



## **A Statement from Outdoor U Staff:**

The murder of George Floyd at the hands of police officers has galvanized the international movement toward justice and racial equity. Our staff and advisory council have spent the last few weeks listening, learning, and reflecting on our role in promoting justice and equality in environmental education.

Environmental and outdoor programming foster the ideals of education, conservation, and environmental respect that can be incredibly empowering for individuals and communities. But pursuit of environmental literacy and sustainability cannot happen in a vacuum. Many of the societal structures that harm the environment are closely linked with the causes of oppression of black people and other marginalized communities. There can be no environmental justice without racial justice.

The Benedictine Values that inform the core of our identity have always implored us to welcome people of all backgrounds and experiences. But as a predominantly white organization in a predominantly white field, Outdoor U can and must look closely at our own implicit racism, biases, and privilege as we strive to proactively dismantle barriers and build bridges for those who have been excluded from the outdoors for so long.

With humility and determination, we are committed to (at a minimum):

- Reduce barriers to outdoor experiences for BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color) and other marginalized peoples;
- Educate, ourselves and our CSB/SJU students, about the history of racism and decreased access to the outdoors and environmental careers for BIPOC;
- Create and foster relationships with people and organizations, both within and outside the CSB/SJU community, that lead to authentic outdoor experiences for BIPOC youth, college students, and adults.

Ecosystems with high biodiversity are healthier and more resilient than those without. So too will greater diversity in Outdoor U enrich our lives and provide a healthier and more resilient future for our community.

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