

# Diversity and the Environment Webinar Series

Presented by:



## **Race and the Environmental Movement: History and Legacies**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 2020  
2:00 PM-3:00 PM ET**

# Moderator

## **Abi Abrash Walton, Ph.D.**

Faculty, Department of Environmental Studies

Director, Master's Programs

Director, Advocacy for Social Justice & Sustainability

Master's Concentration,

Co-Director, Center for Climate Preparedness &  
Community Resilience

Director, Conservation Psychology Institute

Antioch University New England



## Webinar Logistics



Everyone should be connected via Audio Broadcast upon entering the webinar. You do not need to call in & you are automatically muted



The presentation will be recorded and posted to the Antioch CCPCR web site within one week



Please submit any questions you have for the presenter in the Q& A section



If you are having trouble with any aspect of the broadcast, use the Chat section to message the Host directly

# Presenter

## Sarika Tandon

- Adjunct Faculty Member, Antioch University New England
- Principal, Sarika Tandon Consulting- Race Equity and Environment
- Advisory Board Member, Vermont Coalition for Ethnic and Social Equity in Schools
- Co-Senior Editor, North America Cities' Field Guide to Conservation in Cities.







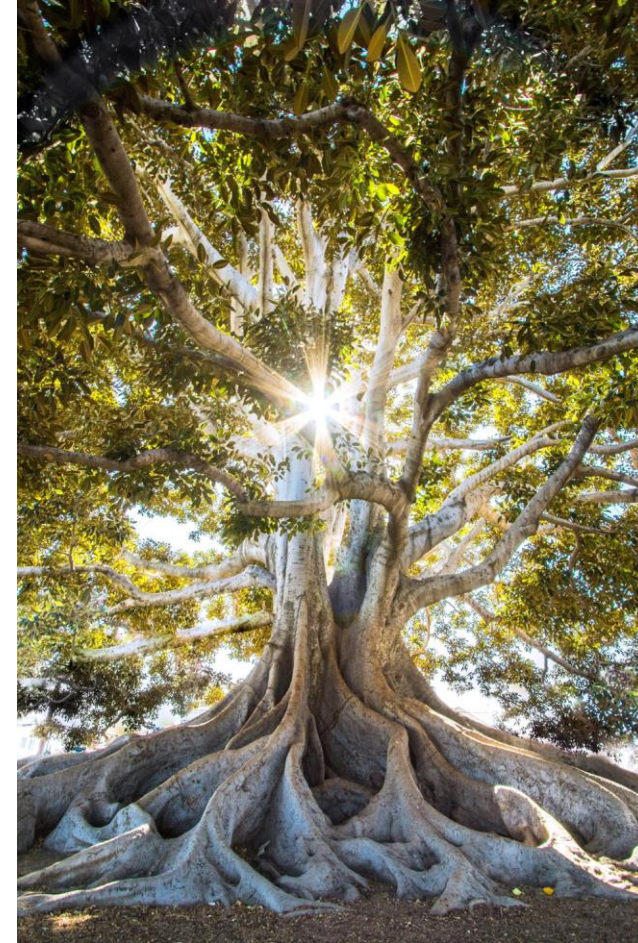


# RACE AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT: HISTORY AND LEGACIES

What are the historical underpinnings of race and racism and the 'lack of diversity' in the US Environmental Movement?

What are the stories that are told in the field of environmental studies?

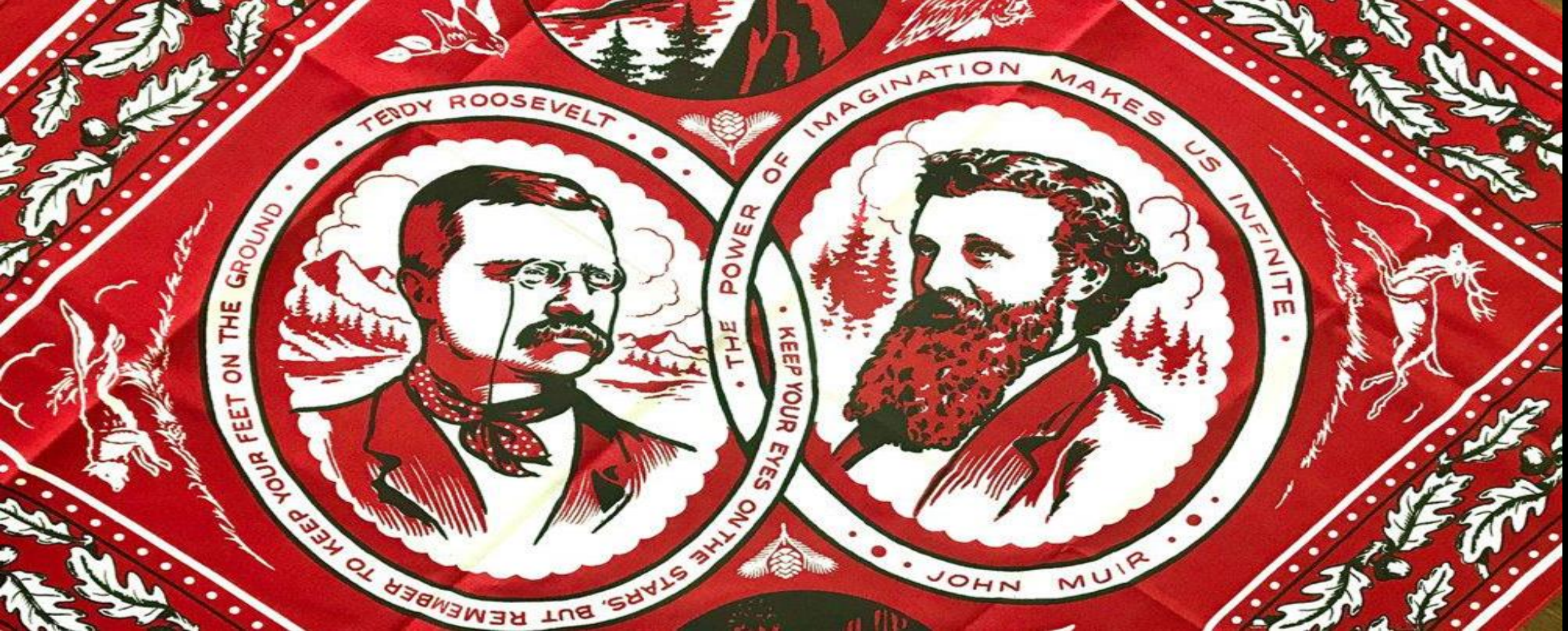
What are the stories that are not told?  
WHY?





