

**Environmental Stewardship for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:  
Opportunities and Actions for Improving Cultural Diversity  
in Conservation Organizations and Programs**

**A Report Prepared for the  
Natural Resources Council of America**

**Phase I**

**Robert G. Stanton  
Consultant  
Conservation Policy, Planning and Management**

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*Our best and most valued acquisitions have been obtained either from our contemporaries or from those who have preceded us in the field of thought and discovery. We have reaped where others have sown, and that which others have strewn, we have gathered. It must in truth be said that no possible native force of character, and no depth or wealth of originality can lift a man into absolute independence of his fellow-men, and no generation of men can be independent of the preceding generation. The brotherhood and inter-dependence of mankind are guarded and defended at all points. I believe in individuality, but individuals are, to the mass, like waves to the ocean. The highest order of genius is as dependent as is the lowest. It, like the loftiest waves of the sea, derives its power and greatness from the grandeur and vastness of the ocean of which it forms a part. We differ as the waves, but are one as the sea.*

Mr. Frederick Douglass

## Part I Introduction

The Natural Resources Council of America (the Council) recognizes the critical importance of assuring that all Americans have an opportunity to contribute to the conservation of our nation's natural resources and enjoy the benefits of a healthy environment. To that end, the Council authorized a project to review the status quo and determine what future actions might be taken to increase the employment and participation of culturally diverse citizens in conservation organizations and programs. Special emphasis was placed on exploring measures for increasing cultural diversity on the boards, staff and within the general memberships of the Council organizations.

This report represents Phase I of the study project with a focus on African Americans, and contains findings and recommendations based on an analysis of 1) diversity representation within Council organizations; 2) employment policies and recruitment; and 3) interagency and community involvement. The recommendations take into consideration a literature survey, and suggestions and comments from individuals and organizations knowledgeable about improving cultural diversity in conservation activities. Also, in consideration of the report discussions and recommendations, the consultant, a graduate of a Historically Black College, drew upon his 35-year career experience with the National Park Service, and his ongoing involvement with a number of national and international organizations relating to youth and conservation.

This report contains recommendations that address the following areas of concern to the Council and its members:

- Improving cultural diversity in conservation organizations and programs with respect to membership, Board of Directors, staff, and youth employment.
- Expanding diversity in conservation programs through cooperative and collaborative relationships with governmental and culturally diverse educational, civic, community and private organizations.
  - Building on past and current programs for achieving cultural diversity.
- Strengthening the capacity of the Council to support members' training and diversity action needs.
- Expanding the conservation agenda by supporting Environmental Justice.
- Telling the full story – promoting the history and contributions of African Americans in the conservation of our nation's natural resources.

The consideration and adoption of the report recommendations will serve as a beacon to the Council and its members' enduring legacy of environmental and natural resources stewardship. As President Theodore Roosevelt would remind us: "Nothing short of

defending this country during wartime compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us.”

The Council and its members understand that, in a rapidly increasing urban and culturally diverse America, the participation of the full spectrum of our society is essential to Mr. Roosevelt’s “central task.”

Note: The views expressed in this report reflect those of the consultant and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Natural Resources Council of America or its member organizations.

*Concern for our environment and protection of our natural resources are important aspects of our national life. Enjoying the benefits of parks, open spaces and outdoor recreation is as well.*

*It is vitally important that all Americans from every part of our society participate fully in both the obligation to protect and the opportunity to enjoy our great outdoors. Unless there is involvement and commitment by all of our citizens, our conservation goals will not be fulfilled and some of our citizens will be denied access to an important part of our national heritage.*

Mr. Laurance S. Rockefeller

Part II Improving Cultural Diversity in Conservation Organizations

A. Membership

Findings:

The total combined membership of the Council organizations that responded to the questionnaire is 8.9 million. Only four of the organizations provided the percentages of the following cultural groups represented in their memberships:

- Hispanic
- Asian American
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- African American
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders

The majority of the organizations indicated that their membership requirements do not call for member identification in this manner. Consequently, they had no basis to determine the representation of culturally diverse citizens within their general membership.

Discussion:

Survey information on the cultural diversity of the general membership of each organization would be useful in determining appropriate measures in attracting a broad spectrum of citizen participation.

The sustained success of an organization is not only dependent on its ability to retain members but also to attract new ones as well. This becomes increasingly important as the demographics of the population change.

As shown below, the 2000 Census is a vivid testament to the fact that the U.S. population is becoming increasingly culturally diverse. Within the total U.S. population of 281,421,906 citizens, the 2000 Census figures estimate the minority population, and the percentage of the total American society it represents, as follows:

Hispanics	35,305,818	12.5%
Asian Americans	10,242,998	3.6%
American Indians/Alaska Natives	2,475,000	0.9%
African Americans	34,658,190	12.3%
Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders	398,835	1%

Recommendations:

- Each Council organization should include, in its core values and strategic plan, a commitment to achieving a general membership reflecting the American population.
- The Board of Directors of each Council organization should charge their staff and current members with the responsibility of serving as “ambassadors” (with respect to outreach to prospective new diverse members.)
- Each Council organization should expand its media relations in order to assure that information on its programs, activities of its members, and its accomplishments are communicated to diverse audiences.
- Each Council member organization should conduct a survey of its membership, in order to determine its level of cultural diversity. Survey results should be used in establishing specific recruitment objectives for new members with respect to under-represented groups. This recommendation acknowledges that organizations with relatively small memberships might have limited opportunities to improve upon their cultural diversity.

B. Board of Directors

Findings:

The total combined number of Board members serving the 61 responding Council organizations is 1,324. Cultural diversity representation in this combined total board membership is as follows:

<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage of total combined board membership</u>
Hispanic <u>35</u>	<u>3</u> %
Asian American <u>17</u>	<u>1</u> %
American Indian/ Alaska Native <u>18</u>	<u>1</u> %
African American <u>57</u>	<u>4</u> %
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islanders <u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

Discussion:

Clearly, the combined minority representation of board members does not reflect the full spectrum of citizen participation in the important leadership roles within the nonprofit conservation community.

