

Sound Rivers and Environmental Justice

July 8, 2020



How this is going to go...

- Introduction
- Sound Rivers
- Definitions
- (Very) Brief History of the EJ movement
- (Very) Brief History of Modern Environmental Movement
- What is Sound Rivers doing
- Questions

Introduction and Goals

- **Intro**
 - Why are we talking about this?
 - Statement recommitting ourselves to the work of EJ
- **Goals:**
 - Make the connection between the work Sound Rivers is doing on water quality and environmental justice
 - Make the connection between environmental injustices and racial injustices
 - Recognize that the environmental movement had been complicit in perpetuating systems of inequality

Sound Rivers

Our Mission: To monitor and protect the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico River watersheds covering nearly one quarter of North Carolina, and to preserve the health and beauty of the river basin through environmental justice.

39 year history of enhancing and protecting the Tar-Pamlico and Neuse through education, advocacy, research, and restoration.

Sound Rivers

At our core, we are an environmental organization working to protect the waters for everyone within the Tar-Pamlico and Neuse River Basins.

However, we know that not all waters or communities are impacted by the same kinds of pollution. Low income communities and communities of color suffer disproportionately from the environmental hazards and have less access to environmental goods.

The environment is simply one more lens through which racial inequity manifests.

You cannot fight for the environment without also fighting for justice.

Definitions

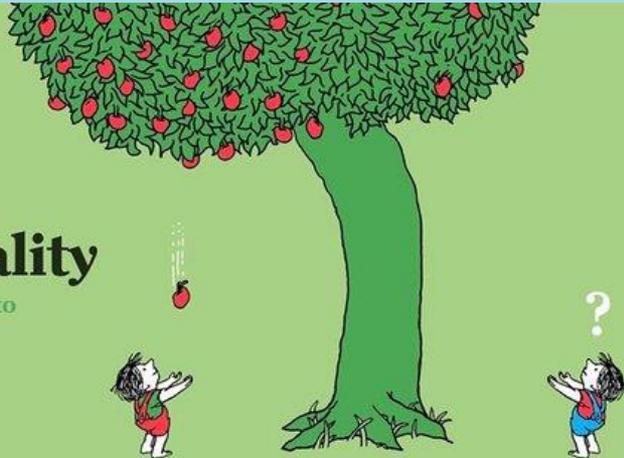
Environmental Justice is the **fair treatment and meaningful involvement** of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

- EPA

Definitions

Inequality

Unequal access to opportunities



With apologies to Shel Silverstein from @lunchbreath

2019 Design In Tech Report | Addressing Imbalance

Equity

Custom tools that identify and address inequality



With apologies to Shel Silverstein from @lunchbreath

2019 Design In Tech Report | Addressing Imbalance

Equality?

