

Breaking the Green Ceiling

Building a foundation for OUR NATION'S next generation of "Urban Environmental Voices"

Urban Areas and their residents are bearing the brunt of environmental degradation.

➤ AIR QUALITY

Heat Islands

PM2.5 (non attainment areas)

➤ URBAN FRESH WATERS

Lakes on 303D list of contaminated water ways

Flooding

Groundwater recharge

Stormwater Management

➤ LAND USE

Brownfield Redevelopment

Parks

Green Infrastructure

Urban Ecology

Urgency to diversify organizations is directly related to the changing demographics of our urban centers* and our country

Community members as stakeholders, advocates and activists AND ultimately professionals

- ▶ Strategic urban environmental programming and projects, enhance urban “Quality of Life” and mitigate effects of Climate Change.
- ▶ This develops and expands the talent pool and exposes young people to these careers in the future.

Dichotomy of Environmental Perspectives

So where is the environment?

Nature of Americans Report - A Park or a Scenic Vista?

“Big Green” organizations must do a better job at framing the issue of environmentalism to reflect why it is important NOW.

Articulating urban perspectives into ACTION with tangible project programming.

- ▶ Developing environmental community programming for the East Orange Youth and Cultural Center. A multi-generational approach, through our children we will connect to parents and the greater community.
- ▶ Engage adults to become more passionate and civic minded on environmental issues.
- ▶ We are developing programming that exposes students, when possible through STEM, to the potential of environmental careers.
- ▶ Environmental job training and entrepreneurship.
- ▶ Economic Self Determination is integral to community buy-in and project ownership.

How Do We Do It?

- ▶ Valuing the urban environment
- ▶ Valuing underserved urban communities
- ▶ Start by valuing, with financial resources, the input of the indigenous community.
- ▶ Engaging and including minority professionals.
- ▶ Finding ways to monetize and incentivize project siting and community resources, with a new financial methodologies, tools and perspectives.

What Does Success Look Like?

- Community empowerment, employment and buy in. The majority of the population lives near an urban area.*
- Increased capacity for community participation in planning, zoning and other public forums, as an informed citizenry.
- Economic self-determination is fundamental to reversing the misery of poverty and increased community capacity and engagement.

* The **1920** census marked the first time in which over 50 percent of the U.S. population was defined as urban.

What does Success Mean?

- ▶ A better environment for all.
- ▶ The rising tide of environmentalism, **MUST LIFT ALL BOATS**
- ▶ If urban environmental challenges are met head on, what will it mean environmentally for populations outside urban areas.

My experience with the Golden Rule: “The guy with the gold makes the rule!”

- ▶ I applaud the philanthropic community, for addressing these issues.
- ▶ A relationship with funders, for community organizations, must be longer term
- ▶ Government policy must take the lead, understanding that proper business incentives should work, for everyone
- ▶ Mission-Driven investment will also play a large role

Thank you for your time. I look
forward to connecting.

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