in Oregon. This vision cannot truly be realized in a world where racism persists.

Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Rayshard Brooks are the latest public victims of this country's systemic racism and injustice, though not the only victims. Their deaths come at a time when the country already feels like a pressure cooker, fearful of COVID-19 and the economic devastation that has come with the response. This is further compounded by a polarized political climate where hate and distrust are actively fostered. What is happening now is an outpouring of pain, and rage, and despair.

Oregon Sea Grant stands in solidarity with Black communities in our cities, state, nation, and across the globe. We oppose injustice and inequity in all forms, and re-commit to creating safe and inclusive spaces throughout our work. Putting these words into action requires having uncomfortable conversations to uncover inequities, that we ourselves perpetuate, and working to ensure voices of all backgrounds are heard, especially the voices of our colleagues of color. This is the work we are committed to doing.

We recognize that simple statements of solidarity are not enough. As an organization, we commit to the following:

- Listening to and learning from our Black, indigenous, and people of color colleagues and stakeholders to more effectively amplify diverse perspectives;
- Initiating uncomfortable conversations that address bias within our organization and with the communities in which we work;
- Recognizing how we as individuals and as an organization benefit from white privilege and systems that perpetuate injustice and racism in order to be better allies for Black, indigenous, and people of color;
- Developing a set of guiding principles that make explicit how we will evaluate existing and implement new programs, projects, work, and recruitment to advance greater racial equity and address systems of oppression; and,
- Holding ourselves accountable to do the hard work to address systemic racism and other systems of oppression through regular reflection, conversation, and evaluation as part of our program meetings.

We also recognize that it is not enough to only act in this moment. Systemic racism and all systems of oppression are inherent in our society and steeped in our state's history where roots of racism, brutality, and exclusion of Black people run deep. It will take dedicated and continual effort to address and fight against these systems. Our pledge is to continue this work, to learn

from our colleagues who have borne the weight of systemic racism and suffered under systems of oppression, and re-center social justice in our values, programming, and activities.

These are challenging times, but the courage and fervor of communities coming together around the world give us hope. Our hearts, eyes, and ears are open, and together we can move toward real, positive, constructive, and tangible change. We are committed to open communication and welcome your thoughts and ideas as we move forward.

Oregon Sea Grant