Evenly distributed tools and assistance

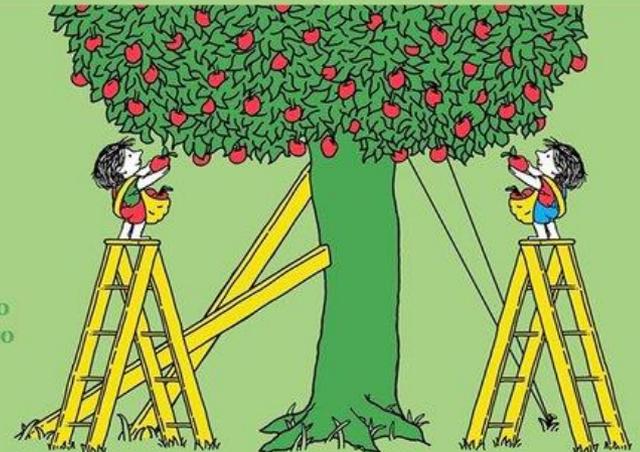


With apologies to Shel Silverstein from @lunchbreath

2019 Design In Tech Report | Addressing Imbalance

Justice

Fixing the system to offer equal access to both tools and opportunities



With apologies to Shel Silverstein from @lunchbreath

2019 Design In Tech Report | Addressing Imbalance

Origins of the Environmental Justice Movement

1982: Warren County, NC and the opposition to PCB disposal landfill

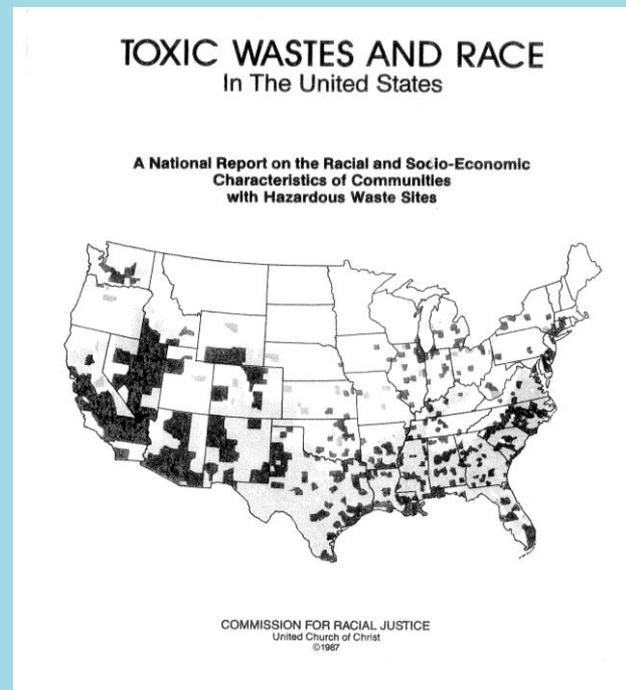
- Massive civil disobedience by residents opposing the trucking in of PCBs to their community



Origins of the Environmental Justice Movement

1987: UCC, "Toxic Wastes and Race"

1991: First People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit



“WE, THE PEOPLE OF COLOR, gathered together at this multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national and international movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction and taking of our lands and communities, do hereby re-establish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth; to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to ensure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and, to secure our political, economic and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples, do affirm and adopt these Principles of Environmental Justice”

Origins of the Environmental Justice Movement

People had been experiencing and fighting against environmental injustices long before Warren County in 1982

Origins of the Environmental Justice Movement

People had been experiencing and fighting against environmental injustices long before Warren County in 1982

- Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike 1968
- Cesar Chavez and the Farmworker Movement 1960s and 1970s



Two Separate Movements

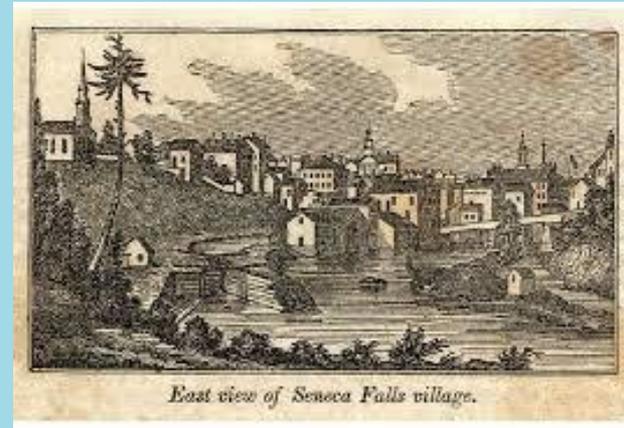
“Throughout its history, the mainstream conservation movement in the United States has mainly attracted a narrow segment of the population—primarily white, wealthier Americans. This demographic prevails today. The leadership, boards, staff, and memberships of mainstream environmental groups continue to be largely white, upper middle-class, and older.”

-Diversity in the Conservation Movement

Developed by the National Audubon Society in partnership with the North American Association for Environmental Education, ToyotaTogetherGreen, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and EECapacity

Reckoning with the Environmental Movement's Racist Past

- Figures in the early conservation movement
 - Garrett Hardin, Gifford Pinchot, Teddy Roosevelt, John Muir, Aldo Leopold
 - Conserving what and for whom?
- Environmentalism and Justice at odds
 - NPS
 - Seneca Village
 - Cap and Trade Climate Solutions



So What is Sound Rivers Doing?

- On DEI(J) internal organizational work
- On Environmental Justice in our advocacy work
 - What are we choosing to work on, who are we partnering with, how are we framing the issues
 - CAFOs



“If this were my property I’d be outraged at some of these conditions that were allowed to persist. Less fortunate citizens have property rights, too. They have a right to good health and enjoyment of their property. If this were some McMansion surrounding hog farming operations, or houses of the affluent and more politically powerful were here, wouldn’t these conditions have been cleared up sooner rather than later? That is my problem.”

- Judge Wilkinson

Resources

- [Environmentalism's Racist History](#)
- [Conservation and Eugenics](#)
- [The Principles of Environmental Justice](#)
- [Cap and Trade - Not So Great if you are Black or Brown](#)
- [Cesar Chavez and the UFW](#)
- [Connecting the Dots between Environmental Injustice and the Coronavirus](#)
- [Conservation and Diversity Report](#)
- [Environmental Injustice in NC's Hog Industry](#)

- **Other Resources:**
 - Robert Bullard, Paul Mohai, Rachel Frosch-Morello, Steve Wing

For More Information

jill@soundrivers.org

252-946-7211

Like us on Facebook: @Pamlicotar



WWW.SOUNDRIVERS.ORG