## **4 WINDOWS INTO RACIAL EQUITY & THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE US**



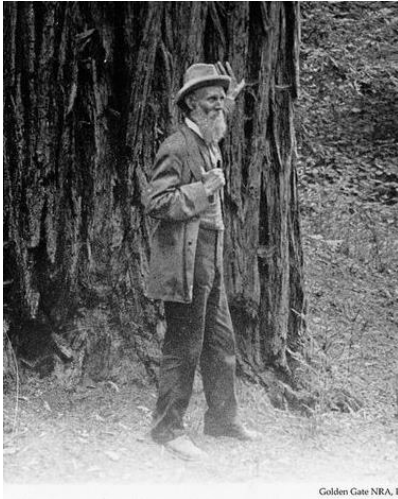


## WINDOW 1- RACE AND THE HISTORY OF THE US CONSERVATION MOVEMENT

Image credit: <https://www.ross-macdonald.com/fathers-of-conservation>



# CELEBRATED US CONSERVATION LEADERS



**JOHN MUIR**  
**1838-1914**



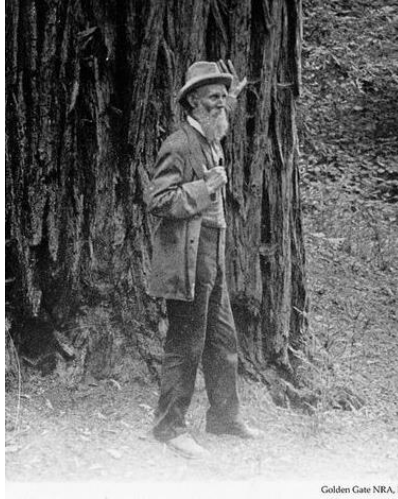
**THEODORE ROOSEVELT**  
**1858-1919**



**MADISON GRANT**  
**1865-1937**

Renowned conservationist, helped to found Save the Redwoods and the Bronx Zoo, considered the father of wildlife management

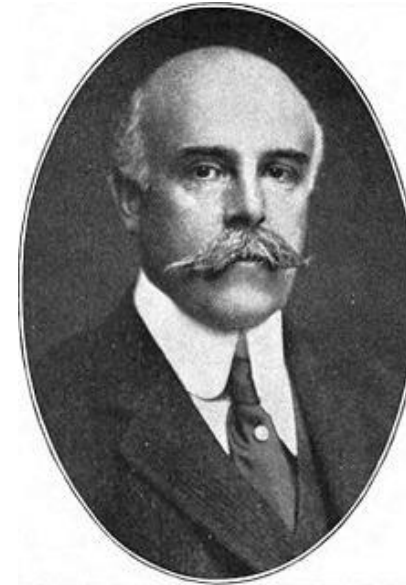
# ATTITUDES ABOUT RACE



JOHN MUIR  
1838-1914



THEODORE  
ROOSEVELT  
1858-1919



MADISON GRANT  
1865-1937

Interpersonal racism,  
disdain

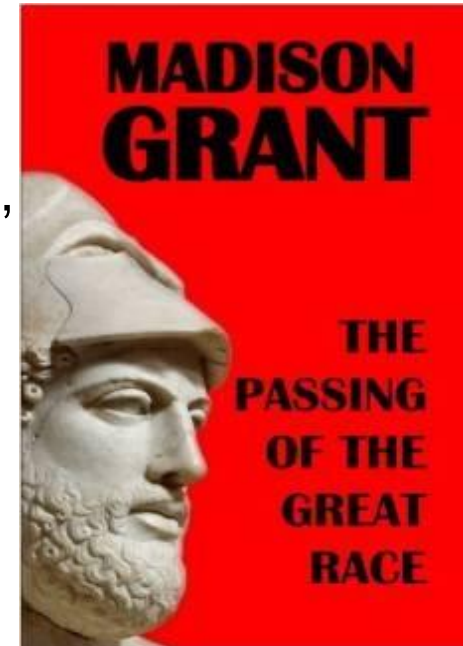
Institutional  
and Structural  
Racism

Strategies for  
Genocide

For more information read: [\*Environmentalism's Racist History\* by Jedidiah Purdy, The New Yorker](#)

# GRANT'S VIEWS ON RACE

- White supremacist
- Major proponent of scientific racism
- Influencing exclusionary immigration act of 1924- policy limiting of Eastern and Southern Europeans, Africans, Jews, and barring Asians
- Advocated for anti-miscegenation laws
- Segregating 'unfavorable' races in ghettos
- Advocated successfully for eugenics- improving population gene pool- through the forced sterilization of certain groups of people
- Roosevelt praised the work, as did Hitler



1916



# ‘PURE’ NATURE

Early 20<sup>th</sup> century conservation ideals overlapped and interconnected with ideas about racial superiority, eugenics and scientific racism



Image Source: [Orion Magazine](#)

# NATIONAL PARKS HISTORY-YOSEMITE



**The Yosemite Valley was inhabited by Southern and Central Miwok Nation people going back around 4,000 years. After colonialists came west, multiple communities including the Mono Lake Paiute, Mission Indians Chukchansi Yokuts, Western Mono also lived in the valley. The Ahwahneechee lived in the valley**

