

# Equity & Inclusion Work Plan

*Created February 2018, updated February 2022*

Dane County Land & Water Resources Department believes that everyone deserves to live in a community with healthy land and water resources as well as with access to the parks, trails, and other natural resources in the county. To help achieve this vision, the Department is committed to:

- equity, diversity, and inclusion by ensuring all people are given the same opportunities for programs, services, and employment regardless of age, race, gender or gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation, place of residence, veteran status, physical ability, cognitive capacity, socioeconomic status, or family or marital status;
- developing and supporting a culture that values and advances equity, diversity and inclusion throughout its workforce and customers;
- learning from underserved or under-represented communities to identify and take appropriate steps towards fully realizing equity, diversity, and inclusion goals.

This following Equity and Inclusion Plan was developed to help put these commitments into action.

**Initiative Area: Organizational Leadership**

*Organizational Commitment, Brand and Visibility*

Chosen Target (Where do we want to be?)	Current Status (Where are we now?)	Tactics to Close the Gap (How do we get there?)	Measures of Success (How did we get there?)	Lead Staff Responsible (Who? By When?)	Resource Mobilization (what resources needed, e.g. staff time, budget, support from others)
<p>LWRD commitment to equity and inclusion is clearly stated and well understood throughout the organization and by the public</p>	<p>Some division work plans and other planning/policy documents have been updated to include equity priorities.</p> <p>Added a new Equity and Inclusion page to LWRD website with commitment to E&amp;I clearly stated, links to the E&amp;I plan and relevant department projects, and highlights of accomplishments.</p> <p>Accomplishments highlighted in our annual department newsletter, parks newsletter, and on social media.</p> <p>Created an overview handout that is sent to new staff so they are aware of the E&amp;I plan and can learn what LWRD has been working on.</p> <p>LWRD has held trainings and provided resources for staff including a presentation by James Edward Mills, a two-part training with The People Company, 15 staff participating in the 2020 YWCA Racial Justice Summit in 2020, and learning resources shared occasionally in an Equity Spotlight email.</p> <p>Developed a template email signature that includes the option to add your personal gender pronouns and provided educational materials to staff. This should remain optional.</p>	<p>Create E&amp;I performance measures for staff; equity action items in Division work plans or employee guidance/direction.</p> <p>Invite staff to include their personal gender pronouns to their display name on zoom or to share their pronouns during meeting introductions. This should remain optional however managers should be encouraged to model and normalize this action.</p> <p>Managers should ask new hires what their preferred pronouns are and not assume.</p> <p>Department forms where we gather information from customers should include a preferred pronouns option so they can self-describe. This ensures we have the appropriate pronouns when we contact them and shows that we are leading by example.</p>	<p>Clear statement of commitment visible to staff and public</p> <p>Performance measures developed and in use</p> <p>Division work plans include items that help accomplish LWRD equity goals</p> <p>Annual check in on how we're doing (managers, Equity Team). Refer to baseline survey (see Section 3, workplace culture) to measure progress each year</p>	<p>LWRD Equity Team and department managers</p>	
<p>LWRD has an internal Equity Team and collaborates with other departments.</p>	<p>LWRD formed an internal E&amp;I team with representatives from each department division. The team meets regularly to help implement the E&amp;I Plan.</p> <p>LWRD has a representative on the county RESJ team and meets with other department E&amp;I teams to share ideas and resources.</p>	<p>We continue to struggle with how to include and engage the broader department in a meaningful and useful way.</p>	<p>Regular LWRD equity team meetings and participation in the county's RESJ team.</p>	<p>Department Director continues to support E&amp;I team.</p>	
<p>LWRD communications consistently include</p>	<p>Staff that use images have increased awareness of the images they chose and try</p>	<p>Intentionally expand photo library so images reflect the diversity of Dane</p>		<p>Staff and volunteer photographers</p>	<p>Funding or staff time to increase photo library.</p>

