

SAVING THE SIERRA

Grassroots Solutions for Sustaining Rural Communities
A One-Hour Radio Documentary by jesikah maria ross & Catherine Stifter



SUSTAINING RURAL PLACES TOOL KIT

Brought to you by the Sierra Business Council in partnership with Saving the Sierra

Encouraging Diversity

The United States is becoming an increasingly diverse society. Changes in demographics, in migration, and cultural pride are creating more of a “salad bowl” than a “melting pot.” The concept of blending into the dominant culture is not a desired outcome, nor the best way to harness the creative power of a multi-cultural society.

It is critical for local communities to embrace the innovation that comes from diversity, for decision-makers to recognize that the traditional ways of organizing and delivering services may not be adequate, and for those who conduct public processes to ensure that traditional ways of doing business do not inadvertently diminish or subvert the full inclusion and participation of all societal groups.

To encourage diversity we need to go beyond the traditional definitions of race, ethnicity, or national origin. Diversity means the inclusion of people with special needs, paying attention to gender equity, reaching out to participants from different socio-economic groups, incorporating children and seniors in processes, and many more cultural variables.

The cost of not encouraging diversity is high, with a disproportionate impact in critical sectors of our society, such as the provision of health care, availability of jobs and housing, quality of education and access to decision-making.

The cost of not incorporating an ethic of diversity in the environmental movement is that we fail to serve all of our constituents, and we fail to bring the joys of stewardship to a new generation.

There are a number of resources that can be used to encourage greater understanding about diversity and incorporate more diversity in processes, communities and leadership:

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www.savingthesierra.org



www.sbcouncil.org



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For a more integrated approach try:
The Center for Whole Communities

www.wholecommunities.org

www.wholecommunities.org/pdf/land_race_power_and_privilege.pdf

To learn more about diversity in political processes:

The National Urban League

www.nul.org/civilrightsandracialjustice.html

The Ella Baker Center

www.ellabakercenter.org

The National Conference for Community and Justice

www.nccj.org

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

www.naacp.org

The National Council of La Raza

www.nclr.org

For resources about environmental justice check out:

Clark-Atlanta University

www.ejrc.cau.edu

Literacy for Environmental Justice

www.lejyouth.org

Urban Habitat

urbanhabitat.org

For resources on encouraging diversity in leadership:

California Tomorrow

www.californiatomorrow.org