JUSTICE & EQUITY IN THE AGE OF EMERGENT STRATEGY

JULY 30, 2019

Tamara Toles O’Laughlin
WHO AM I? – A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

CORE VALUES

- Humor
- Community
- Equity
- Access
- Humanity
- Creativity

FRAMEWORK

- Big Picture
- Relationship Building
- Adaptive Frameworks
- Holistic Living

SPHERES

- Justice
- Policy
- Enviros
- Built Enviros
- Air
- Humans
WHAT DO I DO?—WORK ACROSS LINES I DID NOT DRAW, ON SYSTEMS NOT SYMPTOMS.

Builds a more powerful movement by harmonizing and aligning the impact and leadership of people of color and indigenous people serving on environmental, non-profit boards.

ecoWomen
To inspire and empower women to become leaders for the environmental community through educational and professional development opportunities by inviting and including women of color in every activity.

Amplifies women’s voices to eliminate the toxic chemicals that harm our health and communities.
WHAT DO I DO?—WORK ACROSS LINES I DID NOT DRAW, ON SYSTEMS NOT SYMPTOMS.

The Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC) advises air quality, climate and energy issues to policy committees of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). ACPAC advises the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) on air quality planning and the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) on climate and energy issues and initiatives.

The Mitigation Working Group supports the charge of the state Climate Commission with a focus on regulatory, market-based and voluntary programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while supporting economic development and job creation.
THE WORK

Building a multiracial, multigenerational, identity conscious Global Grassroots Climate Movement to hold our leaders accountable to science and justice.
Why do we need political action to protect people and the planet?
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Timeline/Background

1968-1982  Public Mobilization for Environmental Justice

1983-1990  Federal/EPA Definition provides a limited explanation of how the government could support environmental justice

1991      National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit- EJ Principles
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Timeline/Background

1994  President Bill Clinton’s Executive Order #12898
1996  Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice,
1996  Jemez Principles of Democratic Organizing
1998  The Wingspread Statement/Precautionary Principle
2011  Maryland Environmental Standing Act (enhanced)
“When an activity raises threats of harm to the environment or human health, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.”
US POLICY

- Clean Water Act
- Safe Drinking Water Act
- Clean Air Act
- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act
- Toxic Substances Control Act
Even with the most robust set of environmental laws ever constructed we have not solved basic questions of environment and health.

- Highways AND air pollution.
- Climate Change, flooding AND mold.
- Barber Shops/Beauty Salons AND toxic exposures.
- Equal access to grocery stores, museums or park space in every zip code.
EMERGENT FRAMING: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

working definition:

Meaningful and informed engagement, early and often, with impacted people and decision making bodies, as long term partners, for the purpose of determining a fair distribution of benefits, and, if any, acceptable burdens.

© 2019
## EJ Operational Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity</th>
<th>in the distribution of benefits and burdens among all residents.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>to decision makers at a time when their actions can inform a process rather than merely provide observations on the impact of an action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>the realization of the highest potential of each and all without the weight of structural barriers or biases.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UNSOLICITED OPINION:
CORPORATE BODIES CANNOT DO JUSTICE WORK. THEY
CAN SUPPORT IT VIA A FOCUS ON EQUITY.
Equity
MY FRAMING: EQUITY

Working Definition

Equity as a practice involves habitual refocusing of resources and norms to support those persons, communities, and groups at risk of harm in a given action AND shifting policies, practices and activities to avoid those harms.
EJ v Equity

(Human Bodies v Corporate Bodies)
What does the introduction of clean, renewable energy infrastructure do naturally to increase justice, equity or enjoyment of nature? E.g.

- Hydropower
- Wind
- Solar
- Storage
Inherently. . .nothing.
Equity, Fairness, Just Transition must be informed by the experience of concentric stakeholders and followed by intentional action that incorporates their directive.

Why?

What we promote or we devalue in our policy and practice impacts the health of generations.
HUMAN HEALTH IS IMPACTED BY FEDERAL & STATE ENERGY PRIORITIES & INVESTMENTS.

Political Questions of Environment & Human Health

• What is a just transition through a lens of human health?

• Should Congress explicitly commit to shifting away from fossil fuels? When? On what basis?

• Should federal regulation shift in response to growing demands for Offshore Wind to take begin in the US on of its shoreline?

• Should energy generated in the US stay in the US?

• Should impacted communities have a say in when, where and how energy is produced in the state?
What’s missing from the story?
Madison Grant, 1887 is known less for his conservationist efforts than for his book “The Passing of the Great Race, or The Racial Basis of European History,” a pseudo-scientific work of white supremacism.

Gifford Pinchot, the country’s foremost theorizer and popularizer of conservation, was a delegate to the first and second International Eugenics Congress, in 1912 and 1921, and a member of the advisory council of the American Eugenics Society, from 1925 to 1935.

John Muir, working, consuming, occupying, and admiring American nature was a way for a certain kind of white person to become symbolically native to the continent. He also publicly derided and degraded indigenous people as a part of his iconic narrative and worldview.
EQUITY: ALL THINGS ARE NOT EQUAL

The Indian Removal Act May 28, 1830

Jim Crow Laws 1877-1967


The Homestead Act May 20, 1862

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882

Dawes Severalty Act February 8, 1887

Racially Restrictive Covenants 1920s–1948 (nationwide) prevention of people of color from purchasing homes in white communities.

Equity, Fairness, Just Transition must be informed by the experience of concentric stakeholders and followed by intentional action that incorporates their directive.

Why?

What we promote or we devalue in our policy and practice impacts the health of generations.
ROOT CAUSES

RACIST STANDARDS
CULTURAL NORMS OF OPPRESSION
SILENCED SCIENCE ON CUMULATIVE IMPACTS
(FALSELY) AGGRESSIVE LIMITS ON RESOURCES SUPPORTING ALL OF THE ABOVE
How do we respond to a growing chorus of the righteous and the right now?
GREEN NEW DEAL:
JOBS
INFRASTRUCTURE
PEOPLE
EQUITY & JUSTICE

Assumptions

No community, group or people should bear an outsized burden of environmental threats, ecological manipulation or be excluded from decisions that determine their future for any reason, particularly for profit.

Poverty is not biological it is a function of design.
EQUITY & JUSTICE LENS

Avoids negative consequences/impacts including:

**Jobs:** Accelerated Unemployment or Underemployment

**Pollution:** Rapid and unsustainable shifting of ecosystem conditions

**Public Health:** Agency and localized choice which increases health and well being
PROGRESS ON EQUITY & JUSTICE

New Paradigm

Powershift/Powershare:

Recognize and accept cultural difference, leadership styles, expertise and engage in participatory valuation of land and natural resources.

Recognize that money can be an imperfect or inadequate form of compensation.

Advocate for restorative justice policy and procedures that recognize and respond to all of the above.
PRACTICE MAKES PROGRESS ON EQUITY & JUSTICE

Tools

Health Impact Assessments

Environmental Justice Review/Evaluation

Environmental Fiscal Impact Assessment

Eco-Economy Policy Modelling

- Non-Energy/Community Benefit Protocol
- Organic Infrastructure Redesign

© 2019
PRACTICE MAKES PROGRESS ON EQUITY & JUSTICE

Global Climate Strike → Sep. 20–27

Got plans?
Get in touch if you want support to make the moment matter where you live/love. It’s time for the mass melanization of the movement to make our communities resilient and whole.

https://globalclimatestrike.net/
STAY IN TOUCH:

Email: tamara@350.org
Phone: 443-863-5275
Web: tolesolaughlin.com
Twitter: @Tamaraity