images reflecting the diversity of Dane County residents	to select images that reflect the diversity of Dane County residents (age, ability, gender, ethnicity, etc).  Continued challenge is lack of high quality photos reflecting this diversity. LWRD is working to build their photo library.	County residents.  Put out a call to partner organizations asking if they have photos we can use.			
LWRD social media is effective at engaging diverse audiences	Our social media and messages still reach a limited audience and we plan to keep working to expand our reach.  We currently do not include closed captioning in videos we post on social media or our website. We acknowledge that this excludes members of our community with visual impairments.	Review Pew Research Center Report on social media use by racial and ethnic groups.  Expand social media as a way to reach more Dane County residents.  Highlight more of our WRE and LCD programs – success stories and opportunities to engage.  Highlight accomplishments of E&I plan that would help people better access park properties and program information (translated materials, accessible recreation options, etc)  Staff that create or contract for videos will include closed captioning to be inclusive of those with visual impairments. The Wisconsin Council of the Blind website has resources.		Consult with Ellen Derge (OEI)	

**Initiative Area: Leadership Development**

*Recruitment, Workplace Culture and Staff Retention*

Chosen Target (Where do we want to be?)	Current Status (Where are we now?)	Tactics to Close the Gap (How do we get there?)	Measures of Success (How did we get there?)	Lead Staff Responsible (Who? By When?)	Resource Mobilization (what resources needed, e.g. staff time, budget, support from others)
LWRD staff reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.	There is currently very little workplace racial diversity.  Have started to increased promotion of positions openings through list-servs, networks and media that serve diverse audiences. WRE/LCD have paid to post engineering positions to the Society for Black Engineers job list.  Department is in the process of updating their class specifications and position	Develop relationships with organizations that can help us promote LWRD job opportunities to members of groups that may have been historically unaware of these opportunities and career paths  Formalize our process for posting open positions including where employee relations posts, where division managers are posting, and strategic places to advertise.  Develop position descriptions to reflect	Low turnover  High satisfaction of women and POC staff – implement an exit survey process to interview staff (including LTEs) as they leave.	Division managers and Department Director	

	<p>descriptions to remove the degree requirement when appropriate and have an equivalent requirement of education, training, or experience to a bachelor's degree.</p>	<p>LWRD's values of equity and inclusion (each position within LWRD should have an expectation of some time devoted to equity; recruitment notices should also communicate this expectation)</p> <p>Develop a list of standard exit interview questions to measure help gauge satisfaction of employees and tease out any equity challenges that need to be addressed.</p> <p>Use OEI countywide survey or Keen Consulting final report to gauge staff attitudes any progress over time in terms of changing demographics and attitudes.</p> <p>Think carefully about whether a specific degree or skill is really required before putting it in an announcement. If not required, list as "recommended" so as not to deter candidates who might be a good fit.</p> <p>Engage Dane County youth in our parks and natural resources and create a pathway for them to continue to engage. This could eventually lead to internships and LTE opportunities to expose more youth to land and water careers.</p>			
<p>Dane County youth in diverse communities have an increased awareness of natural resource and conservation careers options</p>	<p>LWRD hosts interns from Simpson Street Free Press and Boys and Girls Club each summer to help expose youth to conservation careers.</p> <p>Parks has given presentations to OFS and Boys and Girls Clubs on developing resumes &amp; competing for positions.</p> <p>Several department programs help expose youth to the outdoors and conservation careers including: Get Outside, Youth Environmental Leadership Experience, Arborist Youth Apprenticeship Program and Career Pathways with OFS.</p> <p>In 2021, parks hired hire two individuals straight from OFS for summer positions.</p> <p>A short summary of our summer LTE positions is sent out to Boys and Girls Club, OEI, Centro Hispano, Urban League and others to make sure these positions are advertised to a wider audience. These</p>	<p>Continue to expand hiring pipeline for other positions with job shadow opportunities.</p> <p>Continue to expand youth programing and our engagement "pathway" to expose youth to outdoor opportunities and land and water conservation careers.</p> <p>Continue and expand participation in forums to describe LWRD work and promote as a career option.</p> <p>Use alternative hiring process where appropriate.</p> <p>Look at previous parks intern program and think about how it could be reinstated, revamped, and expanded to whole Dept. Potential to merge it with the WRE Soil Erosion Inspector state certificate program. If an internship program is created, promote it to diverse audiences.</p>		<p>Outreach staff</p>	

