

**POLICY**

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

**Adopted by the Board of Directors on June 5, 2017**

In alignment with key leaders in Oregon and National nonprofit work, the Rusk Ranch Nature Center asserts the following policies:

*"Our policies and practices provide equal opportunity to all qualified individuals in leadership, staffing and service, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion and any status protected by law."*

**Definitions:** We recognize the following DEI definitions and seek to guide the organization through them:

- **Diversity** is often referred to as the extent which an organization has people from diverse backgrounds represented throughout. It is recognition of individual differences. These differences can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical abilities, nationality, language, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic background and other areas of identity.
- **Inclusion** on the other hand, is seen as the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement of the diversity of an organization, or organizational culture, (essentially all of the ways that an individual might connect and interact with the organization, systems, and community) in order to create equal access, well-being, and a sense of belonging for all members of the organization. Inclusion is closely tied to the culture of an organization.
- **Equity**, in contrast, are the systems, protocols, practices, and policies that allow everyone to be treated fairly within an organization. Equity is closely tied to actions and results.

Arriving at cultural competency through policies focused on DEI is both a process and a goal. Cultural equity embodies the values, policies, and practices that ensure that all people—including but not limited to those who have been historically underrepresented based on race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion—are represented in the development of policy and the fair distribution of programmatic, financial, and informational resources.

**Acknowledgements & Affirmations**

- In the United States, there are systems of power that grant privilege and access unequally such that inequity and injustice result, and that must be continuously addressed.
- Cultural equity is critical to the long-term viability of healthy thriving communities.
- We must all hold ourselves accountable, because acknowledging and challenging our inequities and working in partnership is how we will make change happen.
- Everyone deserves equal access to a full, vibrant natural life, which is essential to a healthy and democratic society.

**Commitments**

- Pursue cultural consciousness throughout our organization through substantive learning and formal, transparent policies.
- Acknowledge and dismantle any inequities within our policies, systems, programs, and services, and report organization progress.
- Commit time and resources to expand more diverse leadership within our board, staff, and advisory bodies.

## **Plan**

Therefore the board of Rusk Ranch Nature Center has the following plan to assure ongoing DEI quality:

- Use the DEI spectrum guide to assess annual progress.
- Include a DEI competency training as part of the annual board retreat in February each year.
- Develop a training document for new board members with a DEI section.
- Develop outreach for diversity in board membership.
- Charge board subcommittees to bring up issues of DEI concern for resolution whenever possible.
- Develop a specific DEI vision.
- Systematically examine the organization's programs and policies for alignment with DEI goals.
- Develop procedure for consideration of DEI inclusion for all programs – such as data collection for fact based decision making.
- Develop an ongoing strategy to reach out to culturally and racially diverse groups for inclusion.