Source: <https://www.nps.gov/yose/learn/historyculture/their-lifeways.htm>

# **‘PRISTINE NATURE’**

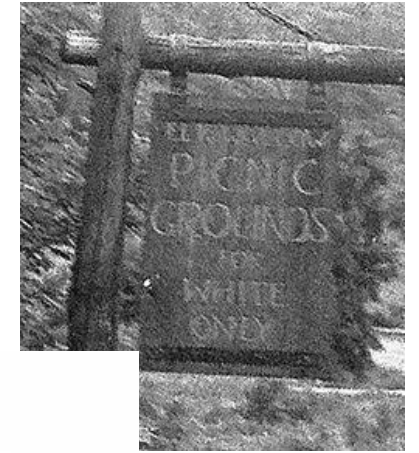
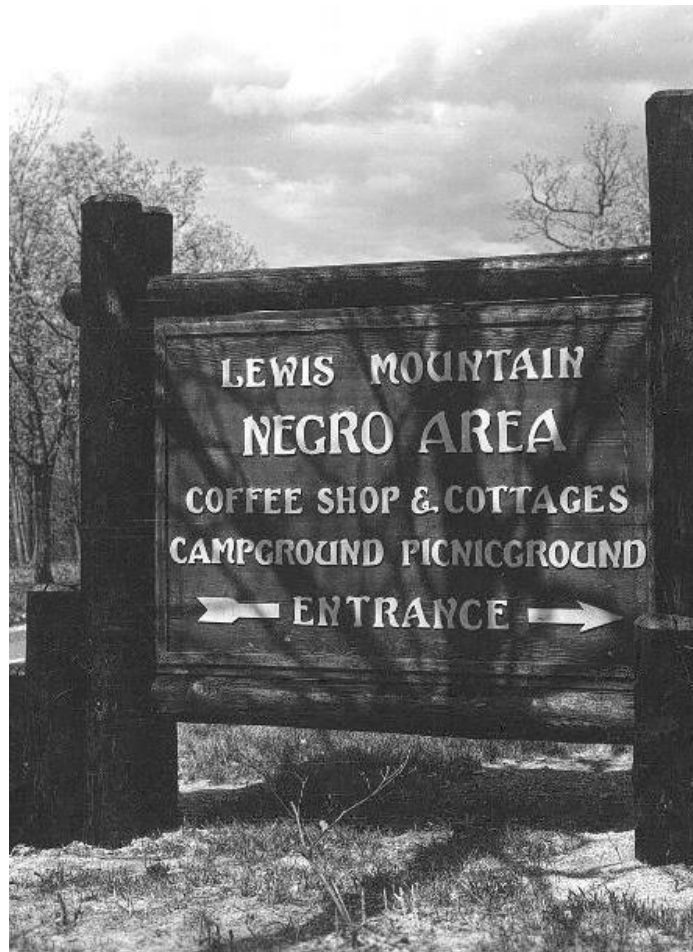


**In the Yosemite Valley, California state militia troops**

- **Forcibly removed and displaced Native American communities at least four times between 1851-1969**
- **Took food stores, burned down villages**
- **1851 killed Ahwahneechee people for refusing to sign treaties to be relocated**



# SEGREGATION IN CONSERVATION SPACES





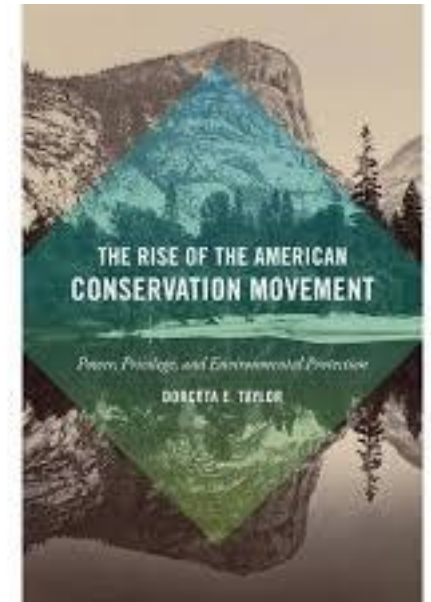
# RACE AND CONSERVATION

**“Four aspects of race relations that had considerable impact on the transformation of the environment:**

- **appropriation of Native American land and resources**
- **the enslavement of blacks**
- **the seizure of Latino territories**
- **the containment of Asians”**

**-Dorceta E. Taylor, The Rise of the American Conservation Movement**

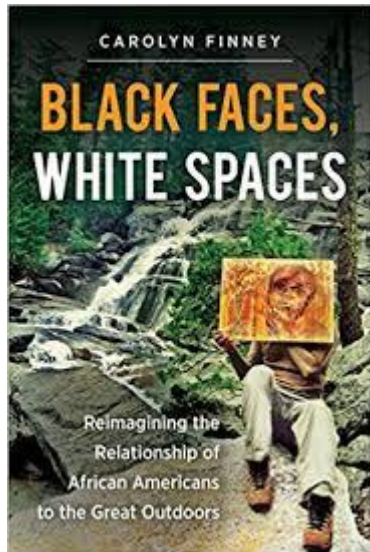
Conservation spaces in the US were intended for the benefit of privileged whites and not for the benefit of people of color or the poor



# TRAUMA AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Threats of physical violence for communities of color

- Possibility of encountering hostile white people
- Displacement
- Sexual assault/violence
- Lynching and other fatal forms of racial terror/ torture