	positions could be a pathway into permanent positions.				
LWRD has a comprehensive understanding of workplace attitudes, beliefs and commitments related to equity and inclusion.  LWRD has a workplan to expand on strengths and offer opportunities for growth and understanding.	E&I group formed with staff representing all divisions.  OEI conducted a county-wide survey in 2018 to assess current knowledge and attitudes but were unable to provide a breakdown of results by department so we don't have department level data.  We have held several all staff trainings and smaller learning opportunities.  We are seeing more staff sharing resources and asking questions indicating an increased interest and awareness in learning more about the topic.	Consider also updating the LWRD strategic plan and revising the mission statement to include equity and inclusion goals.  We continue to struggle with the best way to share learning resources to staff (webinars, readings, etc) in a way that is meaningful to their positions.			
Staff feel supported by the Department when confronted with harassment or discrimination by external or internal parties  Staff understand how to support each other or external parties if harassment or discrimination occur	Some employees experiencing harassment have been backed up by co-workers however there is no department policy or any training on what to do if that happens.  We are hosting a training for our park rangers and enforcement staff this winter focused on diffusing difficult situations. This should include (1) standing up for colleagues or people being harassed/dismisssed/discriminated against by external or internal parties (2) strategies and techniques to diffuse situations if staff are alone and (3) a trauma informed/crisis response training.	Develop department policy on what to do if you see or hear a staff member engaged in a situation involving harassment or threats.	Survey mentioned above should include questions to help assess progress, for example: whether or not staff have encountered these situations and whether they feel they have the necessary skills to diffuse these situations.		
Equity and inclusion is an essential job element and LWRD value	Conference and learning opportunities have been shared with staff as they arise and an increased number of staff have participated since we began implementing this plan.  We will continue to provide opportunities for group trainings options and encourage staff to bring back the ideas and discuss them with their divisions.  State orgs hosting trainings (e.g.,WPRA, WI Land+Water) now include DEI topics now so staff getting exposure during conferences they might already be attending.	Set aside conference and training funds for learning about bias and how to address it.  Develop a department performance evaluation sheet and include equity and inclusion measures.  When divisions develop annual work plans, they should review this E&I Plan and identify possible action items for the year.	Clear statement of commitment visible to staff and public  Performance measures developed and in use  Division work plans include items that help accomplish LWRD equity goals  Annual check in on how we're doing (managers, Equity Team). Refer to baseline survey (see Section 3, workplace culture) to measure progress each year		
LWRD's recruitment	Perceived inequities in hiring and promotion				

and employee development opportunities are understood throughout the organization and employees are aware of opportunities for advancement. .	(including reclasses).  Equitable training and professional development opportunities for staff even if they don't have a certification need.				
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**Initiative Area: Program Innovation**

