

The Watershed Association acknowledges that we could never effectively address the critical environmental problems facing the planet without recognizing the inherent relationship between the environment, justice, and equity. Conservation and preservation of our environment are dependent on remedying environmental harms that have been purposefully or incidentally imposed on historically excluded people, BIPOC populations, and low-income communities. As advocates for Environmental Justice, we honor that communities that bear the brunt of environmental degradation have historically been marginalized and excluded from the environmental movement. We recognize that communities of color are more likely to be exposed to toxic environments and systematically segregated from public lands and other natural places. While we know that limited exposure to nature has serious physical and psychological health ramifications, we also know that early childhood experiences in nature significantly influence the development of lifelong environmental attitudes and behaviors. When people don't form early connections to the natural world or, at the very least, see themselves represented or welcomed in natural spaces, they are less likely to protect them. The Watershed Association and the successful preservation of our water and planet are dependent on actively working to address these issues. We are committed to:

- The continued evaluation and implementation of the principles of environmental justice.
- Honoring the indigenous presence and wisdom in the natural spaces which we work to protect.
- Confronting and interrupting racism, bias, and discrimination in our own institution.
- Incorporating diverse perspectives, experiences, and ideas and building cultural competency and sensitivity.
- Actively working to close the nature gap and enhancing access to natural spaces for these specific communities whenever possible.

A recent study was co-authored between the Watershed Association and Texas A&M; this report provides a baseline, holistic understanding of where diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and environmental justice (EJ) issues intersect with water issues and challenges within the Texas Hill Country and further outlines key findings and defines action items moving forward.

<https://nri.tamu.edu/publications/research-reports/2022/water-and-equity-in-the-texas-hill-country/>

The Hill Country Water and Equity map viewer is an interactive tool built to visualize the intersection of diversity, equity, and inclusion and the environmental justice issues within water characteristics and challenges in the Texas Hill Country.

<https://gis.nri.tamu.edu/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=c5820884c2b8410597dbfdb7446e4b2c>

[Water and Equity in the Texas Hill Country - Watershed Association \(wimberleywatershed.org\)](http://wimberleywatershed.org)