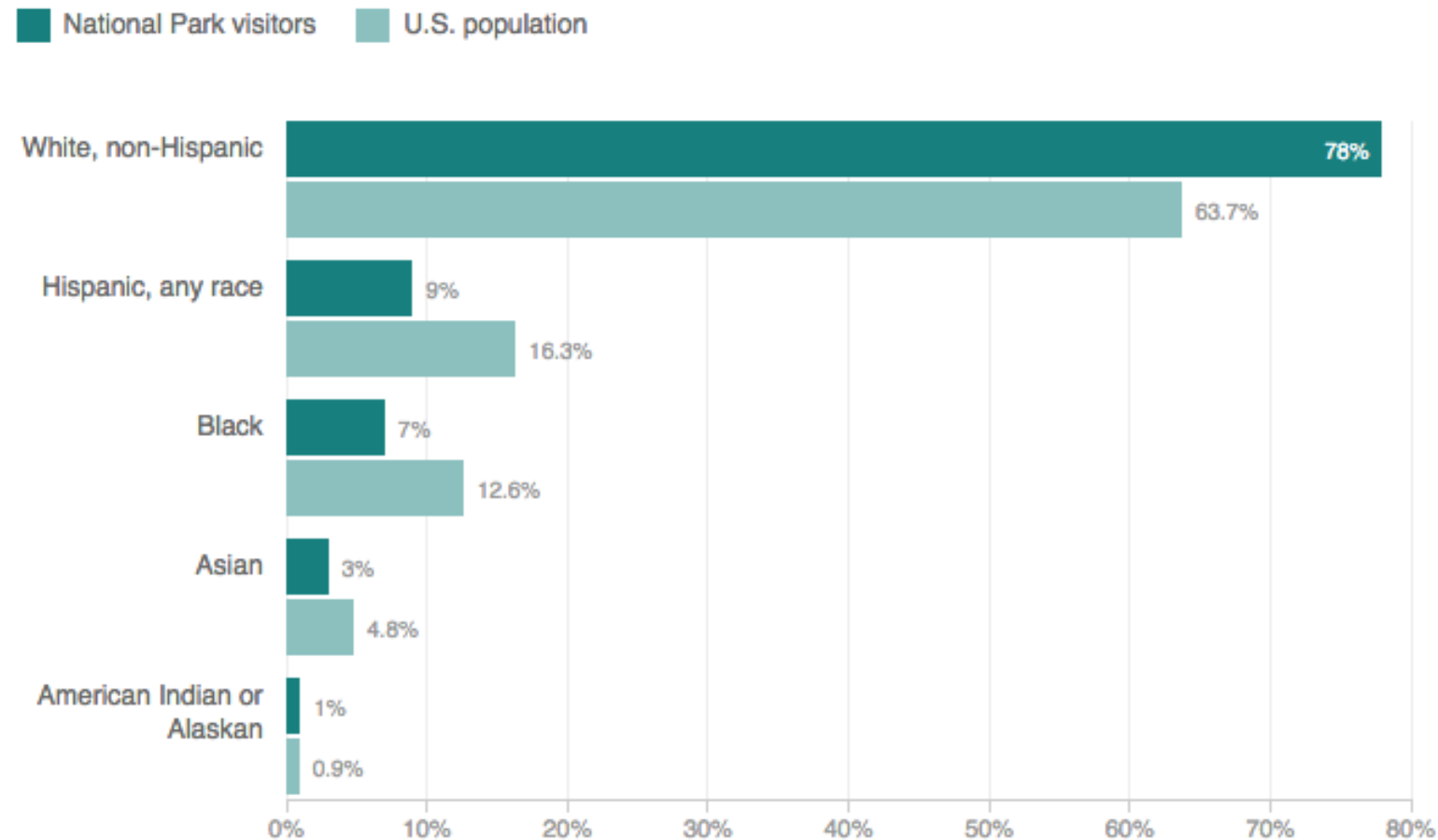
**“I...highlight the limitations of an environmental narrative that does not consider the historical lineage of pain and prejudice experienced by African Americans...”**

**Dr. Carolyn Finney**

**(And indigenous communities, and other communities of color)**

# National Park Visitors More White Than U.S.

A survey of national park visitors in 2008-2009 found that park visitors are disproportionately white and non-Hispanic.



## Notes

The survey excludes some racial and ethnic categories with a small number of respondents, such as respondents who identified with more than one race, so numbers do not total 100 percent.

Source: [National Park Service](#) survey conducted by phone of 4,103 adults from April 2008 to March 2009, [2010 U.S. Census](#)

Credit: Katie Park/NPR

# AND THE MAINSTREAM MOVEMENT DOESN'T TELL ALL STORIES



Harriet Tubman



Elizabeth Azzuz, secretary of the Cultural Fire Management Council, collects *Woodwardia fimbriata* during the Trex training on 30 September. Alexandra Hootnick/The Guardian



