

Baldwin Hills and Urban Watersheds Conservancy

Mission Statement of the Baldwin Hills and Urban Watersheds Conservancy

The Baldwin Hills and Urban Watersheds Conservancy's mission is to acquire open space and manage public lands within the Baldwin Hills, Ballona Creek and Upper Dominguez Channel watersheds to provide recreation, restoration and protection of wildlife habitat within the territory for the public's enjoyment and educational experience.

Environmental Justice Definition

California law defines Environmental Justice as "the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures and income with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies" (Government Code Section 65040 .12 and Public Resources Code Section 72000).

Background

The concept behind the term Environmental Justice is that all people - regardless of their race, color, nation or origin or income – should be able to enjoy access to open space and a healthier quality of life. Environmental justice communities are commonly identified as those where residents are predominantly minorities or low-income; and where residents are at a disadvantage because they are exposed to negative environmental influences that are barriers to their public health well-being and, in some instances, have been excluded from the decision-making process in relation to their built environment. This environmental justice policy aims at addressing the environmental inequities and lack of access for the communities in and around the Conservancy territory.

Specifically, the Conservancy's key environmental justice objectives include: 1) community driven empowerment, organizing and outreach campaigns; 2) resolving access barriers and land use conflicts; and 3) pursuing opportunities to create green infrastructure such as community open space, multi-benefit water and resiliency projects, public and private transportation alternatives (bus, rail, bicycling and walking).

Policy

It is the policy of the Conservancy that the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures and income shall be fully considered during the planning, decision-making, development and implementation of all Conservancy programs, policies, and activities.

The intent of this policy is to ensure that the public within the region, including minority and low-income populations, are not discriminated against; treated unfairly; caused to experience disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects from environmental

and land-use decisions; and that youth and families have access to safe open space and healthy neighborhoods.

Agency Actions

All service programs of the Baldwin Hills Conservancy must consider environmental justice in the decision-making process if the actions have an impact on the environment, environmental laws, or policies. Such actions that require environmental justice consideration may include:

- Making discretionary decisions or taking actions that affect the environment
- Providing funding for activities affecting the environment
- Interacting with the public on environmental issues

Implementation

The Baldwin Hills Conservancy is committed to incorporating environmental justice in its processes, decisions, and programs by making reasonable efforts toward:

1. Keep an environmental justice and equity perspective in our programs, activities, and training, as we set priorities, identify program gaps, and assess the benefits and adverse impacts our programs have on communities in our region.
2. Work with local elected officials, staff of cities, and community groups, to address concerns about lack of access to safe open space, especially in low-income and minority communities.
3. Review and evaluate our programs and activities to ensure that the environmental justice perspective through its programs does not contain any substantive gaps.
4. Seek out and learn from indigenous peoples' unique historical, cultural, and ecological knowledge of California's lands and resources.
5. Develop and incorporate an environmental justice program element into our employee training.
6. Strengthen our public outreach, education, and organizing efforts in all communities, especially low-income communities and where we see a need for the implementation.
7. Identify partners within land-use and transportation agencies that are responsible for the environmental benefits or adverse impacts in our neighborhoods and address potential mitigation activities.
8. Work with cities, County of Los Angeles, and community groups in identifying relevant populations living near industrial and brownfield locations that may benefit from our programs and activities.

9. Taking a proactive role in working with cities in adopting and/or updating their General Plans to implement environmental justice policies.
10. Work in conjunction with other federal, state, regional, and local agencies to ensure consideration of disproportionate impacts on relevant populations and create action-oriented mitigation plans.
11. Foster broad access to existing and proposed data sets and technology to better identify, analyze, and respond to environmental justice issues.
12. Provide annual staff briefing to the Board at a public meeting regarding ongoing and planned activities.