An organization's Board of Directors serves as its policy making body, and as such, determines the organization's success, its future, and contributions at local, national and, as appropriate, international levels. Accordingly, board members, through their strategic thinking and discussions, must not only focus on conservation issues per se, but also must look at organizational governance, capacity, and immediate and long-term means to sustain the viability of the organization and its relevancy for a changing society and world. Therefore, the board members' deliberations and actions must consider a wide range of perspectives, experiences and interests for sound decision-making. Ideally, in a democratic process, the participation of diverse citizens should be represented and provided the opportunity to fully participate in the decision-making and priority setting process.

Recommendations:

- Each Council organization's Board of Directors should establish as policy that its board will include culturally diverse members.
- Each Council organization's Board of Directors should establish as a strategic goal the adoption of a strategy for improving the effectiveness of the process for identifying potential candidates for its boards. This process should include measures to insure consideration of diverse candidates who possess the necessary skills and qualifications to contribute to the success of the board.

C. Staff

Findings:

The total combined staff (permanent, temporary and seasonal) of the 60 Council organizations responding to this portion of the questionnaire is 6,347. The representation of culturally diversity among the combined staff is as follows:

	<u>Percentage of total staff</u>
Hispanic <u>210</u>	<u>3</u> %
Asian American <u>141</u>	<u>2</u> %
American Indian/Alaska Native <u>19</u>	less than <u>1</u> %
African American <u>357</u>	<u>6</u> %
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders <u>5</u>	less than <u>1</u> %

In addition to domestic employees, Council organizations that have international programs reported the employment of citizens of those countries in which the programs exist.

Discussion:

The numbers of culturally diverse employees in the Council organizations is less representative than employment in the civilian workforce, which is as follows (based on the 2000 Census):

	<u>Percentage of representation In the civilian workforce</u>
Hispanic	<u>10.8 %</u>
Asian American	<u>2.9 %</u>
American Indian/Alaska Native	<u>0.8 %</u>
African American	<u>11.0 %</u>
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders	<u>0.06 %</u>

The recruitment and retention of a diverse staff in Council organizations will require the full support of its Board of Directors and management staff. As Ann Morrison outlines in her book, The New Leaders: Guidelines on Leadership Diversity in America:

“The allocation of accountability takes many forms, but two conditions must be met to get the best results. First...top management should remain in the diversity process. The second condition to be met in allocating accountability effectively is to set numerical goals, although these should not be used to the exclusion of other indicators of progress in diversity.”<sup>1</sup>

Recommendations:

- Each Council organization with a total staff of 100 or more employees should establish as a strategic goal the achievement of cultural parity with the civilian workforce.
- The Chief Executive of each Council organization should issue a policy statement declaring his/her commitment to equal employment opportunity and workforce diversity, followed by an equal opportunity/diversity action plan, and appoint a principal official to spearhead the organization’s efforts to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in the plan. Both the policy statement and plan should be approved by the member organization’s Board of Directors and widely distributed to the employees and members.
- Each Chief Executive should establish a procedure through performance standards or agreements that hold supervisors and managers accountable for assuring equal opportunity in the work place and contributing to the goals of the diversity action plan.

## Endnotes

1. Ann M. Morrison, The New Leaders – Guidelines on Leadership Diversity in America, San Francisco, CA: 1992, pages 86-87.

## Sources Consulted

Environmental Careers Organization, Beyond the Green, Redefining and Diversifying the Environmental Movement, Boston, MA: 1997.

Environmental Careers Organization, Increasing Diversity in the Environmental Field, Boston, MA: 2001.

Government Accounting Report – Human Capital, “Key Principles for Nine Private Sector Organizations,” Washington, DC: January 2000.

National Academy of Public Administration, Building the Workforce of the Future to Achieve Organizational Success, Washington, DC: December 1999.

Nina Roberts, Student Conservation Association, Minority Recruitment and Retention, Roundtable Associates, Washington, DC.

US Department of the Interior, Strategic Plan for Improving Diversity, Washington, DC: 1977.

US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Report on Best Practices of Private Sector Employers, Washington, DC: 2000.

*I Leave You a Responsibility to our Young People*

Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune

#### D. Youth Employment

##### Finding:

The 61 participating Council organizations reported that they employ youth as interns or seasonal employees, for a combined average of 692 youth each year.

##### Discussion:

The education and involvement of young people in conservation programs is critical to the achievement of sustainable communities, a healthy environment, and perpetuation of our natural resources. They provide the source of future great influence as parents, teachers, doctors, lawyers, business, civic, governmental and conservation leaders. They are also an important channel for achieving diversity in the workforce, membership and ultimately the Board of Directors of conservation organizations.

Accordingly, it is imperative that our youth, as future decision-makers, possess an understanding and appreciation for resource conservation and environmental quality. Council organizations can invest in the development of future environmental leaders by providing youth with educational and “hands on” experience in a wide range of conservation activities.

One of our greatest accomplishments as a nation is that we have come to recognize that our legacy is about learning and teaching, helping our youth find a better life and a better place, a better community and a better environment because we have made our contributions.

In the words of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, the distinguished educator and civil rights leader:

I leave you a responsibility to our young people. The world around us really belongs to youth, for youth will take over its future management. Our children must never lose their zeal for building a better world. They must not be discouraged from aspiring toward greatness, for they are to be the leaders of tomorrow.

##### Recommendations:

- Each Council organization should set, as a strategic goal, a commitment to the employment of youth at the high school and college/university levels in seasonal or intern programs.
- The number of students employed in 2002 should be treated as a base year minimum, with the goal of increasing the number of student hires by at least 10% each succeeding year.

- Each Council organization’s Chief Executive and Board of Directors should establish guidelines that would govern the employment of youth, to assure high quality supervision and meaningful work experience.
- Several Council organizations have, as their primary mission, to provide employment and development of our youth in conservation programs. These organizations should be considered as resources for other Council organizations with respect to assistance and expertise in youth programs. Assistance might include recruitment, placement, mentoring, orientation and on-the-job training (including safety on the job, conduct, work performance and related “world to work” considerations).
- Council organizations should consider the possibility of providing financial support through scholarships, work-study programs and other arrangements to culturally diverse high school and college/university students, with the intent of eventually bringing them into their career workforce.