# WINDOW 2- RACE AND DIFFERENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

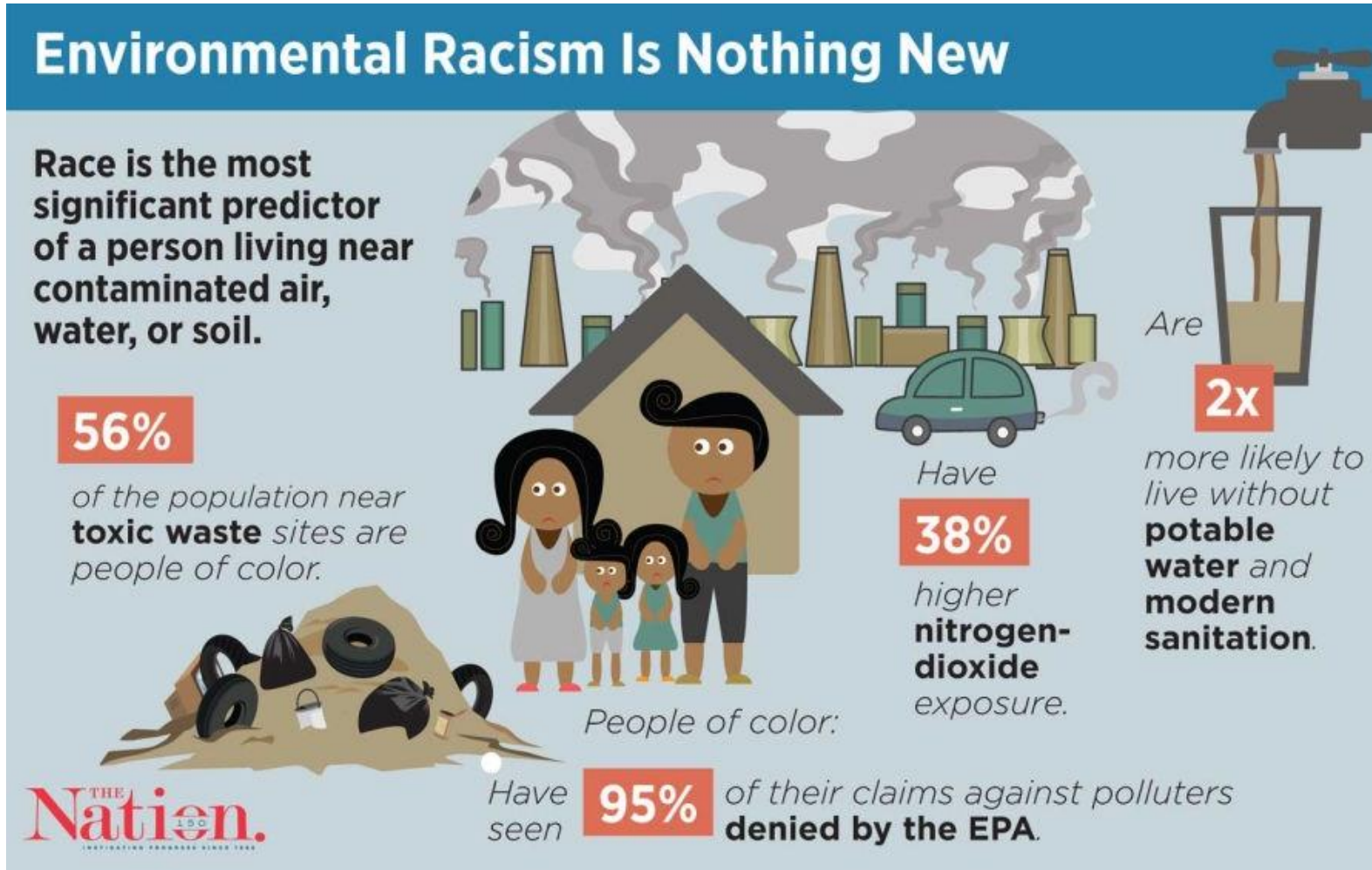


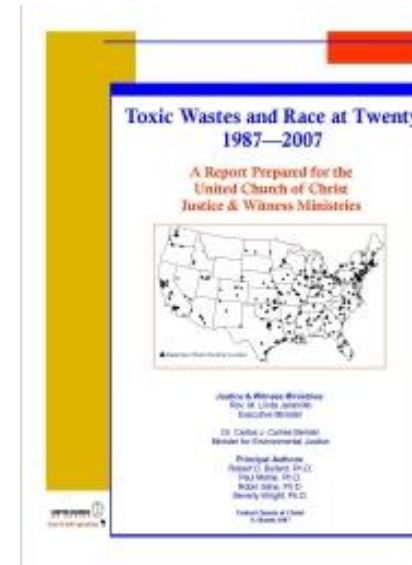
Image Credit: (Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn / *The Nation*. Shutterstock images from Lorelyn Medina, Augusto Cabral). Source Credit: [The Nation](https://www.thenation.com)

# RACE AND PARTICULATE MATTER EXPOSURE

**“Results at national, state, and county scales all indicate that non-Whites tend to be burdened disproportionately to Whites”**

**“disparities for blacks are more pronounced than are disparities on the basis of poverty status”**

**Echoes a pattern demonstrated in the landmark study Toxic Wastes and Race that demonstrated a direct correlation between the placement of toxic waste facilities and communities of poverty and/or color.**



Disparities in Distribution of Particulate Matter Emission Sources by Race and Ethnicity- 2018 EPA Study

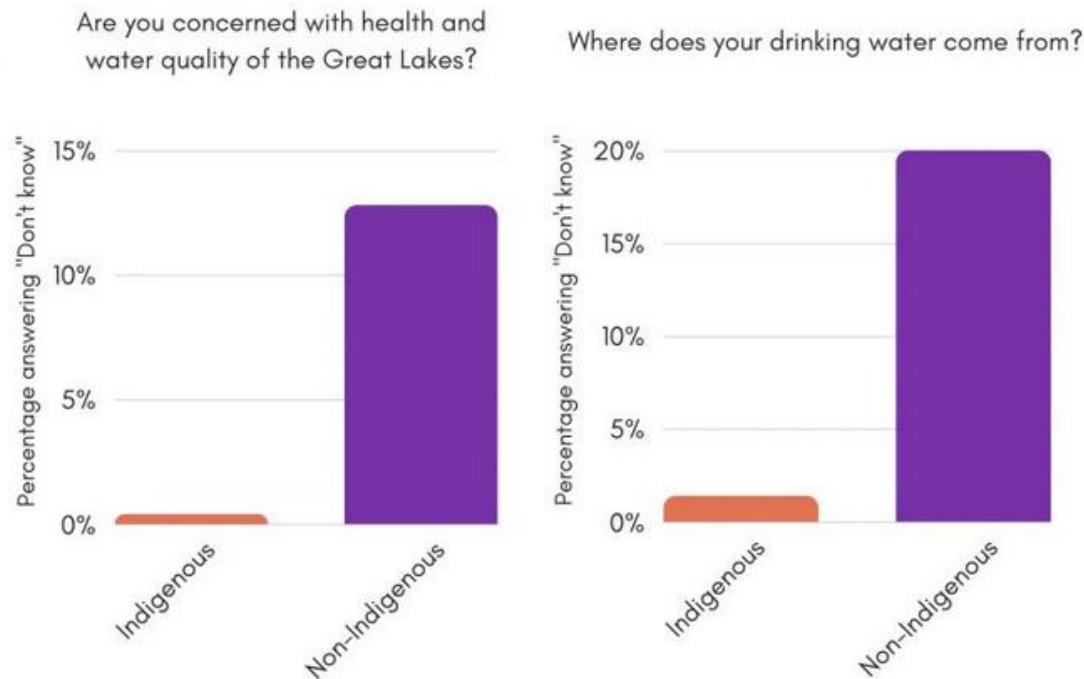
# WINDOW 3: RACE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN



# NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

A poll from the International Joint Commission showed differences between indigenous and non-indigenous perceptions of threat to the Great lakes. 4,000 people were polled, 300 were Native American or other indigenous groups

Percentage of respondents answering "Don't know"



Data source: The Great Lakes Water Quality Board, IJC.org

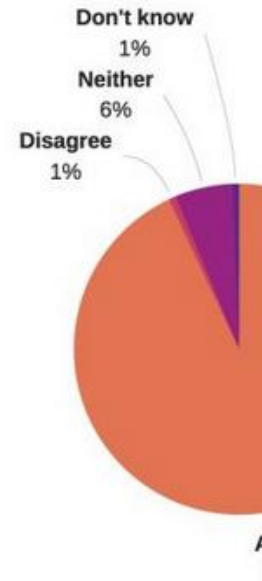
<https://greatlakesecho.org/2018/10/26/poll-shows-indigenous-people-more-aware-of-great-lakes-threats/>



