



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Statement

Approved by the Board of Directors August 9, 2022

Our Role: Statement Summary

Because SLT is committed to conserving and stewarding land for all people, we will engage in an ongoing learning, listening and reflection process to better understand what DEIJ means to specific underserved communities. We will work to give power to these communities by encouraging their participation, on their terms, so their voices and ideas are heard. Our land conservation work will be made stronger, more relevant and more enduring by including the perspectives, experiences and contributions of these marginalized communities.

Acknowledgement of Inequities

Scarborough Land Trust acknowledges that biases and disparities disproportionately burden communities of color, indigenous communities, people with physical and mental disabilities, and low-income communities, with longstanding legacies of restrictive access, environmental damage and ongoing harm. It is our responsibility to ensure that our work does not repeat this history, but rather finds ways to remove these barriers and reverse these inequitable practices. Our central mission of accessibility to nature and outdoor spaces requires us to confront current barriers, visible and invisible, so we can make deliberate and more equitable decisions going forward.

We also acknowledge the historic injustices and inequities inherent in the exclusionary, mostly white, middle/upper class, land conservation and outdoor recreation movement in the United States, and the importance of challenging the cycle of privilege and entitlement toward community resources.

In addition, we acknowledge and recognize the efforts of many of these marginalized communities to lift their own voices and educate others, reminding us that we have an obligation to listen to and invite all voices to the table.

Why SLT Values DEIJ Work

SLT recognizes that access to nature is a human right and essential to the health and well-being of all. Therefore, our outdoor spaces should be comfortably accessible to all people, regardless of background, identity or experience. Typically, SLT's trails and programs serve able-bodied, white people and those with flexible daylight hours and access to private transportation. Although we cannot open our preserves at night for safety reasons, we can and should advocate for the conservation of and access to

green spaces in the more developed, walkable parts of Scarborough. Many other groups, especially those with disabilities, indigenous communities, BIPOC and LGBTQ people, feel excluded, unsafe, and unwelcomed. Until we encourage equal and diverse participation, these individuals will not be heard, nor empowered to contribute.

DEIJ is also important to SLT because we occupy the land of indigenous people whose land rights and sovereignty have been extinguished. As land conservationists, we have a special opportunity, and responsibility, to acknowledge these harms and injustices and to help them regain some of what they have lost.

Institutionally, we recognize that a diversity of ideas and backgrounds will improve our work, attract more funders, supporters and volunteers, and make us a stronger, more effective and resilient organization.

Our Commitments

- SLT commits to providing opportunities for all board members and staff to further their understanding of all the diverse groups who live in our community and what their barriers to participation may be. This includes connecting with school and town resources to help identify and better serve these underrepresented communities.
- SLT commits to prioritizing and connecting with all underserved groups and coordinating outings to our properties. This includes educating our Summer Education and Outreach Specialist in the importance of our DEIJ work. Through our programming, we commit to working with these communities to ensure open, safe, and welcoming access to all of our conserved properties.
- SLT commits to making our program offerings more accessible for attendees with disabilities and for BIPOC and LGBTQIA people who feel excluded by the outdoor community in Maine.
- SLT commits to inviting and reflecting more diversity in our committees, staff, volunteers, guest educators and board of directors.
- SLT commits to actively improving access on trails and opportunities to rest on trails when we rebuild and reroute.
- SLT commits to doing an “ethics check” on our endowment investment fund via our Finance Committee.
- SLT commits to improving the visibility of our DEIJ work through intentional outreach, programming, volunteer opportunities, and hiring practices to set a standard we can build upon.
- SLT commits to researching and providing a more complete land use history of our properties, going back to the indigenous people who first lived on and cared for these lands, while working with the First Light Conservation Community Delegation to acknowledge and work with the Wabanaki people who currently live in Maine.
- SLT commits to pursuing the educational resources that will help deepen our understanding of the true history of U.S. land conservation and its inherent biases, as well as its past and present perpetuation of exclusion, intended and unintended.
- SLT commits to engaging in a dialogue with regional partners working on these issues to seek guidance and develop collaborations for building a more equitable and inclusive land conservation movement in the Greater Portland area.
- SLT commits to working with the Town and other community groups to find, preserve and make accessible more green space in developed areas of Scarborough, and to promote more tree-planting and other greening initiatives in those areas.

Actions We Have Already Taken to Support DEIJ

- Established current SLT DEIJ Task Force.
- Our Universal Access Trail at Pleasant Hill Preserve.
- Adding accessible signage to properties and designated parking spots.
- Kiosks at preserve parking lots translated into the five most commonly spoken languages in Southern Maine and accessed via QR codes.
- Name-blind hiring and DEIJ forward messaging in job postings.
- In interviewing potential staff, sending message that SLT is DEIJ focused in our actions.
- DEIJ training for board/staff, and promoting self-education from reliable sources.
- Budget line for DEIJ training and workshops.

This is a living document that forms the foundation for SLT guidelines on how to commit to and implement DEIJ work in our community and internally. Strategies, goals and definitions are subject to change as our work and education evolve. All board members and staff are aware that we are representatives of SLT and that our words and actions (and inactions) matter.