## E. Equal Opportunity Employment Policies and Recruitment

### Findings:

Of the 61 Council organizations responding to the questionnaire, 48 reported that they have a documented policy on Equal Employment Opportunity/Diversity; 28 have a designated official with primary responsibility for managing the Equal Opportunity/Diversity Program; 13 have an Employee Recruitment Plan; and 15 provide formal training on valuing cultural diversity in the workplace for the benefit of staff and board members.

With respect to job vacancy announcements, 44 organizations reported that they advertise their jobs through house newsletters, the Internet, newspapers, and “word of mouth.” Only 11 reported conducting recruitment visits to college and university campuses.

43 organizations reported that their job announcements include the statement that they are an equal opportunity employer, and 21 reported that they include a statement encouraging women and minorities to apply.

### Discussion:

A wide range of management policies and practices govern equal employment opportunity/diversity and recruitment among the Council’s members. Many of these variations can be attributed to the size of an organization and the number of staff. Nevertheless, it remains fundamental to each organization’s success and future to be clearly established as an equal opportunity employer, regardless of its number of employees. This policy must be well understood within the organization, and by external sources as well.

A successful Equal Opportunity/Diversity Action Program requires that appropriate policies are approved, communicated and understood; accountability established, progress monitored, and results evaluated.

With respect to recruitment of culturally diverse employees, efforts must be taken to develop and nurture a wide range of recruitment sources, i.e., individuals, colleges and universities, professional societies, and civic organizations. Retention of all employees will be in direct proportion to job satisfaction affected by supervision, quality of life/work conditions, career development and opportunities for advancement and recognition.

One of the major efforts of equal opportunity/diversity action programs is to attract, develop and retain a highly skilled, motivated and dedicated workforce. Cultural diversity within the workforce strengthens an organization’s capacity by drawing upon a wide range of experience, talent, and perspectives, enabling the organization to better serve and meet the needs of a changing world.

### Recommendations:

- The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 2000 conducted a comprehensive survey of some 200 private sector employers regarding best practices for achieving equal employment opportunity and diversity in the workplace. The Summary Findings of the best practices are shown in Index E and should be considered by each Council organization as further guidance in making improvements in their recruitment, employment, and retention practices. <sup>1</sup>
- Each Council organization should, regardless of number of employees, have an equal opportunity policy stated in each vacancy announcement that the organization is an equal opportunity employer, and that both women and minorities are encouraged to apply.
- Vacancy announcements should be distributed as widely as feasible with special attention given to specific sources, i.e., organizations, media, etc., which serve large diverse audiences.
- All employees and board members of each Council organization should receive in-depth orientation or training on Equal Employment Opportunity and valuing cultural diversity in the workplace.
- Each Council organization should conduct a study to identify employee work concerns, such as child/elder care, wellness, transportation, telecommuting; flexible work schedules, etc., and develop action plans to eliminate these concerns, which impact qualified women and minority applicants in their search for employment. <sup>2</sup>
- In order to achieve the goals of workforce diversity, a process for planning should be established which: (1) considers historic and current hiring and promotion trends; (2) determines from available data areas where under-representation exists; (3) sets short-term goals and objectives; and (4) develops a strategy to accomplish them.
- Those Council organizations that have an active college/university recruitment program should develop a recruitment brochure. The brochure should, among other considerations, include information on the following topics:
  - A. History of organization and purpose
  - B. National and international programs
  - C. Employment opportunities, i.e., intern, seasonal, work-study, career
  - D. Equal Opportunity Employer and Workforce Diversity

Several publications exist which could serve as references in the development of recruitment materials and strategies:

Minority Recruitment and Retention, Roundtable Associates, National Forum and Training Institute (Nina S. Roberts, Presenter, Research Associate, Student Conservation Association) 2001.

Increasing Diversity in the Environmental Field (The report from the National Roundtable on Diversity in the Environment) Environmental Careers Organization, 2001.

National Park Service, Where the Past Meets the Future, National Park Service Recruitment publication, 2000.

- The website of each Council organization should include a statement on the organization's commitment to equal employment opportunity and diversity in the workplace.
- Each Council organization should foster employee development and career upward mobility through formal and on-the-job training, inter-organizational developmental assignments and career mentoring through use of individual development plans.

## Endnotes

1. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Report on Best Practices of Private Sector Employers, Washington, D.C., 2000, pages 160-161.
2. U.S. Department of the Interior, Strategic Plan for Improving Diversity, Washington, D.C., 1997, pages 5-8.

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Government Accounting Report – Human Capital “Key Principles for Nine Private Sector Organizations: Washington, D.C.: January 2000.

National Academy of Public Administration, Building the Workforce of the Future to Achieve Organizational Success, Washington, D.C., December 1999.

Nina Roberts, Minority Recruitment and Retention, Roundtable Associates, Washington, D.C., April, 2001.

Morrison, Ann M. The New Leaders – Guidelines on Leadership Diversity in America, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992.

*We are the Architects of our Own Fortune and the Hewers Out of our Own Destiny*

Dr. George Washington Carver

### Part III Expanding Contractual, Cooperative and Collaborative Relationships with Government Agencies and Culturally Diverse Organizations

#### Findings:

Council organizations responding to the questionnaire reported a significant level of involvement with government agencies at the Federal, Tribal, State and local levels. These relationships focus primarily on cooperative research, resource planning and conservation, public programs, volunteerism and youth employment. Also 15 organizations reported that they participate in the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA).

While 26 Council organizations reported that they contract for goods and services with private firms, only eight reported that having recently contracted with a minority-owned firm. Several organizations stated that it was not always possible to know the cultural identity of the owner of the contracting firm.