# I am concerned with the health of the Great Lakes region

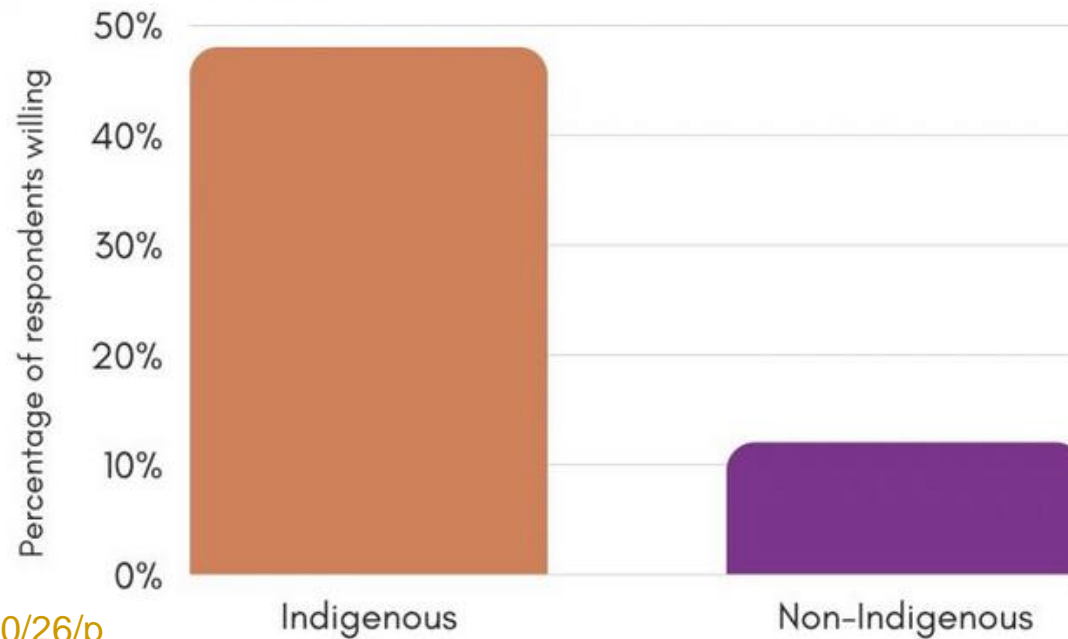
Indigenous

Non-Indigenous



Data source: The Great L

## Percentage of respondents willing to take political action (protest, lobby, vote) to protect the Great Lakes



<https://greatlakesecho.org/2018/10/26/poll-shows-indigenous-people-more-aware-of-great-lakes-threats/>

Data source: The Great Lakes Water Quality Board, IJC.org

# ASIAN AMERICANS

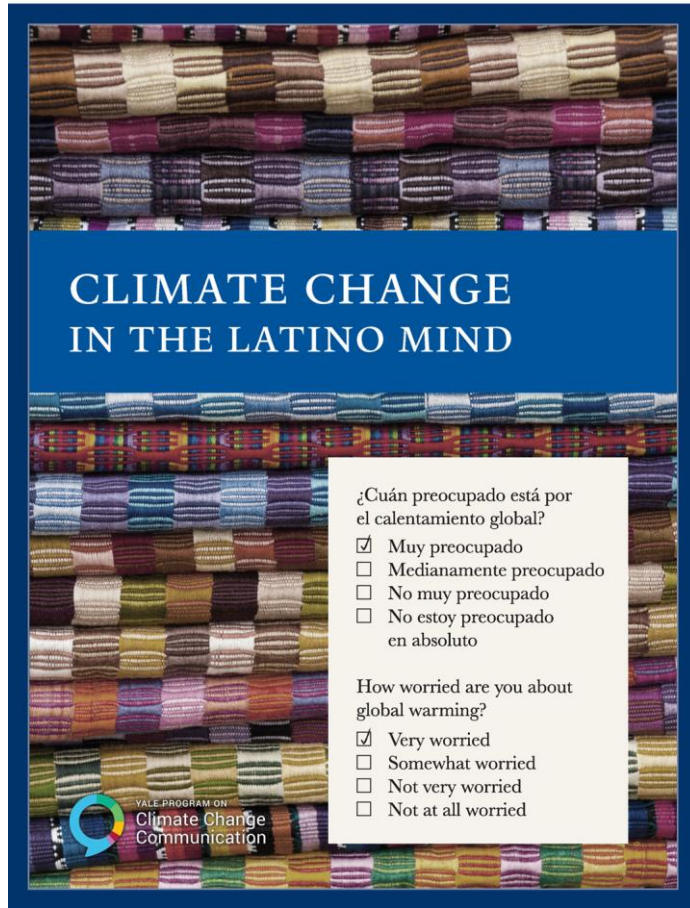


**71** percent of Asian Americans consider themselves environmentalists-  
which is about

**30** points *higher* than the national average

-according to the series of National Asian American Surveys (NAAS)—a landmark effort to collect data about the policy views of Asian Americans, started in 2008 and led by political scientists, Karthick Ramakrishnan, UC Riverside, and Taeku Lee, UC Berkeley

# LATINOS



“Latinos are **much more engaged** with the issue of global warming than are non-Latinos....

Are more convinced global warming is happening and human-caused,

Are **more worried** about it, perceive greater risks,

Are **more supportive** of climate change policies...”

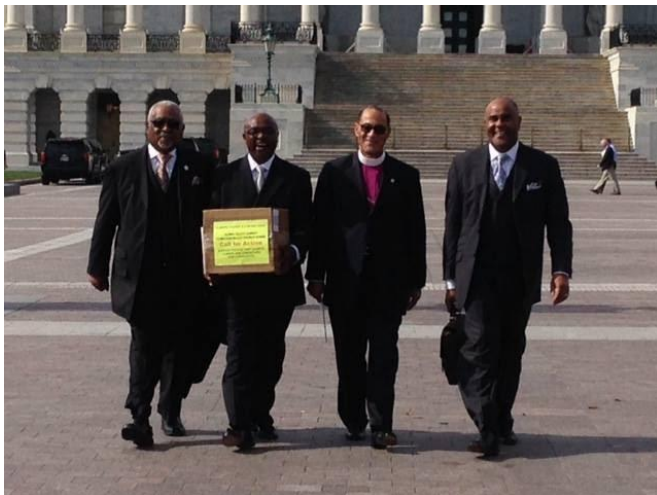
Source: Yale Center for Climate Change Communication- Climate Change in the Latino Mind



# AFRICAN AMERICANS

- African Americans express **greater desire for action** on global warming than adults do nationally
- 3 in five African Americans rate global warming and air pollution as serious problems, **60% of see global warming as an “extremely” or “very serious” problem**

Source: [Themes and Findings from a Survey of African-Americans on Climate and Clean Energy](#), 2015.



