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**Iowa Wildlife Federation**

**Equity and Justice Board Committee Charter**

The Iowa Wildlife Federation, on December 4, 2021, at the 2021 Annual Meeting, voted to adopt, as a standing entity of the board of directors, an Equity and Justice Committee (EJC). The historic notion – whether conscious or unconscious – that conservation is strictly a space of white men and women is wrong and always has been. Conservation is a space for everyone and it will be the work of this committee to separate the board and staff of the Iowa Wildlife Federation from the “whiteness” that has long dominated this space and work to engage new and diverse communities into the work of Iowa conservation. It is the interest of this committee that Equity and Justice be integrated into the DNA of this organization in order that all decision making have EJ at its heart.

**How we define Equity and Justice**

**Equity** ensures that everyone has support and access to the resources needed to be successful, by identifying and eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of all staff and members.

* Improving equity involves increasing justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions and systems, as well as in the distribution of resources.
* Equity differs from equality. Equality refers to treating everyone the same but does not necessarily lead to equitable outcomes because diverse communities have diverse needs and have faced varying obstacles and inequities.

**Justice** is the collective responsibility of a free and just society, to ensure that civil and human rights are preserved and protected for each individual regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, nation of origin, sexual orientation, class, physical or mental ability, and age.

**Other important definitions:**

**Diversity** refers to acceptance of and respect for the variety of similarities and differences among people, including but not limited to gender, gender identity, gender expression, ethnicity, race, Native or Indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, romantic orientation, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, other family status, socio-economic difference, appearance, language and accent, ability and disability, mental health, substance use disorders, education, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role and function, veteran status, thinking style, and personality type. Inclusion of various diversity dimensions may vary by geography or organization.

**Inclusion** is a dynamic state of operating in which diversity is leveraged and power is shared to create a fair, healthy, and high-performing organization or community. An inclusive environment ensures equitable access to resources and opportunities for all. It promotes a sense of belonging. It also enables individuals and groups to feel safe, respected, engaged, motivated, and valued for who they are and for their contributions toward organizational and societal goals.

**Purpose**

The Iowa Wildlife Federation established the EJC as a standing committee in order to acknowledge the critical importance of advancing conservation for all people in Iowa. The history of conservation is extremely white and, to a large degree (often entirely) ignores communities of color and other historically underrepresented groups. The committee is a critical driver in fostering real organizational change, establishing a dedicated focus on diversity and inclusion priorities, and promoting Equity and Justice.

The EJC and therefore the Iowa Wildlife Federation strives to create an organizational culture and climate in which all participants (board, staff, constituents and partners) are valued, have a sense of belonging and connection with one another and the organization, and feel empowered to do their best of conservation.

The EJC is charged with researching, developing, and proposing mechanisms that will help create a supportive, positive, and inclusive work environment. This includes taking Equity and Justice into consideration during all decision-making efforts whether that be board and staff recruitment, programmatic development and implementation, budget development and all areas in between. The EJC will also work to the full board and staff in integrating Equity and Justice into our conservation work including our outreach, philanthropy and external partnerships.

**Goals**

* Promote and Celebrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and multiculturalism among the board and staff through a variety of mechanisms including but not limited to workshops, discussions, social gatherings, and events.
* Create spaces that foster respectful, inclusive, and equitable communication practices throughout and among board and staff and promote best practices engagement and belongingness.
* Provide the tools and resources to learn about, discuss, and ask questions about issues and topics related to Equity and Justice including continuous training, guest presentations, and other educational and inspirational resources.
* Facilitate communication between all staff and board to share ideas and recommendations and assist in finding consensus when it comes to our Equity and Justice needs, goals, and intentions.

**Responsibilities**

1. Identifying Trainings – board and staff
2. Support in board recruitment
3. Partnership development support
4. Staff recruitment
5. Event development -
6. Constituent education – social media and newsletter
7. Policy development and ratification
8. Programmatic development support
9. Board and staff assessment – annual analysis of “how we are doing” as an organization
10. Addition goal setting and support in integration of Equity and Justice into the overall make-up of the organization.

**Membership**

1. Chair: The committee will select a chair or who will report to the full board. The chair will be responsible for meeting scheduling and preparation, meeting facilitation, follow-up on action items, regular newsletter items, liaising with the full board, etc.
2. Committee: The committee membership will reflect the diversity of the board. The committee will have no less than three members with a goal of five. For the inaugural year of the committee, the EJC chair and the board chair will conduct outreach to board members to develop the group. After the first year, the committee members will be nominated by the board chair or volunteer.
3. Meetings: The EJC Chair will set the tone for meetings frequency and times. There shall be no less than six meetings held each year.

If more than five staff members are interested in serving, the EJC will develop a process to select membership with a goal of creating a diverse and inclusive committee. If volunteer participation is insufficient and/or the membership does not effectively represent the diversity noted previously, board chair and EJC chair will solicit additional members.