Of the 13 organizations reporting contracts or cooperative agreements with a college or university, four of the agreements or contracts are with Historically Black Colleges and Universities; two with Hispanic Serving Institutions; and one with a Tribal College.

#### Discussion:

Webster's defines "province" as "An extensive area of knowledge, activity or interest," then the question becomes: Unto whom is the province for the care of this land, the air, the water, and all other creatures that cohabit this earth? The care of these natural and environmental resources which sustain our very lives and communities, and which we cannot make, but surely can degrade, is a shared responsibility of each of us, as well as our public and private institutions.

It is clear that the changing demographics of our nation make it imperative that all segments of our society contribute to and enjoy the benefits of our natural resources and a healthy environment.

While some progress in developing relationships with diverse citizens through contractual, cooperative, and collaborative relationships has been realized, tremendous opportunities and need for increasing their participation with conservation organizations still exist. Charles Jordan, Director of Parks and Recreation in Portland, Oregon, advises "If we want to engage traditionally disenfranchised populations in environmental causes, we must be prepared to depart from business as usual."<sup>1</sup>

Recommendations:

- The Council's organizations should embrace the letter and spirit of Presidential Executive Orders in support of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Hispanic Serving Institutions. Furthermore, each Council organization should review its recruitment, research and special study needs in order to explore cooperative agreements or contracts with these institutions of higher learning. (See listing of colleges and universities - Appendix D).
- Council organizations should make available to such learning institutions their assistance as instructors, guest speakers or loan executives for capacity building and curriculum development, teaching and related support services, based on individual college or university needs.
- Council organizations should consult with officers and members of major diverse community, civic, educational and conservation organizations about job referral programs and enlist their assistance in posting vacancy announcements. (See listing of several of these major organizations - Appendix B-3).
- Many major organizations focused on cultural diversity hold annual conferences or conventions each year attracting between 500-5,000 attendees. Council organizations should seek opportunities to serve as speakers, panelists, resource consultants, etc., and consider individually or collectively sponsoring information exhibits at those meetings.
- Council organizations should routinely provide news releases, job announcements, and feature stories on their employees and various conservation programs and issues to the news media that serve a large diverse audience. (See listing of selected news media – Appendix G).
- Developing and maintaining strong relationships with prominent, diversity-oriented organizations not only provide opportunities for program outreach and employee recruitment, but also offers excellent direct or indirect sources for prospective board members. Accordingly, Council organizations should confer with the head of these organizations about their recommendations for possible nominees for board membership. (See listing of several of these major organizations – Appendix B-3).
- Council organizations should consider the appointment of Federal employees in their organizations through the provisions of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) and conversely the placement of their employees in Federal agencies. These assignments would provide career developmental experiences for both the Federal and conservation employee. Since each Federal agency is required to have an Equal Opportunity/Diversity Action Plan, the availability of IPA assignments in conservation agencies would be supportive of the development of diverse employees.
- As a means of building greater awareness and appreciation of its programs, each Council organization should routinely distribute copies of its newsletters (or other

materials) to national organizations that have significantly large culturally diverse staff and memberships.

- Each Council organization that has an international program should provide news releases, special reports, etc., for the U.S. media on its international activities. Particular attention should be given to media outlets that have large culturally diverse audiences. Furthermore the release of reports should describe the nature of the international programs, employment and contracts with in-country, local individuals or firms, and most importantly the assistance provided for enhancing the internal capacity of a given country (or agency) in managing conservation programs in the long term.
- A number of local and national organizations established within the past 20 years are devoted to increasing the employment and participation of culturally diverse citizens in conservation and environmental programs. These organizations have tremendous experience and credibility in culturally diverse communities, and could serve as valuable partners or alliances with other conservation organizations' recruitment, training, community capacity building, and addressing issues of mutual concern. The services and support of these organizations should be acquired through contracts, cooperative agreements or other forms of partnerships, as appropriate. (See partial listing of the national organizations – Appendix H).

### Endnotes

1. Charles Jordan, "Sustainability and Social Justice: The Changing Face of Land Use and Environmentalism." In Land Use in America, Henry Diamond and Patrick Noonan, Washington, D.C., 1996, pages 261-272.

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Environmental Careers Organization, Beyond the Green, Redefining and Diversifying the Environmental Movement, Boston, MA: 1997.

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Roundtable Associates, Inc. (RTA), A Blue Print for Improving the Quality of Park, Recreation and Conservation Service for Minority Populations (Draft), Washington, DC: 2001.

US Department of Interior, Strategic Plan for Improving Diversity, Washington, DC, 1977.

US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Report on Best Practices of Private Sector Employers, Washington, DC: 2000.

#### Part IV Building upon Past and Current Programs for Achieving Cultural Diversity

Each Council organization was asked to identify its (1) most successful programs or actions for achieving cultural diversity in its organization and programs; and (2) programs or actions that the Council should initiate or expand to assist in improving diversity efforts.

The responses are summarized below:

##### (A) Successful Programs and Actions

- Board of Directors approved an initiative to increase minority representation on board and staff.
- Provided funding for activities which reflected diversity. Board of Directors devoted at least one meeting annually to an environmental issue of concern to a broad spectrum of citizens, including the matter of environmental justice.
- Sponsored a comprehensive outreach program involving diverse communities. Developed and implemented a diversity action plan.
- Researched cultural values relating to citizen participation in environmental and conservation programs. Applied findings to outreach and recruitment activities.
- Assisted in purchasing historical sites that represent diverse cultural heritage.
- Provided diversity internships and programs in cities with large culturally diverse populations. Sponsored junior ranger and environmental education programs.
- Provided scholarship for international participation at annual conservation conference.
- Sponsored an awards program to recognize employees who actively promoted diversity.
- Advertised jobs through every available source for interns and volunteers.
- Supported various community-based organizations through cooperative agreements that have large minority membership.
- Funded environmental justice activities.
- Funded heritage education and preservation of historic sites.
- Provided publications and web site in the Spanish language.