**On Capitol Hill delivering 10,000 Black Church leaders' signatures in support of abating climate change- Rev. Jesse Bottoms, Bishop James Walker, Bishop Carroll Baltimore and Rev. Brian K. Brown**

Source: <http://www.creationjustice.org/climate-change-and-communities-of-color.html>

# **WAS ANYONE SURPRISED BY THAT DATA?**

**“most Americans underestimate just how  
concerned minorities and lower-income people  
are about environmental threats...even minorities”**

Source: Diverse Segments of the US public underestimates the environmental  
concerns of minority and low-income Americans, Proceedings of the National  
Academy of Science

# WINDOW 4- RACE AND DIVERSITY IN ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

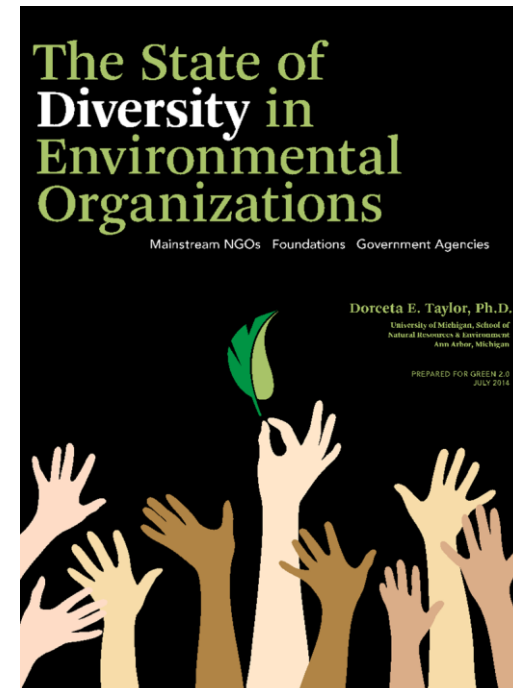




# THE STATE OF DIVERSITY IN ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Includes data from over 300  
environmental organizations including:

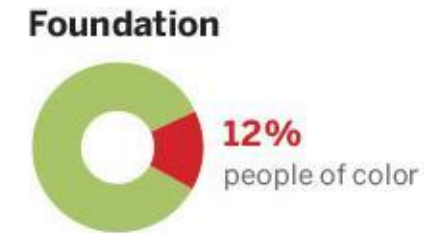
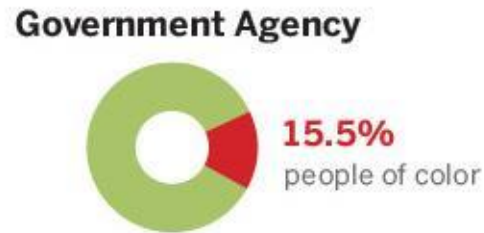
- 191 environmental non-profits,
- 74 government environmental agencies
- 28 leading environmental grant making  
orgs
- Confidential interviews of 21  
environmental leaders from  
diverse backgrounds and experience.



Dr. Dorceta Taylor

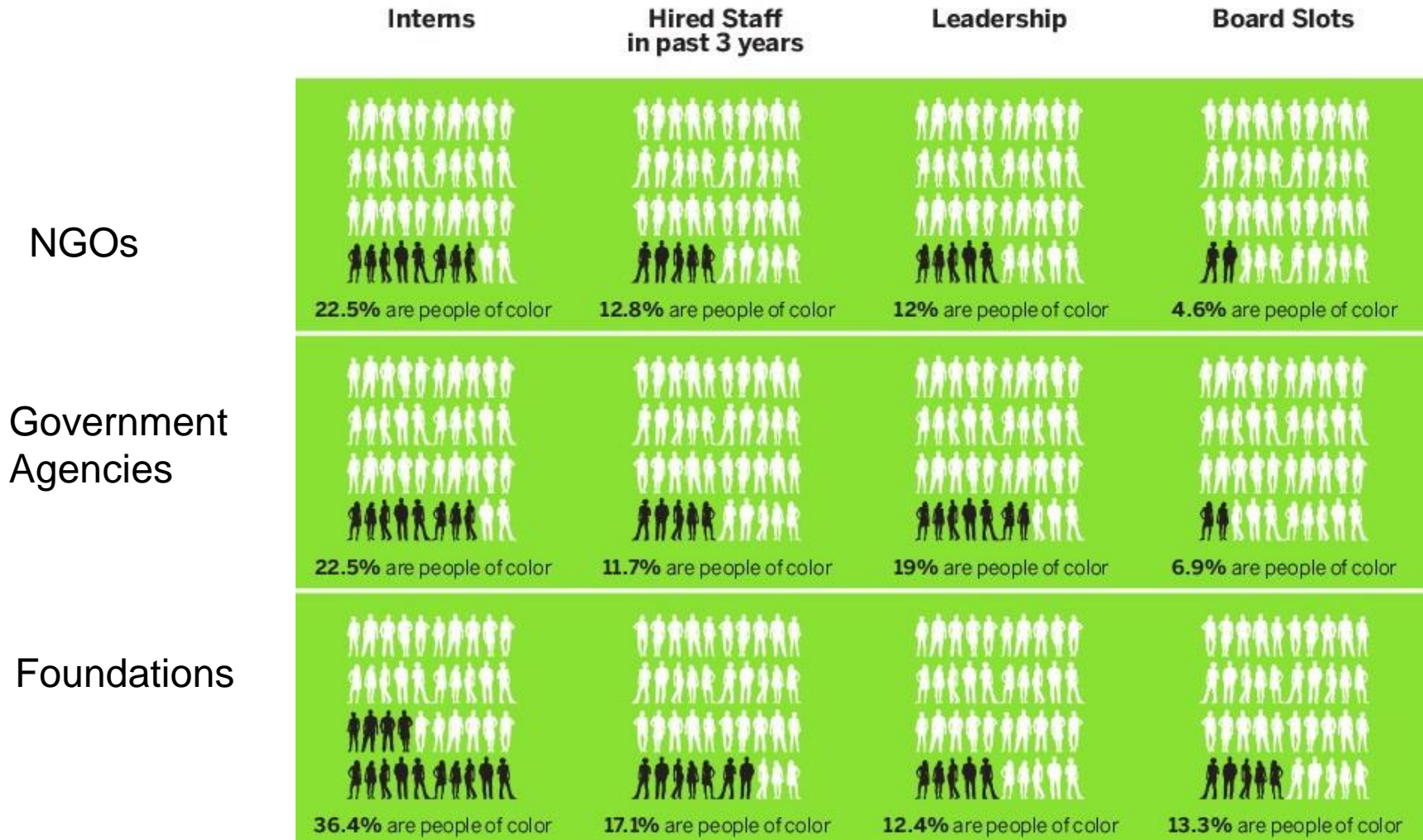
# SEVERE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF PEOPLE OF COLOR

