FOSTERING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

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Park Manager, Chair Emeritus OPRD Inclusion Committee
HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- Oregon’s current makeup of park users is disproportionate to Oregon’s demographics.

- Oregon’s demographics are changing rapidly to become more diverse, which will further separate the ratio of users compared to population.
WHERE TO BEGIN?

“Some people can’t afford it”
“Our parks are already full”
“This is just affirmative action 2.0”
“Inclusion is the new buzz word for diversity”
“We don’t have time for this”
“We’re already welcoming”
“We can’t change society”
FOCUS ON REMOVING BARRIERS AND CREATING DOORWAYS

Need to look past misconceptions, assumptions, & ignorance

Ground Rules

- Respect ALL and encourage questions
- Actively listen
- Discuss candidly and be honest
- Assume positive intent
- Focus on the good of the team
- Give your full attention
- Minimize distractions (cell phones/texting)
- Allow for participation; no interruptions please
- Encourage appropriate humor
- Understand others' points of view
- No personal agendas
- Look for solutions without blaming others
- No subjects are off the table
CONVENTIONAL vs UNCONVENTIONAL

“Culture trumps program and process every time” - Fariborz Pakseresht, Director Oregon DHS

“Change is disturbing when done to us and exhilarating when done by us”  
Rosabeth Moss Kanter, professor of business at Harvard Business School
BEGINNING OF A NEW E.R.A.

Engage – Go First, Be the Connection, Bring your best self

Relate – Listen to Learn, Act with Empathy, Here to Serve

Adapt – Be responsible for the outcome, Challenge Ourselves and Our Traditions
• “Recruited” and Trained Frontline employees as Ambassadors
• Held Ambassador led scheduled discussions in every team across the state quarterly
• Feedback reported to Inclusion Committee
E.R.A. OUTCOME

1. Individual/Personal investment to inclusion
2. Expanded awareness
3. Improved service
4. Intentional change
OTHER NOTABLE OUTCOMES

• Strategy to promote statewide Diversity Conference to all staff.
• Hosted a debrief for attendees to unpack what they learned at the conference.
• Recruited professional presenters for agency all-staff meetings
• Created an Inclusion seat on every agency committee
INCLUSION
PLEDGE

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department will provide world class customer service to ALL, including each other.

I agree to hold myself, and those around me, accountable to the highest standards of service.
IT'S CONTAGIOUS

Divisions and Field managers begin to incorporate inclusion into their procedures and programs.

- Marketing
- Park planning
- Hiring
- Outreach
Do people (especially non-users) feel like there is value to State Parks?

Does everyone feel safe in our State Parks?

Does everyone feel welcome or like they belong in our State Parks?

Does everyone feel as if State Parks are theirs?
WHERE TO GO?

Need to look past misconceptions, assumptions, and ignorance to exploring unconscious bias, privilege, and redefining our definition of community.

To foster a welcoming culture for all