*Removing Barriers*

Chosen Target (Where do we want to be?)	Current Status (Where are we now?)	Tactics to Close the Gap (How do we get there?)	Measures of Success (How did we get there?)	Lead Staff Responsible (Who? By When?)	Resource Mobilization (what resources needed, e.g. staff time, budget, support from others)
<b>Identify Barriers:</b> Gain a better understanding of what the existing barriers actually are. The barriers identified below are what we currently perceive to be barriers. We would like to find out what the actual barriers are and adjust our outreach and programs to help overcome those barriers.	LWRD currently working on a park access project with Keen Consulting to gain a better understanding who is currently using our park system and what barriers exist that could be preventing people from accessing our parks or other services. Once these barriers are identified we can further refine the perceived barriers we have listed below and come up with additional goals to address those barriers.	By the end of 2022, additional barriers to park access should be identified through this research project. Once these barriers are identified we can further refine the perceived barriers we have listed below and come up with additional goals to address them. The identified barriers will also help guide our 2022 Parks and Open Space Plan update.			
<b>Language:</b> LWRD programs, services, and properties are available to non-English speaking residents	The county launched a new website content management system and all of our department websites now include a "translate" feature on the page allowing the user to translate the webpages into whatever language they want using google translate.  Some information and surveys have been translated into Spanish and/or Hmong (POSP survey; Simpson Street Free press articles; watershed model signage at zoo; Story Walks and Scavenger Hunts at the Lussier Family Heritage Center)  Much of our current park signage, information, maps, etc. is only available in English.	Our Land Conservation and Water Resources Engineering divisions have identified priority documents to translate.  Land conservation would like to translate PDF documents attached to the website that don't get translated with the sites translate button. Also planning to add an what languages the service providers speak into the registry.  Water Resources Engineering would like to translate ECSM permit applications as well as the service provider registry.  Meet with Spanish and Hmong speakers to find out translation priorities or determine other methods for sharing information (spoken language, videos, etc)  Learn more about how we can make	Track website clicks on translated material if possible.		

	<p>With over 12,000 acres of land in our park system and many department divisions, it has been hard for us to determine what information to prioritize for translation. We have a lot of information and could use some recommendations or guidance on where to start. Department is involved with discussions in the RESJ group about language access needs and priorities.</p>	<p>information more accessible to people that don't read or have visual impairments and can't see website information.</p> <p>Work with other departments on the topic of translation services. Our department needs subject matter expert translators to make sure the appropriate terminology is being used.</p> <p>Figure out what our interpretation service options are (including sign language) and have signage/information available to the public so they can communicate with staff.</p> <p>Create a welcome sign for park kiosks that is in multiple languages with key info translated into Spanish, Hmong and English</p> <p>Create a series of key park warning signs (thin ice, trail closed) in Spanish, Hmong, and English with a graphic visual</p>			
<p><b>Transportation:</b> LWRD events and meetings are accessible by using public and non-motorized transportation</p>	<p>Staff have been cognizant of transportation issues when scheduling events and public meetings to make sure they are in locations accessible to the public.</p> <p>Parks website includes information on parks accessible by bike or bus.</p> <p>Many of our county parks are outside of the urban areas so there are not bus lines or other public transportation options which is a challenge for getting the public out to our parks. In collaboration with the Sierra Club Four Lakes Group, staff used a survey to gather stories from the public about where bus transportation access to parks could be improved. The results will be used to pilot a park shuttle program to see if there is demand for larger transportation service.</p> <p>WRE and LCD have moved their permit applications online so applicants no longer have to get to our office in person to drop them</p>	<p>Note bus lines bike routes on meeting notices; on parks brochures.</p> <p>Consider location when scheduling public meetings.</p>		<p>Staff holding public information meetings</p>	

