



Western Washington University
Western CEDAR

Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference

2018 Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference
(Seattle, Wash.)

Apr 6th, 12:00 AM - 12:00 AM

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Environmental Progress

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Chang, Michael and Lowell, Natalie, "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Environmental Progress" (2018). *Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference*. 608.

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SSE2 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Environmental Progress
Session Chair: Michael Chang & Natalie Lowell

Long-term solutions to complex environmental issues will not be successful without a representative, collaborative, and inclusive approach in building solutions. Natural resource management inherently revolves around communities' access to resources. Regardless of intention, the field of conservation has systematically excluded many groups who may experience disproportionate impacts to environmental issues. Diversity and inclusion within conservation can lead to innovation, community empowerment and buy-in during decision making processes, and more effective solutions to environmental issues. Because of this, it is imperative that we systematically diversify the environmental movement.

There are many different ways of thinking of diversity and inclusion within the field of environmental science, policy, and management. Here, we focus on three different paradigms of thinking regarding diversity and inclusion, though they are not mutually exclusive: diversity and inclusion through representation, content, and process. During this panel session, we brought regional leaders to discuss the various perspectives and frameworks in how they engage in diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies. We invited audience members to submit anonymous questions, in order to foster a safe and open space, and used those questions to engage in issues related to representation, retention policies, education, traditional and indigenous knowledge, the hiring practices, and methods of engaging in productive conversations with superiors without fear of retribution. This session highlighted the perspectives of historically underrepresented voices, and from this panel session we have created an initial network of professionals interested in continuing conversations regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion in the near future.