

Environmental Justice as Resilience: Water, Climate, People and Place

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Planners and decision makers are beginning to embrace climate equity as a foundational principle in climate resilience. Frontline communities, including low-income and communities of color, are some of the first to experience impacts from climate change, and will be disproportionately impacted.

An integrated and multi-benefit approach is necessary to build coalitions, assess needs and develop and implement projects that not only improve water quality in frontline communities but also address issues of crime and illegal dumping, access to open space and active transportation, reduce multiple pollution burdens, engage youth and address long standing trust issues.

Keywords: climate equity, resilience, social justice

Session Title: Resilience through Social Equity: Planning Approaches for Climate Equity, Inclusion and Healthy Watersheds

Speaker Biographies:

Colin Bailey: Colin Bailey is the Executive Director and Managing Attorney of The Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW). An accomplished social justice attorney, Colin supports EJCW's policy agenda, programs, and grassroots member organizations. Building upon California's historic adoption of the Human Right to Water policy in 2012, EJCW supports the grassroots effort to implement and enforce this mandate statewide. Colin serves on several advisory committees for various State agencies and academic institutions. Colin received his J.D. from UCLA School of Law, with a certificate from the Public Interest Law and Policy Program and the Critical Race Studies Program. As a legal aid attorney, Colin served as lead counsel for a community coalition that, in 2012, after a five-year campaign, defeated a proposal to construct an underground natural gas storage facility that threatened to cause massive explosion and fire and contaminate the groundwater in a low-income community of color in south Sacramento.

Hannah Doress: Hannah Doress, is co-director of Shore Up Marin, a ground-breaking multi-racial coalition advocating for equitable approaches to sea-level rise, flooding, and emergency preparedness. She serves on the Steering Committee of Bay Area environmental justice and climate resilience planning coalition the Resilient Communities Initiative. She is also known for her leadership role in national digital news start up The Breaking News Network and for consensus-changing events promoting social, health and environmental progress on both coasts through Hannah Doress Events. Her success generating measurable climate actions through her Earth Day Marin Festivals was recognized with the Essence Award from the Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center.

Marcus Griswold: Marcus is a Senior Associate at Skeo, a national consulting firm focused on embedding equity and social justice into decisions made in and adjacent to environmental justice communities across the U.S. He received a Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering Sciences, where he has since utilized his background in, and love of nature, to manage watershed, climate change and environmental education programs and to support the use of science at a number of non-profits. Before moving to the west coast, he was a founding board member of Blue Water Baltimore and the Maryland Climate Communications Consortium, where he led efforts to communicate complex scientific issues to lay audiences.

David Ralston: David Ralston, PhD. After obtaining a masters in city planning and architecture, David received his doctorate in cultural geography from UCLA based on research of place-water and the cultural (re)formation of Los Angeles from the modern to postmodern periods. David has worked in the urban greening, environmental justice and community development fields also serving 15-years as a project planner for the City of Oakland. David is currently the community engagement manager for the regional government (Air District) in the San Francisco Bay Area and also works as an adjunct professor teaching regularly at Merritt College as a fellow of the Brower-Dellums Institute for Sustainable Policy Studies. David lives with his family in Oakland, California.

Doria Robinson: Doria is 3rd generation resident of Richmond, California and the Executive Director of UrbanTilth, a community based organization rooted in Richmond dedicated to cultivating a more sustainable, healthy, and just food system.

In 2014 she led the charge to develop Urban Tilth's Basins of Relations Watershed restoration and stewardship training program, drawing on the work she did with the Watershed Project, Urban Creeks Council and the thinking and insights of her friend Brock Dolman of the Water Institute at Occidental Arts and Ecology Center. Basins of Relations trains and employs young people from West Contra Costa County to become stewards of their watersheds, communities, and the creeks that run through them. Each year, this program employs and trains a Watershed Restoration Technician (WRT) team capable of contributing to restoration projects and leading watershed awareness programs in West Contra Costa County. Over the course of a summer training program and a year-long apprenticeship, the WRT team develops a set of skills and expertise that will help them support their local watershed, their community, and their own career. Topics covered include riparian ecology, native flora and fauna identification, horticulture, hydrology, water quality testing, community engagement and leadership, storm water management and creek restoration.

Doria currently lives in the neighborhood she grew up in in Richmond with her wonderful 15 year old twins.