- Created a Latino outreach committee and programs.
- Provided technical and financial assistance in resolving conservation and resource management problems.
- Supported and encouraged the development of local support for wildlife management. Initiated actions to increase citizen involvement and participation in local conservation programs.
- Provided scholarships for low-income students.
- Provided leadership and technical assistance for enhancing the capacity of developing countries in areas of climate and environmental changes.
- Developed and funded and administered a Diversity Project Associate Program. Four (4) positions are filled at any given time.
- Established an annual African American Heritage Day Program.
- Enhanced diversity programs externally which resulted in a major catalyst for improving diversity internally,
- Improved board diversity and expanded outreach for Tribal communities.
- Established environmental and conservation centers in diverse communities, increased internships and enhanced citizen science initiative.

(B) Assistance Required in order to Improve Diversity

- Help identify, refer and recruit candidates for job openings and continue to build awareness.
- Pull together a list of minority-based organizations, which have an interest in natural resource issues and government affairs. Identify where to go for recruitment.
- Centralize recruitment through the Council for the benefit of small members. The Council could serve as job clearinghouse – use council newsletter for advertising of job openings.
- The Council could make contact with various organizations on behalf of the conservation community. Identify potential board members and introduce to members. Provide assistance on membership outreach and strategies.
- Support long-term recruitment and training strategy benefiting the members.

- Provide support for interns – recruitment and placement.
- Promote the recruitment of young diverse populations into the conservation community.
- Share and use the results of this study (Phase I) as a method of improving focus on workforce diversity.
- Develop outreach for encouraging high school students to pursue college training in wildlife conservation. Members should invest in a more diverse professional workforce.
- Provide specific suggestions on how small organizations can become more culturally diverse, both internally and through their programs.
- Assist in developing bi-lingual conservation educational literature and programs in order to effectively reach culturally diverse populations.
- Provide an increase in internships in members. Help bring diverse participants to conservation conferences.
- Provide a “pipeline” of candidates.
- Develop a network of professionals with a range of diversity who could be notified of positions – or identification of locations (sites, organizations, etc.) for posting of job openings which are accessible to culturally diverse professionals.
- Maintain a database of prospective candidates for boards and staff positions.
- Identify culturally diverse organizations to serve as possible affiliate members with national conservation organizations.
- Develop and provide concrete tools that can be utilized to help make diversity a reality. Provide networking opportunities. Share lessons learned – obstacles and challenges.
- Identify and develop a pool of diverse individuals interested in working with conservation organizations – particularly individuals.
- Help Council organizations rethink their mission in light of socioeconomic and environmental changes.
- Circulate contact names and addresses to members – share information on job openings between Council organizations.
- Work with and provide training to CEO’s and managers of Council organizations regarding cultural diversity in workforce and communities.

- Encourage greater cooperation with international organizations and explore funding options for increased international cooperation and collaboration.
- Support close interaction between the Green Group and the Council.
- Develop K-12 educational programs and tools in order to attract broader diversity of students into conservation and the design professionals.
- Establish an awards program for recognizing Council organizations that have made significant accomplishments in cultural diversity.
- Develop outreach to minority youth – create new ways of involving diverse communities in conservation including capacity building through financial and technical assistance.

## Part V Strengthening the Support Capacity of the Natural Resources Council of America

### Finding:

The Council staff provides a wide range of important services and programs for the benefit of the members and their employees. The current staff, however, is a total of four (4) employees including the Executive Director. With an increasing membership and a need to provide support in cultural diversity matters, the current staff capacity is limited.

### Recommendations:

- The Council's Board of Directors and members should consider the approval of at least one additional professional staff person within the immediate office of the Executive Director. The principal duties of this position should include:

- A. Coordinate training for Council organization staff in cultural diversity and leadership development.

- B. Liaison with major diverse civic, educational and conservation organizations in conjunction with current Council programs.

- C. Assist Council organizations with respect to their participation in major conferences and conventions with diverse audiences.

- D. Coordinate fundraising activities for the Council in support of diversity and develop ongoing programs for members.

- E. Coordinate IPA assignments between Federal agencies and Council organizations, as appropriate.

- F. Disseminate information to members relative to major administration and Congressional actions affecting cultural diversity in the work place, programs and organizations.

- G. Develop and maintain a "job bank" of candidate referrals for possible employment in Council organizations and assist in recruiting.

- H. Conduct an in-depth analysis of the successful programs identified in Part IV of this report with an eye toward preparing a special newsletter(s) on "best practices" among Council organizations in achieving cultural diversity.

- I. Establish an awards program for recognizing Council organization accomplishments in achieving cultural diversity in workforce and programs.

- With the adoption of the recommendations contained in this report, the Council Board of Directors should establish a Steering Committee to provide hands on assistance to the

Council's members for implementation purposes. The membership of the Steering Committee should include a representative from the Council, two-three representatives from organizations outside the Council's membership and a private consultant (or firm) who is well-versed and skilled in cultural diversity in the workplace and programs.

## Part VI Expanding the Conservation Agenda through Support of Environmental Justice

### Findings:

Although a specific reference to Environmental Justice was not included in the questionnaire, three (3) Council organizations provided background material on their programs and assistance with environmental justice issues.

Based on information from a number of sources, the environmental justice movement continues to grow rapidly. Over 500 national and local organizations have been established within the past 25 years.<sup>1</sup> These organizations represent a wide cross-section of the American public and deal with environmental concerns at the local, regional and national levels.

Following intense activity by various social and environmental action groups, former President Clinton issued an Executive Order on Environmental Justice. This order states in part ...“Each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects of its programs, policies and activities on minority populations and low income-population in the United States and its territories and possessions.”

This Order remains in effect, and has been reaffirmed by the current Administration as evidenced by the EPA Administrator’s memorandum of August 9, 2001.

As stated in an article entitled “Environmental and Economic Justice: Implications for Public Policy,” appearing in The Journal of Public Management and Social Policy, the authors find that:

The impetus for changes comes from people of color grassroots activists and their “bottom up” leadership approach. Grassroots organized themselves, educated themselves, and empowered themselves to make fundamental changes in the way environmental protection is performed in the communities.<sup>2</sup>

The recommendations set forth in the National Environmental Policy Commission report presented to the Congressional Black Caucus in September, 2001, have major implications for strengthening the environmental justice movement.

