

# EQUITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY



## VISION AND VALUES

The Intertwine Alliance's vision is that people of all ages and ethnicities are connected to nature and work together to create and sustain communities in which they can fulfill their promise to be safe, healthy, and unafraid. The Alliance honors the diverse ways communities already connect with nature in different settings and seeks to expand these possibilities.

With this vision in mind, the Intertwine Alliance was formed to find common ground among multiple communities, perspectives, organizations, political affiliations, and ideologies. Anything short of that would be a failure to fulfill our most fundamental purpose. We believe our work can be a force for making our community healthy and whole – environmentally, economically, and socially. We are different in many ways, but The Intertwine is where we come together as a community around those things we have a shared commitment to. It is our common ground.

It is our intention that The Intertwine Alliance will include, represent, and serve the full cultural and demographic diversity of the region. We find that while there are many differences in approach and perspective, our fundamental vision - that nature is a crucial component of life in the metropolitan region - is shared by different geographical and cultural communities across the region.

The idea of strength in diversity, and of building bridges among organizations and communities that share common purpose but are diverse in perspectives, is a central value that is at the very core of The Alliance. At the most fundamental level, it is the reason we came together. This value extends to building bridges across cultural divides.

The Intertwine Alliance will harness the power of our coalition as a force for change. We will support Alliance partners in becoming more diverse and culturally conscious and in addressing inequities in how the benefits of parks, trails and natural areas and associated programming are distributed and accessed. For Alliance partners already working on diversity and equity issues, we will provide a platform for them to further their work. Our vision is that people of all ages and ethnicities are connected to nature and work together to create and sustain communities in which they can fulfill their promise and be safe, healthy, and unafraid. Our vision is that The Intertwine Alliance includes and represents the full diversity of our region.



## ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGY

The Alliance works on several fronts to fulfill the commitment to embody becoming a diverse and culturally agile alliance.

### INTERNAL ALLIANCE EFFORTS

1. **Achieve a culturally agile staff and board.** Alliance directors and management are committed to and work towards ensuring that organizational infrastructure, leadership, and staff represent regional demographics.
2. **Incorporate equity and inclusion awareness and practice into all Intertwine Alliance work processes and programs.** We work with and learn from partner organizations that have developed tools and practices for cultural awareness and inclusion and adapt them to Alliance work. We continue to learn and improve our processes over time. We plan to develop a system-wide approach to integrate equity, diversity and inclusion.
3. **Seek to understand the needs of diverse communities and integrate those needs as Alliance priorities.** Just as ecosystems are more resilient when they are diverse, the strength and viability of our Alliance rests on its diversity. We invest in relationships and seek to support and add value to the work of a wide range of organizations and communities. We particularly emphasize building relationships with communities of color, low income communities, and youth. We make a special effort to welcome organizations that have been excluded in the past. We are interested in the priorities of our region's various communities, and how they think about social, economic and environmental issues. We support and include different approaches to and ways of addressing the issues our communities face, and respect the wisdom of the people that live here. In these ways we work to build a coalition that truly reflects, in its membership, the rich diversity of our region, and reflects the values and ways of our community.

### COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

4. **Support our partners to become more culturally aware and inclusive and achieve their equity objectives.** We do this by identifying organizations who have this expertise, elevating existing community leaders, connecting members to one another, and using our "economies of scale" to make workshops and programs available to our partners that they would otherwise not have been able to as easily access on their own. Partners already implanting action plans to become more inclusive and equitable will be supported through resources to have a greater impact.
5. **Support partners' existing collaborative initiatives and generate new collaborative initiatives.** We will promote and supplement the programs that our partners are already involved in and connect them to expert organizations that could further expand their reach into the community and substantiate their programs. We will initiate and facilitate projects and programs that support our partners in working together collaboratively to advance

equity objectives in the region. These new initiatives will include targeted programs involving a subset of our partners, as well as initiatives that include many or all of our partners.

