

## **Ocean First Institute Statement on Black Lives Matter, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:**

Ocean First Institute is dedicated to fostering a healthier planet and a brighter future for a new generation. As such, we cannot remain silent when Black lives are at risk, daily, due to systematic injustice, racism, and police brutality. A healthier planet is one where racial equity is prioritized, and where systematic racism is dismantled. We believe that there is no place in our world for racism, division and hate.

As a conservation and environmental education organization, Ocean First Institute has worked to demonstrate the intersection between education, research and conservation in order to create a healthy, sustainable planet for all people. While diversity and inclusion should be at the center of our work, we have not done enough to end racial injustice. We understand that intent and impact are not always in alignment. As such, we know that we must do more to ensure a just and equitable society, free from the pervasive racism and injustices that continue to plague our country, because there can be no environmental sustainability, without human sustainability.

We acknowledge that the environmental and conservation movements have a long and fraught history of racial exclusion for Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. Given our crossover with the outdoors community, we must reckon with the fact that the outdoors is still an exclusionary zone that it is not always considered safe for BIPOC. This must change.

We also recognize that our small nonprofit organization is not yet as diverse as we aspire for it to be. Though we have worked hard to highlight, hire and support women in science, we know we can do more. We are currently discussing how to better integrate diversity, equity and inclusion into our work, how we can address disparities in the environmental space, and what environmental justice-specific programming we can engage.

Specifically, we are committed to redoubling our efforts to learn from and support youth, families, and educators in underserved communities through our environmental education programs, even as we recognize that in America, and around the world, communities of color are disproportionately impacted by environmental injustices. As such, we seek to ensure that our programs and resources are relevant, accessible, and have a positive impact for Black communities and other communities of color.

We look forward to seeking out, learning from and collaborating with BIPOC conservationists and educators to build a more diverse, global network of Ocean ambassadors; with whom we can build community, introduce underrepresented youth to careers in STEM and immerse youth of color in conservationism. Through this

network, we will seek to be more intentional in eliminating systemic racism from our society, and to honoring all backgrounds, colors and cultures.

To our community of donors, supporters, researchers, educators, community leaders and conservationists; we challenge you to fight for justice for all people. It is important to recognize that we are all part of one ecosystem, connected to and dependent upon one another. No one can thrive in a broken ecosystem and human justice is directly tied to environmental justice. It will be the strength of our diversity that enables us all to create a better future for both people and the planet. We look forward to this future with hopeful enthusiasm and resolute determination.

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***Here are some resources to learn more about and support the Black Lives Matter movement. We have learned from these and hope you will find them useful, as well:***

<https://lectureinprogress.com/journal/resources-for-supporting-black-lives-matter-movement>

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BRIF2\\_zhNe86SGgHa6-VIBO-QgirlTwCTugSfKie5Fs/mobilebasic?fbclid=IwAR1jSwVn6Ci6-42PPA-errhROxrCDMT2mT-gW9lOhz11RysYVFDh57aQSCA](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BRIF2_zhNe86SGgHa6-VIBO-QgirlTwCTugSfKie5Fs/mobilebasic?fbclid=IwAR1jSwVn6Ci6-42PPA-errhROxrCDMT2mT-gW9lOhz11RysYVFDh57aQSCA)