The National Environmental Policy Commission Report states: “Environmental justice is the fair treatment of people of all races, income and culture with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatment implies that no person or group of people should shoulder a disproportionate share of the negative environmental impacts resulting from the execution of this Nation’s domestic and foreign policy programs.” It further states,

“Environmental justice movement seeks to remedy a legacy of environmental racism and economic disparity. Environmental racism is defined as an environmental policy, practice or intentionally or unintentionally, different impacts on disadvantaged individuals, groups or communities based on race, color, or ethnic groups.”<sup>3</sup>

The urgent and critical question of environmental justice is also a global concern. Witness the proposed discussion streams for the Fifth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas planned for 2003 in Durban, South Africa under the auspices of the IUCN and its World Commission on Protected Areas. The Congress is expected to draw approximately 2,000 participants from some 100 sovereign nations. The theme of the Congress is “benefits beyond boundaries.” Principal topics will include 1) integrating protected areas into broader landscape to ensure that they are planned and managed in context; 2) building new constituencies and broadening the appreciation of protected areas’ values – stresses involvement of local communities, engaging new audiences (youth, senior citizens, citizens with disabilities, urban residents, and culturally diverse citizens; 3) capacity building; 4) solutions to maintain ecological integrity; 5) financial security; and 6) building a comprehensive protected area system. All themes stress the importance of citizen involvement and equity.

Dr. Robert Bullard, the distinguished sociologist and director of the Environmental Justice Research Center at Clark Atlanta University, in his article “Grassroots Flowering” in the Amicus Journal states, “At home (U.S.) the environmental justice movement has broadened the very definition of environmentalism.” He further adds,

“Partly as a result of the movement’s work, the public’s concept of the “environment” now includes endangered urban habitat, childhood lead poisoning, energy, and transportation, facility siting, equal protection, and a host of other issues related to where people live, work and play.”<sup>4</sup>

A leading educator in the field of conservation and natural resources, Dr. Dorceta A. Taylor, writing on the topic “Environmentalism and the Politics of Inclusion” in the book, Confronting Environmental Racism offers this perspective:

“The environmental justice movement blasts apart the widely held myth within traditional environmental movement that poor people and people of color are unconcerned with environmental issues.” She further adds, “Several funding organizations are tying some of their funding to conventional environmental organizations to successful diversification efforts.”<sup>5</sup>

Recommendations:

- Each Council organization – in response to 21st century population demographics, resource conservation and environmental challenges—should review its organic mandate, charter and by-laws in order to determine the appropriateness of adopting an amendment(s) incorporating the principles of environmental justice.

- With an aim toward building a broader constituency for conservation, environmental quality and justice, the Council’s Board of Directors should appoint a task force to determine how the Council and its members could assist community-based organizations and other national organizations in improving their capacity in resolving conservation and environmental problems. Capacity building might include technical, administrative and legal assistance, resources and site planning, interagency cooperation and collaboration, and financial support.
- The task force should also address possible inter-organizational and mutual aid agreements between the Council, the Green Group, traditional national social action organizations, and local, regional and national environmental justice organizations. Moreover, the task force should consider convening a workshop including representatives of the aforementioned groups with an eye toward developing a major inter-organizational agenda benefiting all citizens for a quality environment. The workshop might be held at a National Park, such as Grand Teton, Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grant Canyon (Albright Training Center), the National Conservation Training Center, or on the Campus of a Tribal College, Hispanic-Serving Institution or Historically Black College or University.

#### Endnotes

1. Robert D. Bullard. People of Color Environmental Groups 2000 Directory, Environmental Justice Resource Center, Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA, 2000.
2. Robert D. Bullard and Glenn S. Johnson “Environmental and Economic Justice: Implementation for Public Policy” Journal of Public Management and Social Policy, 1998, pages 137-148.
3. National Environmental Policy Commission, Report to the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Environmental Justice Braintrust, South Carolina, 2001, pages 14-20.
4. Robert Bullard, “Grassroots Flowering: The Environmental Justice Movement Comes of Age,” AMICUS Journal, Spring, 1994, pages 32-33.
5. Dorceta A. Taylor, “Environmentalism and the Politics of Inclusion,” In Confronting Environmental Racism, Robert Bullard, Ed., Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1993, pages 53-61

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*The upward progress of this nation has been achieved by the struggles of people whose heroic actions on our behalf we are learning to celebrate. Patriotism and loyalty are aroused by full sense of participation.*

Dr. John Hope Franklin

Part VII Telling the Full Story – the history and contributions of African Americans in the conservation of our nation’s natural resources

Discussion:

African Americans have made tremendous contributions to the conservation of our nation’s natural resources. Unfortunately, due to past laws, discrimination and segregation, the contributions of African Americans were not well represented in history books or in the popular media.

Many scholars in recent years have substantially increased the body of knowledge involving African American history, achievements and contributions. Yet the “story” of African Americans in organizations and programs relating to the conservation of our natural heritage is not widely recorded or known.

Recommendations:

- The Council’s Board of Directors should consider in cooperation with education, historic preservation, history and civil rights organizations providing support for a major independent scholarly research project on African American contributions to land ownership, conservation, farming, pioneering, exploration and science. The comprehensive historical accounting should cover the period from Jamestown Settlement (or before) to the present. The research project should result in a book or a series of books.
- In order to build greater public awareness, the Council and its members should collaborate with other organizations and individuals in producing for television a special documentary film on African Americans in conservation.
- The Council and its members should develop a partnership with the Congressionally authorized commissions and other organizations responsible for sponsoring the following national commemorations:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Event</u>
2004	50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of landmark US Supreme Court Decision <i>Brown vs. Board of Education</i>
2004	200 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Expedition
2007	400 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Settlement of Jamestown

Involvement and assistance in these national commemorations would provide tremendous opportunities to promote conservation and highlight the contributions of African Americans in the development of our nation.