	off.				
<p><b>Financial:</b> Dane County residents with financial limitations are able to access our parks, trails, and other services</p>	<p>While visiting a Dane County Park is free, some activities (biking, skiing, disc golf, etc) require a park permit. Parks has a <a href="#">Financial Assistance</a> option available and will provide the permits at no cost for those that cannot afford them but this information was not publically available anywhere on our website. We have not added a page so the information and process is clear.</p> <p>Parks currently offers two free weekends where no permit is required to try new recreational opportunities.</p> <p>Parks has a senior permit fee schedule.</p> <p>Dane County has supported Yahara Watershed Academy scholarships for minority and low-income people.</p> <p>Most outreach programming is free and open to public</p> <p>If farmers can document financial burden, they can receive 90% cost-sharing v. 70% (this is state program, mimicked by county)</p> <p>Dept. has moved to invoicing online so there is no more requirement that people have a checking account for permit applications.</p>	<p>Update and revamp the financial assistance program and webpage.</p> <p>Continue to explore other areas of financial hardship that we might be able to work on. One of these could be lower cost permits for veterans or active military personnel who could benefit from the mental health and recreation benefits that our parks provide.</p>			
<p><b>Awareness:</b> Dane County residents are aware of services, lands, recreation and public input opportunities etc, and accessibility features of county properties</p>	<p>Park and Open Space Plan survey was translated into Spanish and promoted by Simpson Street Free Press article in Spanish</p> <p>Simpson Street Free Press has written several articles highlighting parks and department programs. Some of these were translated into Spanish.</p> <p>Currently creating some “learn to” type events to allow people to test</p>	<p>Continue to work with Simpson Street Free Press and other groups to help promote information and opportunities.</p> <p>Partner with local organizations, such as Color in the Outdoors, on some cosponsored park outings. Could pair these with Healthy Parks events.</p>			



	<p>outdoor recreation opportunities they may not have tried before.</p> <p>Staff have partnered with Centro Hispano on a Junior Naturalist summer session for 2022.</p>				
<p><b>ADA Access:</b> Where feasible and appropriate, consider exceeding ADA requirements to provide a fully inclusive environment at LWRD buildings and properties</p>	<p>Dane County Parks has done a lot in terms of accessibility, in many places going above and beyond ADA requirements. The 2022 budget includes a new \$500,000 budget line for accessible improvements in the parks.</p> <p>Staff began working with an ADA consultant for the CamRock playground project and plan to have her consult on other projects. Staff also <a href="#">tested wheelchair and rollator</a> to look for accessibility barriers and plan to test on future sites as well.</p> <p>A new Accessible Recreation page was added to the Dane County Parks website to better promote accessible parks and trails.</p> <p>New all-terrain wheelchair provide by AccessAbility Wisconsin is now housed at and managed by our Lussier Family Heritage Center facility. Anyone can check out the wheelchair for free and use it to explore the trails in the surrounding Capital Springs Recreation Area.</p> <p>Dane County Parks is partnering with others to develop system-wide improvements at county lake access sites. Improvements will create and enhance access to <a href="#">fishing and boating opportunities</a> for all ages and abilities.</p> <p>All portable toilets at Dane County Parks are currently being upgraded to ADA accessible units.</p> <p>WRE and LCD staff provide one on</p>	<p>Accessible areas show up in online searches</p> <p>Brochures or info developed that specifically promote accessible areas</p> <p>Keywords added so Dane County Parks show up in online searches for accessible areas.</p> <p>Make sure our accessible parks show up on informational websites such as <a href="#">this one</a>.</p> <p>Advertise our accessible parks to local organizations, medical professionals, physical therapists, etc that might be looking for accessible activities</p>			

	one assistance for anyone without computer access or email.				
<b>Gender:</b> Improve our policies and facilities to be more gender inclusive.	Our Lussier Family Heritage Center Facility worked to create a more inclusive space by requiring all vendors on their preferred vendor list to have LGBTQ friendly policies.  Park staff are currently conducting a bathroom inventory to identify opportunities to update single stall bathroom signage from signs with a male/female symbol to all gender signs that are more inclusive of all. The inventory will also identify opportunities for bathroom upgrades that could occur as part of future park development projects and upgrades.			GIS LTEs conducting restroom inventory. Park planners will assess options	
<b>Park Naming Conventions:</b>	We are working on capturing our current park naming conventions in writing so they are consistent and transparent.			Park Planning staff	

