

To: Crag Law Center Board of Directors
From: Crag Staff Members
Date: May 16, 2018
Re: Draft Equity Diversity Inclusion Statement

Crag staff present this draft equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) statement to the Board of Directors for consideration, discussion, and input. We invite questions, comments, and challenges towards a goal of authenticity in our approach as well as shared understanding of the importance of EDI principles for the mission of the organization.

Context:

In 2017, Crag began organizational Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) work with a daylong, facilitated racial equity workshop. Major principles taught at the workshop include: group norms and common values for how we talk to each other about EDI work (how to speak one's own truth, accepting non-closure, and practicing humility); shared language and definitions of common EDI terms; history of racism in Oregon; white privilege and institutional racism; and methods to identify barriers and opportunities to move against structural inequities. The workshop activities helped solidify our group understanding of efforts within our *Communities* program to make land use planning more equitable and inclusive.

Following the workshop, we carried the process forward by applying the framework to *The Wild* program, which focuses on public lands and wildlife protection. Through that several months long process, we identified a number of EDI themes that flow through our work in *The Wild*, and acknowledge that we can use our privilege to more purposefully address those themes by building relationships, supporting community leaders, and providing access to justice.¹

Process:

At Crag's April 2018 staff retreat, we participated in a self-directed exercise to begin drafting an EDI statement for the organization. Before the retreat, all staff watched a webinar presentation, *Crafting a DEI Case for Change and DEI Statement*, provided by Training Resources for the Environmental Community (TREC), which explained the anatomy of an EDI statement and included some examples and potential pitfalls to keep in mind.² We collectively brainstormed each element of the statement: (1) Acknowledgment of inequities, (2) Our role, (3) Articulating our why, (4) Our commitments. For each segment, ideas were first collected as a group without analysis or discussion. We then reviewed the collected ideas and either distilled the concepts to a sentence, or identified the concepts that felt most aligned with Crag's mission and values. The exercise was timed for each segment. The ideas captured during the brainstorming exercise, presented in random order, are provided for reference in Attachment A. Together, we pulled ideas from

¹ The EDI and The Wild process and outcomes are captured in a report dated 3/16/2018.

² Available at: <https://www.trec.org/resources/crafting-dei-case-change-dei-statement/>

our brainstorming session that resonated the most with our staff and our mission. These formed the basis for a rough draft EDI statement.

Staff met again in early May to discuss and improve the rough draft EDI statement. We refined language, better articulated the connection to our work, and challenged ourselves to be brave in naming injustice, privilege, and racism in our statement. We also discussed each of the commitments to develop consensus around what we will do and hold ourselves accountable to. Staff who were able to attend the Symposium on Environmental Justice, Race, and Public Lands at the University of Oregon (May 9-11) suggested a few additional refinements and one additional commitment to the statement.

Outcome:

Draft Crag EDI Statement

We are all interconnected with the land, water and air. But not all people have equal voice in decision-making that affects our environment and our communities. This problem is rooted in settler colonialism, systemic racism, and corporate dominance leading to unequal access to social, political and economic power. Crag balances the scales of justice by supporting communities to achieve their goals for a healthy environment. To realize our mission, we must help to elevate the voices of diverse communities. There is no environmental justice unless all communities have access to justice. Implementing equity, diversity and inclusion principles will allow us to use our limited resources for the greatest impact, create space for new leaders, improve our own thinking and approach to our work, confront injustice and cultivate a culture of compassion at Crag. We can use our power and position as a leader in our community to promote these values and remain focused on the needs of our clients.

Our Commitments:

1. We will prioritize time and resources to support equity and inclusion within our organization and with our clients, our supporters, and our community.
2. We will recruit, train, and mentor diverse staff, board members, interns and volunteers.
3. We will acknowledge our privilege and step back, listen, and help to elevate diverse voices.
4. We will challenge assumptions about community values, the relationships of people to the land and how ecosystems function.
5. We will remain client-focused.

Attachment A

(1) Acknowledgment of Inequities

How does Crag characterize inequities in the world today?

- Unequal access to justice
- Money equals power
- Not everyone has equal voice
- Financial security
- Gender representation
- White privilege
- History of slavery
- Genocide, land theft, and colonialism
- Land ownership
- Lack of affordability
- Equal access to resources
- Racism
- Religion
- Political power
- Access to education and technology
- Climate injustice
- Corporatism
- Government subsidies/assistance

(2) Our Role

Based on our mission and skill sets, how can our organization contribute to a more equitable world? How does Crag make the world a better place and for who?

Mission: Protecting and sustaining the Pacific Northwest's natural legacy.

- Providing equal access to justice (for underserved, under-resourced, marginalized, traditionally unrepresented communities)
- Providing representation
- Elevating voices
- Holding government and corporations accountable
- Providing high quality legal services to individuals and organizations who could not otherwise afford it
- Supporting grassroots
- Developing leaders
- Educating communities
- Coalition building
- Providing support for community organizing
- Mentoring and training
- Balancing the scales
- Empowering communities
- Providing tools to achieve goals

Attachment A

(3) Articulating our Why

Why is EDI important to our organization?

- Source of clients
- To achieve our mission we need to elevate the voices of diverse communities
- Higher quality of life
- Because there is no environmental justice unless all communities have access to justice
- Better ideas come from a diverse group of thinkers
- Feels good
- It's the right thing to do
- Builds power
- Strengthens us
- Environmental movement has been dominated for too long by white men
- Greatest impact, greatest need
- Create space for new leaders
- Expand reach or focus of clients
- Cultivate a culture of compassion at Crag
- Avoid siloing of cultural movements
- Intersectionality
- Dismantling top down approach to environmental movement
- Improving our own thinking and approach
- Acknowledging and addressing Oregon's racist history

(4) Our Commitments

How do we bring our EDI values to fruition? What are the actions that we take that support equity and inclusion? Strategies for both our external clients' well being as well as our staff.

- Seeking out, training, mentoring diverse interns, staff, and board
- Asking clients to explore how their work impacts or includes diverse communities
- Stepping back, listening and using our privilege to elevate diverse voices
- Create space for conversations about injustice (both internally and with donors) and to celebrate our diversity
- Expanding our relationships and work we take on to represent a more diverse community
- Continuing the conversation
- Remaining client focused
- Explore how we prioritize our limited resources to address equity and inclusion
- Stay authentic
- Investing for the long term
- Practice humility; acknowledge we can learn from others.