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## Part VIII Listing of all Recommendations to the Natural Resources Council of America

### Membership

- Each Council organization should include, in its core values and strategic plan, a commitment to achieving a general membership reflecting the American population.
- The Board of Directors of each Council organization should charge their staff and current members with the responsibility of serving as “ambassadors” (with respect to outreach to prospective new diverse members.)
- Each Council organization should expand its media relations in order to assure that information on its programs, activities of its members, and its accomplishments are communicated to diverse audiences.
- Each Council member organization should conduct a survey of its membership, in order to determine its level of cultural diversity. Survey results should be used in establishing specific recruitment objectives for new members with respect to under-represented groups. This recommendation acknowledges that organizations with relatively small memberships might have limited opportunities to improve upon its cultural diversity.

### Board of Directors

- Each Council organization’s Board of Directors should establish as policy that its board will include culturally diverse members.
- Each Council organization’s Board of Directors should establish as a strategic goal the adoption of a strategy for improving the effectiveness of the process for identifying potential candidates for its boards. This process should include measures to insure consideration of diverse candidates who possess the necessary skills and qualifications to contribute to the success of the board.

### Staff

- Each Council organization with a total staff of 100 or more employees should establish as a strategic goal the achievement of cultural parity with the civilian workforce.
- The Chief Executive of each Council organization should issue a policy statement declaring his/her commitment to equal employment opportunity and workforce diversity, followed by an equal opportunity/diversity action plan, and appoint a principal official to spearhead the organization’s efforts in order to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in the plan. Both the policy statement and plan should be approved by the member organization’s Board of Directors and widely distributed to the employees and members.

- Each Chief Executive should establish a procedure through performance standards or agreements that hold supervisors and managers accountable for assuring equal opportunity in the work place and contributing to the goals of the diversity action plan.

### Youth

- Each Council organization should set, as a strategic goal, a commitment to the employment of youth at the high school and college/university levels in seasonal or intern programs.
- The number of students employed in 2002 should be treated as a base year minimum, with the goal of increasing the number of student hires by at least 10% each succeeding year.
- Each Council organization's Chief Executive and Board of Directors should establish guidelines that would govern the employment of youth, to assure high quality supervision and meaningful work experience.
- Several Council organizations have, as their primary mission, to provide employment and development of our youth in conservation programs. These organizations should be considered as resources for other Council organizations with respect to assistance and expertise in youth programs. Assistance might include recruitment, placement, mentoring, orientation and on-the-job training (including safety on the job, conduct, work performance and related "world to work" considerations).
- Council organizations should consider the possibility of providing financial support through scholarships, work-study programs and other arrangements to culturally diverse high school and college/university students, with the intent of eventually bringing them into their career workforce.

### Employment Policies and Recruitment

- The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 2000 conducted a comprehensive survey of some 200 private sector employers regarding best practices for achieving equal employment opportunity and diversity in the workplace. The Summary Findings of the best practices are shown in Index E and should be considered by each Council organization as further guidance in making improvements in their recruitment, employment, and retention practices.
- Each Council organization should, regardless of number of employees, have an equal opportunity policy stated in each vacancy announcement that the organization is an equal opportunity employer, and that both women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

- Vacancy announcements should be distributed as widely as feasible with special attention given to specific sources, i.e., organizations, media, etc., which serve large diverse audiences.
- All employees and board members of each Council organization should receive in-depth orientation or training on Equal Employment Opportunity and valuing cultural diversity in the workplace.
- Each Council organization should conduct a study to identify employee work concerns, such as child/elder care, wellness, transportation, telecommuting; flexible work schedules, etc., and develop action plans to eliminate these concerns, which impact qualified women and minority applicants in their search for employment.
- In order to achieve the goals of workforce diversity, a process for planning should be established which: (1) considers historic and current hiring and promotion trends; (2) determines from available data areas where under-representation exists; (3) sets short-term goals and objectives; and (4) develops a strategy to accomplish them.
- Those Council organizations that have an active college/university recruitment program should develop a recruitment brochure. The brochure should, among other considerations, include information on the following topics:
  - E. History of organization and purpose
  - F. National and international programs
  - G. Employment opportunities, i.e., intern, seasonal, work-study, career
  - H. Equal Opportunity Employer and Workforce Diversity

Several publications exist which could serve as references in the development of recruitment materials and strategies:

Minority Recruitment and Retention, Roundtable Associates, National Forum and Training Institute (Nina S. Roberts, Presenter, Research Associate, Student Conservation Association) 2001

Increasing Diversity in the Environmental Field (The report from the National Roundtable on Diversity in the Environment) The Environmental Careers Organization, 2001

National Park Service, Where the Past Meets the Future, the National Park Service Recruitment publication, 2000

- The website of each Council organization should include a statement on the organization's commitment to equal employment opportunity and diversity in the workplace.
- Each Council organization should foster employee development and career upward mobility through formal and on-the-job training, inter-organizational developmental assignments and career mentoring through use of individual development plans.

### Cooperative and Collaborative Relationships

- The Council's organizations should embrace the letter and spirit of past Presidential Executive Orders in support of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Hispanic Serving Institutions. Furthermore, each Council organization should review its recruitment, research and special study needs in order to explore cooperative agreements or contracts with these institutions of higher learning. (See listing of colleges and universities - Appendix D).
- Council organizations should make available to such learning institutions their assistance as instructors, guest speakers or loan executives for capacity building and curriculum development, teaching and related support services, based on individual college or university needs.
- Council organizations should consult with officers and members of major diverse community, civic, educational and conservation organizations about job referral programs and enlist their assistance in posting vacancy announcements. (See listing of several of these major organizations - Appendix B-3).
- Many major organizations focused on cultural diversity hold annual conferences or conventions each year attracting between 500-5,000 attendees. Council organizations should seek opportunities to serve as speakers, panelists, resource consultants, etc., and consider individually or collectively sponsoring information exhibits at those meetings.
- Council organizations should routinely provide news releases, job announcements, and feature stories on their employees and various conservation programs and issues to the news media that serve a large diverse audience. (See listing of selected news media – Appendix G).
- Developing and maintaining strong relationships with prominent, diversity-oriented organizations not only provide opportunities for program outreach and employee recruitment, but also offers excellent direct or indirect sources for prospective board members. Accordingly, Council organizations should confer with the head of these organizations about their recommendations for possible nominees for board membership. (See listing of several of these major organizations – Appendix B-3).
- Council organizations should consider the appointment of Federal employees in their organizations through the provisions of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) and

conversely the placement of their employees in Federal agencies. These assignments would provide career developmental experiences for both the Federal and conservation employee. Since each Federal agency is required to have an Equal Opportunity/Diversity Action Plan, the availability of IPA assignments in conservation agencies would be supportive of the development of diverse employees.

