



Berkshire Natural Resources Council

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Access, and Belonging

BNRC has made a commitment to shift its culture and priorities to ensure that our programs, operations, and internal processes and policies are inclusive and offer dignity, respect, and belonging for all—from staff and board members, to visitors, community members, and donors. The BNRC staff and board are committed to learning, growing, evolving, and strengthening the organization's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Access, and Belonging (DEIAB) efforts.

BNRC's DEIAB work has involved the full staff, a staff committee, community members, and the Board of Directors. The staff committee has been meeting weekly since May 2020 to develop long- and short-term plans, establish training, and share ideas and resources. The full DEIAB committee provides monthly support and includes board and community members. For a full committee list visit bnrc.org/belonging.

Through this work, we've taken some significant steps toward our DEIAB goals. The BNRC 2020 strategic plan included Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as a priority that stood on its own. Now, we are working on an integrated DEIAB workplan that highlights the importance of these goals and values and demonstrates how they touch every sector of our work, both now and in the future. Here we share our foundational values—this is the “why”, and the “how.” This work is ongoing, and our goals will continue to evolve and change as we continue to learn.

Internal practices for the organization will fully incorporate DEIAB considerations.

Our internal policies and human resource practices will be regularly informed by this work and reflective of the organizations DEIAB goals. We will work to ensure that all BNRC employees feel welcome, safe, and supported.

We will do this by:

- Establishing fair and equitable policies to guide BNRC human resources practices and routinely reviewing these policies to ensure they continue to meet our DEIAB goals.
- Holding ourselves accountable by developing systems and procedures for employees to both receive and provide feedback.

Education is the foundation of BNRC's DEIAB work.

We will prioritize both the internal and external education of BNRC staff, board, and wider community by sharing organizational DEIAB initiatives and providing opportunities for deeper learning and resources about this work. We believe education provides a critical foundation for the rest of our work by fostering a culture of shared values, reflection, and continual growth.

We will do this by:

- Conducting an internal review to understand how past and present conservation practices have affected BIPOC communities and individuals.
- Educating ourselves about our history of land conservation and of our holdings to understand our blind spots and obstacles to achieving equity.
- Providing regular DEIAB training for staff and board and ongoing learning opportunities.
- Integrating DEIAB training into the staff and volunteer onboarding process.
- Sharing learning within BNRC and in partnership with other land trusts.
- Developing collaborative educational opportunities and resources for the community, with community input.

Partnerships will move at the speed of trust and influence programmatic choices.

Partnerships add value to all aspects of BNRC's work. We will examine our understanding of historic and current approaches to all aspects of our work while strengthening existing and building new partnerships. We will look to community partners to provide their guidance, support, and feedback. This deliberate and responsive approach is rooted in establishing a relationship based on trust, rather than an imposition of BNRC-directed programs and priorities.

We will do this by:

- Analyzing current partnerships and outreach strategies to understand who our programs serve currently.
- Increasing the quality of collaboration with organizations outside of the conservation space and providing compensation for time shared.
- Consulting with partners during project planning and implementation.
- Incorporating feedback in meaningful ways and discussing points on which there is not alignment.

We will identify and remove barriers to **access** to nature, outdoor experiences, and individual connection to BNRC.

We acknowledge and are beginning to understand the numerous systemic, physical, racial, and emotional ways that groups of people and individuals are not welcomed, encouraged, or even allowed in outdoor spaces. We seek to ensure that all feel welcome and belonging at BNRC reserves and programs.

We will do this by:

- Prioritizing the research, development, and maintenance of accessible trails, interpretive signage, and beginner-friendly brochures and engagement and educational opportunities.
- Exploring new conservation opportunities that can:
 - Prioritize and offer proximity to urban centers,
 - Help expand farmer access to farmland, and
 - Honor the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican Nation's ties to their homeland.
- Develop a better understanding of our community demographics to diversify our donor base.
- Ensuring that our Conservation Strategic Plan and High Road project framework reflect and remain accountable to our DEIAB goals.
- Providing new avenues for entry into land conservation work through scholarships and paid internship opportunities.

BNRC **resources** will be positioned to fulfill DEIAB goals in consistent and well-coordinated ways.

We know that this work cannot be done without both internal and external support. We will prioritize proper funding and dedicated staff time to our DEIAB goals and ongoing work, ensuring that these goals are forever embedded in our organizational fabric.

We will do this by:

- Devoting resources to partnerships, outreach, education, and engagement programs.
- Establishing ongoing funding, including a budget category, for DEIAB public programs.

BNRC **communications** will be considerate of DEIAB and spread knowledge of activities, programs, and goals in this area.

All communications materials produced by BNRC will reflect our vision for diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging. BNRC will strive to be as transparent as possible to support the representation of all Berkshire communities, ensure resources are known to those that need them, and continue to explore community-centric fundraising practices.

We will do this by:

- Working toward accessible compliant publication and website practices.
- Translating messages into languages reflective of the community.
- Better representing all Berkshire communities in digital and print publications.
- Regularly sharing progress toward the goals of DEIAB in communications and marketing and with staff, board, and partners.
- Sharing voices and stories that reinforce the benefits and values of DEIAB.
- Updating existing materials with DEIAB principles.