## PROJECTS

### INTERNAL ALLIANCE COORDINATION

#### Achieve a diverse staff and board

1. **Build relationships with communities of color to identify prospective staff and board members.** Incorporate equity and inclusion awareness and practice into Intertwine Alliance work processes and programs. These initiatives and programs will tie in communities of color so that they are involved in The Intertwine's work. Community leaders can be elevated to leadership roles within The Intertwine and be more invested in the work. Through establishing these new relationships, The Intertwine will build relationships with community leaders of color and will network to identify prospective staff and contractors.

#### Incorporate equity and inclusion awareness and practice into Intertwine Alliance work processes and programs

2. **Adopt tools and practices for cultural awareness.** Work with and learn from partner organizations (such as Multnomah County) that have developed tools and practices for cultural awareness and inclusion and adapt them to Alliance work. These tools and practices would be applied to initiatives such as the Community Health and Nature Initiative, the Our Common Ground Campaign, and others. We will continue to learn and improve these tools and processes over time. Implementation of these tools will result in organizations assessing how equitable and diverse they are. Action plans will be created to strengthen their cultural relevancy and The Intertwine will offer resources to interested organizations so they can take execute their plan.
3. **Conduct half day workshops for Alliance partners in how to apply cultural awareness tools and practices.** Conduct workshops for key Alliance leaders in how to apply the cultural awareness tools and practices. Engage equity leaders within the community to promote their work as models and to use those models to train others within the Alliance.

### ALLIANCE MEMBER EFFORTS

#### Help our partners become more culturally aware and inclusive and achieve their equity objectives.

4. **Diversity Training.** The Alliance will arrange for diversity and equity training for its staff, board, core group, and key leaders. We recognize that equity and inclusion is an ongoing process, and commit to continued learning as an organization and community. Diversity training can be a good way to build relationships among key Alliance leaders from different

organizations. Organizations already implementing this work will be identified as they can be potential facilitators and trainers.

- a. Sponsor a two day multiculturalism workshop for 25 to 50 leaders from different Alliance organizations. Include members of The Alliance board and key committees, as well as key partner organizations. The workshop would teach about institutionalized racism and other “isms.”
  - b. Diversity at Intertwine Alliance Summits. The Intertwine Alliance convenes two summits per year that attract more than 300 community leaders. The Alliance will explore new ways to use these summits, such as bringing in guest speakers, artists, poets, musicians and trainers who convey messages that our community may not typically hear. We will sponsor a half day workshop at the Intertwine Alliance spring summit for Alliance partner organizations.
5. **Intertwine Parks Directors Peer Learning.** Responding to demographic shifts and recognizing an opportunity for community leadership, many of the region’s parks departments are developing and implementing strategies to address equity and inclusion. Each department is approaching this opportunity in a different way, discovering as they go what works best for them. There is a tremendous amount of opportunity for peer-to-peer learning and exchange.

The Intertwine Alliance convenes the region’s 25 federal, state, regional, and local facilities and parks directors quarterly. This project will work with Mickey Fearn, Professor of Practice at North Carolina State University and former Deputy Director of the National Park Service to design and implement a peer learning program with the region’s parks directors. The program will include peer presentations and discussion, discussions with local leaders-of-color, and diversity training.

6. **Organizational Assessments.** Coalition of Communities of Color has developed a racial equity assessment tool. The Intertwine Alliance will introduce the tool at The Intertwine Alliance 2014 Fall Summit. At the Summit, partners will be invited to be part of a six-month pilot program. Organizations that are interested, would become part of a “cohort” that would work together to apply the assessment tool in their respective organizations. The Intertwine Alliance staff would be a member of the cohort and participate in the assessment process. The cohort would meet regularly (every month?) to share their experiences and what they have learned. The cohort would present a summary of their experience and any lessons learned at subsequent summits.
7. **Leadership Cohorts.**  
The Alliance will convene cohorts of conservation leaders who are making a commitment to equity and diversity for ongoing learning. The groups will meet on a regular schedule. The specific membership and meeting schedule will be determined by group members.