**Initiative Area: Collaboration**

*Removing Barriers*

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Commissions and Committees staffed by LWRD have adopted their own organizational commitment statements and plans; integrated with LWRD Equity Plan	Our department staffs four committees and commissions and also works closely with the Foundation for Dane County Parks nonprofit. The Lakes and Watershed Commission and the Foundation have adopted equity and inclusion statements and/or plans and other committees have expressed interest.	Recommend similar action to the Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee and Land Conservation Committee  Joint training for Natural Resource committees and commissions  WHERE ARE THESE AT??	Diversity of committee/ commission representation  Existence of plan  Evidence of implementation		
LWRD continues to	LWRD learns by participating	Request training RESJ 1 training for managers and			

<p>learn what others in Dane County are doing and shares our own efforts</p>	<p>in RESJ meetings and meetings with equity leaders in other departments</p> <p>The department shares learning resources with staff and hosts occasional trainings on E&amp;I topics.</p> <p>Staff are working to build connections to community groups to learn how we can engage and support other efforts.</p> <p>WRE division has partnerships with the UW School of Engineering and landscape architecture program. Also a good relationship with UW Platteville.</p> <p>Need to determine how department programs can reach a larger audience through these partnerships. Who are we reaching now? How can we track this?</p>	<p>Equity Team (Public Health Madison Dane County is willing to provide this to LWRD) RESJ 2 also. Have RESJ certified trainers on staff to assist friends groups etc.</p> <p>New Initiative – every staff member dedicates 2 hours per year to having department information (rainfall simulator, STEM activity about their job area, tree/plant giveaway with education info, etc) <b>at a community event</b> that reaches a diverse audience, hosting an educational talk/event <b>at the Heritage Center</b>, or participating in a <b>park outing</b> with a community group. We will hire a translator to help if needed.</p> <p>New Initiative – ever staff member can use 8 hours of work time each year to volunteer in their community with a focus on interacting with groups they don't normally interact with. The department will organize some group opportunities for staff.</p> <p>If we are hosting a training, make sure it is being sent out broadly and reaching all audiences.</p>			
<p>Support Friends groups/build capacity in partnering with LWRD on equity and inclusion</p>	<p>Parks staff is participating on a collaborative interpretation plan process with the HoChunk Nation, the Dane County Historical Society, the Friends of Capital Springs Recreation area and the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District. The goal is to create a new interpretive plan for WG Lunney Lake Farm County Park with a model for collaboration that could be replicated throughout our park system.</p> <p>Purchased August Ball's self-guided webinar training for use with park friends groups and department staff.</p>	<p>Identify ways staff could contribute E&amp;I information at our partner and friends group meetings. Define specific actions or resources.</p>		<p>Outreach staff</p>	

**Initiative Area: Resource Mobilization**

Purchasing and Contracting

Chosen Target (Where do we want to be?)	Current Status (Where are we now?)	Tactics to Close the Gap (How do we get there?)	Measures of Success (How did we get there?)	Lead Staff Responsible (Who? By When?)	Resource Mobilization (what resources needed, e.g. staff time, budget, support from others)
<p>LWRD staff take advantage of increased opportunities to purchase services and products offered by diverse communities</p>	<p>Staff try to reach out to a diversity of food vendors and musicians for park events that include these groups ago and continue to try to engage diverse audiences in events when we have them. Together with other DEI committees we have <a href="#">compiled resources</a> for POC, women and veteran owned businesses. We have shared these resources with Joe Oby in OEI.</p> <p>Staff try to purchase supplies from local businesses when possible.</p>	<p>Share local business lists with staff and create guidance on purchasing locally and from POC, women and veteran owned businesses when possible. Important for lower dollar amount purchase where staff discretion is high.</p> <p>Department could use some additional guidance or business lists to help us with ideas of other businesses we could be connecting with. Some of the areas include: printing companies, graphic designers, and construction contractors.</p> <p>Look at LCC contractor lists and WRE consultant lists – they self register – promote to diverse groups to register. Incorporate into a LWRD contractor list/services list. Discuss lists with OEI so they can encourage participation in their networks.</p>	<p>Compare past contract lists with current practice, and OEI list</p>	<p>Staff with Purchasing cards</p>	