Working with Communities of Color for the Bayside Ecologists URGE Pod

This is what was found by Bayside Ecologists URGE pod at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) on Policies for Working with Communities of Color as well as plans for improved processes and/or needed resources.

- **Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at SERC - this is a partial list**

  **General**
  - Sellman House History and Archaeology
    1. Reaching out to the local community of color to learn more about the history of the land SERC occupies
    2. Research on Indigenous peoples living on these lands previous to colonization

  **Marine Invasions Lab**
  - PlateWatch – marine invasive species citizen science monitoring program in Alaska and California (2007-present)
    1. Include local communities of color and indigenous students and adults in the monitoring in their area
    2. Look for partnerships that can provide funding for them to monitor

  **Batillaria Eradication Project - to remove invasive snails at Loch Lomond Marina (2007-2009)**
  1. Partnered with the Bay Institute that focused on engaging underserved communities in riparian projects at the middle school and high school level
  2. Provided education and background training to students

  **Dunphy Park - design alternatives to a breakwater (2018-2019)**
  1. Partnered with Conservation Corps of Marin County which serves underserved communities primarily in Latinx communities to pay students to attend classes and do restoration work
  2. In conjunction with SFSU EOS Center were able to pay a small number of students to do ecological surveys at the park, produce interpretive signs, a poster for a meeting, analyze oyster recruitment tiles, and produce a report on the data
  3. Included Spanish translation for all aspects of teaching and work

  **Bering Sea Days – a week of science education relevant to the Bering Sea for K-12 in the Pribilof Islands (intermittent to present)**
  1. Teach the community about research in the Bering Sea
2. Help native children envision the possibilities of doing science as a career

SF Ecological Seawall – Creating Living Seawalls that are a green alternative to existing structures in partnership with the Port of San Francisco (2020 – present)
1. Port initiated extensive outreach to local communities in the area that the ‘living seawalls’ would be implemented (specifically targeting underserved communities in the project area) to find out their needs and vision for the waterfront
2. Will produce interpretive signage and a web interface that will engage the community and public in learning about the science behind the project

Panamex – Latitudinal Experiment looking at marine fouling in coastal waters (2018 – present)
1. Most of the participants in South America include local, often female undergraduates

Risk Assessment for non-native species spread in Guam and Micronesia for the DOD (2010-2011)
1. Partnered with Australian researchers to engage local communities, agencies and governments to evaluate the risk of non-native species to assess their knowledge of the issue, their capacity to deal with the issue and their cultural values around marine species and marine invasions

BOEM Project in the Arctic – To prepare a baseline of information about marine invertebrate fouling communities in the Arctic (2020 - present)
1. Plan to engage local Indigenous groups in discussions about the research

Galapagos Marine Invasions Conference and ongoing research in the islands (2015 - present)
1. Partnered with the Darwin Marine Station to hold a 2-day conference with local agencies to discuss marine invasive species threats to the Galapagos
2. Meeting was held in the native Spanish language with translation for English speakers
3. Providing ongoing advice to local agencies in the Galapagos to help manage marine invasive species in the islands
4. Program is expanding to include native communities in future

Education Department
Science to Go – online programs at libraries and for at home instruction for grades 5-12 (2020 – present)
   1. Reaches out to underserved communities to provide science learning for those who may not have access to a computer

Marine Disease Ecology Lab
   Chesapeake Bay Otter Alliance (to present)
   1. Reaching out to colleagues to meet local community members (in parallel with the castle’s efforts to link the PanSI health and Race Initiatives)
   2. Talked extensively with colleagues at the Anacostia Community Museum, a museum that works with communities of color, devoted to bringing people together and documenting community memory
   3. Conversations with a AWHI curator who is a Native Hawaiian about the history of scientific engagement and tokenism that has happened in Hawaii

Biodiversity and Conservation Lab
   Orchids in the Classroom
   1. Working with students in DC public schools, Montgomery County Public Schools, and Prince George’s County Public Schools,
   2. Partners with schools in Miami-Dade school system through Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
   3. All partner schools have student bodies that are primarily BIPOC

   Preserving Salmon in Alaska – Project to determine what salmon need and where the hotspots are
   1. Community Outreach resulted in native Indigenous Alaskans joining the staff of the Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve to assist with salmon data collection

The following examples are from direct experiences with the PlateWatch Program: https://platewatch.nisbase.org/

- **What worked well in these interactions?**
  - Trying to find common ground - focusing on communities’ interest in their local waterways and their desire to know what is happening to them
  - Respecting different perspectives - having flexible project models so that monitors can participate based on their available time and interest
  - Looking for ways to follow up to give feedback to and get feedback from communities we engage - through regular conversations, participating in the state’s Invasive
Species Task Force Meetings, producing a yearly newsletter and funding periodic in person workshops

- Making community connections through existing connections to community members, community leaders, and local agencies
- Listening to community concerns: information sharing in both directions
- Having fun!

- What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?
  - Not following through and letting the community know the results of our research
  - Not having a clear picture of their differing priorities - some communities are not interested in invasive species work and/or have other important priorities

- Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?
  - Find ways to compensate community members who help us gather data
  - Communicate research results on a regular basis - we've added a summary section to our website to summarize findings annually
  - Include acknowledgements in forthcoming publications and presentations - add a land acknowledgment
  - Translate outreach materials into local language(s)
  - Strive for continuity, making long term connections
  - Consult a diverse section of groups from local communities about their priorities
  - Include local communities in the grant writing process, and through all stages of the work
  - Have one point of contact from SERC to the groups we engage in order to streamline communication efforts/messaging and build trust. SERC labs should have more conversations about who they engage on projects so multiple labs can streamline community outreach
  - Establish a plan with the community you wish to engage to allow for their feedback and preferred communication method/frequency, etc.

- Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?
  - Understanding their priorities and how to frame our research within those priorities is key to forming collaborations
  - Additional support/funding for volunteer monitors (PlateWatch)
  - Designing an evaluation mechanism, a means for feedback from the communities engaged
Update and improve the way we track what SERC is doing to work with communities of color (SERC Event Tracker)

Metrics from SERC events tracker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Events Per Year</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>309</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On SERC Campus vs Off Site (2018- Present)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SERC (Edgewater campus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tbody>
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Overview of SERC Event Tracker Issues Targeted for Improvement

- Most activities occur on our campus, but events have been organized in many states and with other countries. Not everyone is aware that off-campus activities are included.
- No clear metric of what communities SERC is engaging with in these activities.
- Need more people to use the Tracker, also some personnel are unaware the Tracker exists.
- Need to clarify exactly what information the Tracker is asking for & what it aims to achieve.