



## **A vision for Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion in the Sierra Club Canada Foundation**

May 5, 2021

### **Introduction and Purpose**

In 2020, the Sierra Club Canada Foundation (SCCF) established the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee in response to a growing movement of intersectional environmentalism and awareness of systemic issues related to JEDI in Canada and beyond.

This vision reflects the conversations, principles, and objectives of the Committee and SCCF. It describes our mission and vocabulary, and recommends priority areas for meaningful action. This vision is intended to inspire specific goal setting, targets, and actions within SCCF to expand and diversify SCCF's membership and leadership. SCCF recognizes the importance of the Jemez Principles and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in informing our approach to JEDI and this ongoing process of self-transformation<sup>1,2</sup>.

### **Statement on a Living Document**

Reflecting our current context and ongoing journey, this vision exists as a living document to be updated and expanded over time. SCCF strives to continuously assess, apply, and reassess this vision as we grow and learn together.

### **Sierra Club Canada Foundation and JEDI**

Principles of JEDI are foundational to the achievement of SCCF's mission and mandate, and environmental action more broadly. In particular, [SCCF's Strategic Plan 2019-2020](#) establishes a priority for "being inclusive and a leader in advancing environmental justice."

To enact this priority, we must move forward collectively, acknowledge historical and systemic inequalities, and reflect on our internal practices to build a more inclusive and accessible community. SCCF must integrate and empower diverse voices in the environmental movement, understanding that vulnerability to environmental crises is tied to privilege and oppression. It is important that the communities affected by the changes we advocate for are part of the conversation and process, and that we can support or ally in initiatives that align. For SCCF to fully deliver its mission, we must recognize that environmental and social justice are deeply intertwined. Internalizing JEDI principles in SCCF's programs, campaigns, and leadership will foster an inclusive and sustainable organization, and an approach to environmental advocacy that reflects the cultures of the communities we serve. As a grassroots organization, SCCF and our actions must reflect our grassroots membership.

### **Our Shared Vision**

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<sup>1</sup>Jemez Principles, [here](#)

<sup>2</sup>United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), [here](#)

SCCF envisions that our community will uphold JEDI principles and enact our strategic priority to serve as a leader in environmental justice by:

- Creating space for and uplifting diverse voices in the environmental movement
- Enabling and encouraging inclusive access to nature and the environmental movement
- Engaging and fostering partnerships with diverse and equity-seeking communities
- Promoting accessible and multidirectional communication, collaboration, and learning
- Ensuring access to JEDI training for SCCF leadership and the wider community

We envision an SCCF community where diverse voices can flourish in both French and English, giving due space to reflect nuance in environmental justice issues, particularly from marginalized voices. We strive to create this space by listening, being careful not to speak for or over others. We endeavour to build and strengthen meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples, without being extractive. We aim to engage with diverse communities, such as Indigenous, immigrant, youth, people with disabilities, and lower income communities, ensuring accessibility to nature and SCCF's mission. We aspire to champion intersectionality, building bridges across social and environmental justice while recognizing our historical role in systemic injustice and inequity.

### **Our Shared Vocabulary<sup>3</sup>**

Justice refers to consciously working toward righting past, current, or future wrongs that may differentially impact individuals or communities. This can include dismantling barriers to opportunities, reducing vulnerabilities to crises, or addressing historical inequities. It can also include building a future that acknowledges this history and actively works against it to proactively address inequity and promote activism that is more than reactive.

Equity means that people are treated fairly, taking into account their varying identities. It goes beyond equality by recognizing differential barriers to services, supports, and opportunities based on diverse experiences and identities.

Diversity encompasses the range of human identities, lived experiences, expressions, or differences, including age, education, immigration status, Indigeneity, religion, disability, language, ethnicity, culture, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, among many others. Diversity is sometimes differentiated by demographic, experiential, and cognitive diversity<sup>4</sup>, but may include many more forms.

Inclusion is creating an environment that respects equity, is welcoming, and is accessible to all. An inclusive environment is one where people feel like they belong, are valued, and can bring their whole self to the organization. Inclusive environments also make an effort to amplify those voices that may experience barriers to access.

### **Taking Meaningful Actions**

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<sup>3</sup>Definitions informed by NSERC's Guide for Applicants: Considering equity, diversity and inclusion in your application, [here](#)

<sup>4</sup>The three types of diversity that shape our identities, [here](#)

As we begin 2021, we enter the final year of SCCF's current strategic plan and an opportunity to realize JEDI with meaningful and targeted action. We have identified priorities in four areas that will lead to future goals, targets, and specific actions for accountability:

#### Self-Learning

- Uncovering and understanding power and privilege within the SCCF, particularly as it relates to environmentalism and communities affected by environmentalism
- Understanding the perpetuation of colonialism at individual and institutional levels within SCCF, its staff, members, and volunteers
- Providing training to SCCF staff, members, and volunteers to enable JEDI-centered leadership, communications, and advocacy

#### Building & Supporting Our Operations

- Implementing policies and processes to improve JEDI accountability, especially within SCCF leadership and fund development
- Developing accessible, equitable hiring practices, particularly for staff and leadership
- Transparently reviewing internal governance structures and processes under a JEDI lens, ensuring clear communication of this process and resulting actions

#### Building & Supporting Our Community

- Recognizing the need for and implementing JEDI principles throughout SCCF programs, campaigns, and membership culture
- Establishing an inventory of SCCF's collaborative potential to support JEDI initiatives
- Assessing geographic representation of SCCF and working to be more inclusive
- Offering SCCF's support to BIPOC-led charities, organizations, and causes

#### Communicating

- Ensuring SCCF is language-inclusive, becoming fully French/English bilingual and using Indigenous languages where applicable and appropriate
- Amplifying diverse stories and voices involved with SCCF programs and campaigns
- Assessing SCCF vernacular to build trust through inclusive and inviting communications
- Expanding the voice of SCCF to respect the dignity and interdependence of the environment and all living beings
- Collaborating on strategies for new engagement using an intersectional lens, ensuring our community is given opportunity, time, and space to learn with us