## Staff Diversity in Environmental Organizations



- Ethnic minorities and multi-racial backgrounds comprise about 38% of the US population
- Environmental organizations are made up of less than 16% people of color
- The science and engineering workforce is made up of 29% people of color

# THE GREEN CEILING



**Data show that people of color are concentrated at the lower ranks of environmental organizations**

Source: <https://www.diversegreen.org/the-challenge/>



# **ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS INTERVIEWED FELT THAT:**

**‘The dominant culture of the organizations is alienating to ethnic minorities, the poor, the LGBTQ community and others outside the mainstream’**

**Diversity equity and inclusion should be core values that are in the mission statements of these organizations**

**There are a significant number of talented ethnic minorities that are willing and able to work in environmental organizations but hiring practices can be discriminatory**



Taylor, Dorceta. The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations, 2014, p. 9

# MAINSTREAM ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT?



Collin O'Mara, National Wildlife Federation



Carter Roberts, World Wildlife Fund



Michael Brune, The Sierra Club



Gina McCarthy, Natural Resource Defense Council



Jennifer Morris, The Nature Conservancy



Jamie Williams, The Wilderness Society



Annie Leonard, Greenpeace



Jamie Rappaport, Defenders of Wildlife



Fred Krupp, Environmental Defense Fund



Abigail Dillen, Earth Justice



David Yarnold, Audubon Society

# WHO IS LEADING THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT?



Peggy Shepard- WEACT for Environmental Justice



Winona LaDuke,  
Honor the Earth



Jacqui Patterson,  
NAACP



Dwaigh Tyndal,  
Alternatives for  
Community and the  
Environment



Lois Gibbs,  
Center for Health  
Environment & Justice



Kim Wasserman-Nieto  
Little Village  
Environmental Justice  
Organization



Miya Yoshitani  
Asian Pacific  
Environmental  
Network



Tom Goldtooth,  
Indigenous  
Environmental  
Network



Elizabeth Yeampierre  
UPROSE- Climate  
Justice Alliance



# FUNDING DIFFERENTIALS

Environmental Grantmakers Association data show that out of over **\$6.8 billion** spent by U.S. foundations on environmental giving 2007– 2013,

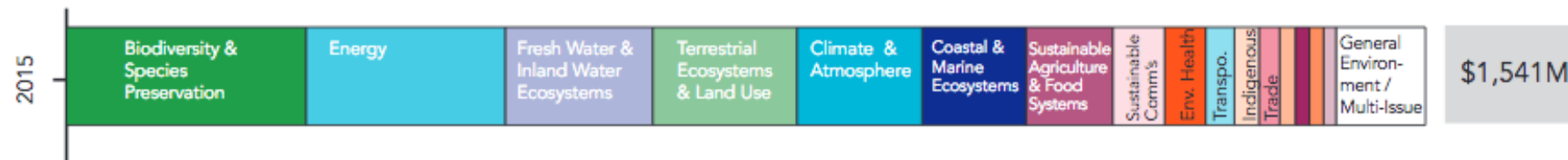
only **\$85 million (12.5%)** was dedicated to the Health & Justice category, which included the subcategories of environmental justice, toxics, environmental health, and indigenous populations/communities.

***This was the Environmental Grantmakers Association's smallest funding category.***

Tracking the Field: Analyzing Trends in Environmental Grantmaking, Volume 5 Summary,  
Canfield, Henderson, Li 2015

# FUNDING DIFFERENTIALS

FIGURE 1. EGA MEMBERS' GRANTMAKING BY PRIMARY ISSUE AREA, 2009–2015



A SUMMARY FROM  
THE ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTMAKERS ASSOCIATION'S  
**TRACKING THE FIELD: VOLUME 6**  
ANALYZING TRENDS IN ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTMAKING

***“We essentially have a racially segregated environmental movement, we’re too polite to say that.***

***Instead, we say we have an environmental justice movement and a mainstream movement.”***

***-Van Jones, co-founder of the nonprofit Rebuild the Dream and a former adviser on green jobs to the Obama administration. The Washington Post March 2013***



# RECKONING WITH THE HISTORY



**Racism/ white supremacy is part of the foundation of the US conservation movement, and it's legacy is alive today**



# ACKNOWLEDGING THE LEGACY

## Essential Questions Revisited-

What are the historical underpinnings of race and racism and the 'lack of diversity' in the US Environmental Movement?

What are the stories that are told in the field of environmental studies and environmental education?

What are the stories that are not told?

Why?



# **A CALL FOR RECKONING & RECONCILIATION**

# THANK YOU

**Sarika Tandon**

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[standon@antioch.edu](mailto:standon@antioch.edu)

# Questions?

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*Join us as we launch a new webinar series that will present activists and scholars leading solutions to environmental problems through advocacy.*



## Environmental Advocacy Webinar Series

### The Path to Environmental Justice is Local

Wed., June 10, 2020 – 12:00-1:00 PM



Presenter:  
**Elizabeth Yeampierre**  
Executive Director of  
UPROSE, Brooklyn's  
oldest Puerto Rican  
community-based  
organization.

### When Kids Fight for Environmental Justice, Words Have Power

Thursday, June 11, 2020 – 12:00-1:00 PM ET



Presenter: **Jaysa Hunter-Mellers'**  
dynamic speeches at  
rallies and her testimony  
at City Hall helped shut  
down the coal-fired  
power plant that was  
causing her asthma.

Her story is told in the short film, "Words Have Power"

Registration open for both webinars at [www.communityresilience-center.org/environmental-advocacy-webinar-series/](http://www.communityresilience-center.org/environmental-advocacy-webinar-series/)