- As a means of building greater awareness and appreciation of its programs, each Council organization should routinely distribute copies of its newsletters (or other materials) to national organizations that have significantly large culturally diverse staff and memberships.
- Each Council organization that has an international program should provide news releases, special reports, etc., for the U.S. media on its international activities. Particular attention should be given to media outlets that have large culturally diverse audiences. Furthermore the release of reports should describe the nature of the international programs, employment and contracts with in-country, local individuals or firms, and most importantly the assistance provided for enhancing the internal capacity of a given country (or agency) in managing conservation programs in the long term.
- A number of local and national organizations established within the past 30 years are devoted to increasing the employment and participation of culturally diverse citizens in conservation and environmental programs. These organizations have tremendous experience and credibility in culturally diverse communities, and could serve as valuable partners or alliances with other conservation organizations' recruitment, training, community capacity building, and addressing issues of mutual concern. The services and support of these organizations should be acquired through contracts, cooperative agreements or other forms of partnerships, as appropriate. (See partial listing of the national organizations – Appendix H).

#### Capacity of the Council

- The Council's Board of Directors and members should consider the approval of at least one additional professional staff person within the immediate office of the Executive Director. The principal duties of this position should include:
  - A. Coordinate training for Council organization staff in cultural diversity and leadership development.
  - B. Liaison with major diverse civic, educational and conservation organizations in conjunction with current Council programs.
  - C. Assist Council organizations with respect to their participation in major conferences and conventions with diverse audiences.
  - D. Coordinate fundraising activities for the Council in support of diversity and develop ongoing programs for members.

E. Coordinate IPA assignments between Federal agencies and Council organizations, as appropriate.

F. Disseminate information to members relative to major administration and Congressional actions affecting cultural diversity in the work place, programs and organizations.

G. Develop and maintain a “job bank” of candidate referrals for possible employment in Council organizations and assist in recruiting.

H. Conduct an in-depth analysis of the successful programs identified in Part IV of this report with an eye toward preparing a special newsletter(s) on “best practices” among Council organizations in achieving cultural diversity.

I. Establish an awards program for recognizing Council organization accomplishments in achieving cultural diversity in workforce and programs.

- With the adoption of the recommendations contained in this report, the Council Board of Directors should establish a Steering Committee to provide hands on assistance to the Council’s members for implementation purposes. The membership of the Steering Committee should include a representative from Council staff, two-three representatives from organizations outside the Council’s membership and a private consultant (or firm) who is well versed and skilled in cultural diversity in the workplace and programs.

### Environmental Justice

- Each Council organization – in response to 21st century population demographics, resource conservation and environmental challenges—should review its organic mandate, charter and by-laws in order to determine the appropriateness of adopting an amendment(s) incorporating the principles of environmental justice.

- With an aim toward building a broader constituency for conservation, environmental quality and justice, the Council’s Board of Directors should appoint a task force to determine how the Council and its members could assist community-based organizations and other national organizations in improving their capacity in resolving conservation and environmental problems. Capacity building might include technical, administrative and legal assistance, resources and site planning, interagency cooperation and collaboration, and financial support.

- The task force should also address possible inter-organizational and mutual aid agreements between the Council, the Green Group, traditional national social action organizations, and local, regional and national environmental justice organizations. Moreover, the task force should consider convening a workshop including representatives of the aforementioned groups with an eye toward developing a major inter-organizational agenda benefiting all citizens for a quality environment.

## Telling The Full Story – African Americans in Conservation

- The Council's Board of Directors should consider in cooperation with education, historic preservation, history and civil rights organizations providing support for a major independent scholarly research project on African American contributions to land ownership, conservation, farming, pioneering and exploration. The comprehensive historical accounting should cover the period from Jamestown Settlement (or before) to the present. The research project should result in a book or a series of books.
- In order to build greater public awareness, the Council and its members should collaborate with other organizations and individuals in producing for television a special documentary film on African Americans in conservation.
- The Council and its members should develop a partnership with the Congressionally authorized commissions and other organizations responsible for sponsoring the following national commemorations:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Event</u>
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2004	200 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Expedition
2007	400 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Settlement of Jamestown

Involvement and assistance in these national commemorations would provide tremendous opportunities to promote conservation and highlight the contributions of African Americans in the development of our nation.

Part IX Phase II of the Study Project

<i>Phase II Task</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
<p>1) Present the Phase I findings and recommendations to the Council’s Board of Directors and members. Presentation sessions should allow for questions and explanation of study data, contributing sources, and areas of critical concern or sensitivity. The office of the Council’s Executive Director would coordinate the time and location of the presentation, which could be scheduled for employees of an individual member organization or employees representing several members.</p>	<p>To be determined</p>
<p>2) Collect and analyze additional data and develop recommendations with respect to the employment and participation of Hispanics, Asian Americans, American Indians, Native Alaskans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in conservation organizations and programs.</p>	<p>February-August 2002</p>
<p>3) Work with the Council and its members and the proposed Steering Committee relating to the implementation of the Phase I recommendations.</p>	<p>March-December 2002</p>
<p>4) Other tasks as assigned by the Council’s Board of Directors and the Executive Director.</p>	<p>Continuing</p>

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# **Appendices**

## **(attached separately)**