

Expanding Boundaries Through Allyship in Conservation Biology

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Reading list:

Maas et al. 2020: "Academic leaders must support inclusive scientific communities during covid-19":

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41559-020-1233-3>

Schell et al. "Recreating Wakanda by promoting Black excellence in ecology and evolution"

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41559-020-1266-7>

Miriti et al. 2020. Hidden Figures in Ecology and Evolution.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41559-020-1270-y>

Foster et al.: "Increasing the Diversity of U.S. Conservation Science Professionals via the Society for Conservation Biology"

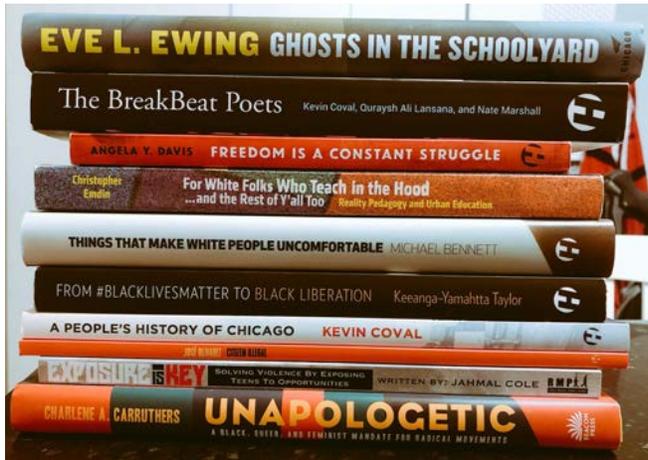
<http://www.aerinjacob.ca/uploads/1/0/5/5/10559030/cobi121821.pdf>

Decolonizing conservation reading list:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FuplJt02tLda8N_zFDOWfw4ybcvBCEJ7gsetpdIComo/edit

[Decolonizing field ecology. DOI: 10.1111/btp.12663](https://doi.org/10.1111/btp.12663)

[Travis Gallo]: These are not science-specific, but the photo that was in our presentation for the “read deliberately” slide was my reading list from 2018. It was actually my New Years ‘resolution’ to read 12 books written by people of color. I made it through 11. One is missing, “Electric Arches” by Eve Ewing. I would recommend them all. I learned a ton and while they are not science or conservation specific, the connection is there because none of this is mutually exclusive (thank you Cynthia Malone for opening my eyes to that). “Exposure is Key” is pretty Chicago specific, but I still learned a lot about under-resourced neighborhoods and how that perpetuates generations of inequality.



I am currently reading “Raising White Kids: bringing up children in a racially unjust world” by Jennifer Harvey and “For the Love of Men” by Liz Plank and so far have learned a lot. Again, not science specific, but I am hoping to broaden the reading list by adding works that might make us better citizens, parents, friends, mentors, comrades and ultimately better conservation scientists.

<https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.4/indigenous-affairs-education-land-grab-universities>

<https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/racism-killing-planet>

<https://nonamebooks.com/Black-August>

Resources:

<https://www.academics4blacklives.com/>

bit.ly/ANTIRACISMRESOURCES

<https://blacklivesmatters.carrd.co/>

<https://freakonomics.com/podcast/reparations-part-2/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/podcasts/1619-podcast.html>

<https://www.wilderness.org/articles/article/public-lands-united-states-curriculum>

Examples of successful initiatives to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion:

Society for Freshwater Science Instars program:

<https://freshwater-science.org/awards-programs/instars-program>

ESA SEEDS program

<https://esa.org/seeds/>

Northeastern Illinois University - Social Justice Ally Cohort

<https://www.neiu.edu/angelina-pedroso-center-diversity-and-intercultural-affairs/social-justice-ally-initiative/sjai-curriculum>

Session take-aways

Things allies can do as individuals and in our communities:

- *Read fiction + non-fiction written by BIPOC. Follow BIPOC on social media.
- *Invest your time in trainings (eg Academics for Black Survival and Wellness, bystander intervention training).
- *Form accountability groups for white people to educate themselves - don't increase the burden on BIPOC.
- *Use privilege (time and safety) to advocate for BIPOC in the workplace and to take on administrative tasks disproportionately shouldered by underrepresented groups.
- *Constantly query our goals and plans, and engage in frequent discussions amongst ourselves and with BIPOC. Make sure what we are doing is actually helping - addressing real problems and not creating new problems! Don't be afraid to take on risk.

Things allies can do at our institutions and in our work:

- *Make sure we are actively recruiting BIPOC for jobs (entry-level to head of the organization). Consider how we establish job qualifications and who we are excluding when we do so. Consider how job boards and other means of publicizing openings reach different groups. Ensure that we are prioritizing equity and inclusion, not just diversity.
- *Work on compensation/reward issues. Pay students and interns! Compensate everyone who does DEI work. Move beyond citations as a metric for performance.
- *Center environmental justice and human well-being in our research questions.
- *Increase emphasis on outreach and engagement work.
- *Work from both the bottom up and top down - attain a critical mass of people dedicated to social justice.
- *Use white privilege to buffer BIPOC against unstable/unsafe work environments - especially in government jobs.
- *Create spaces that are safe and welcoming for BIPOC. Academic spaces are hierarchical (with people at the top mostly white) and use language that can be a barrier to BIPOC. Some outdoor spaces are actively unsafe for BIPOC.

- *Create curricula and classes that emphasize environmental justice and the history of racism underlying conservation biology.
- *Consider the disproportionate effects of COVID-19 on BIPOC in the workplace. Enact policies that protect "essential workers" (disproportionately BIPOC)
- *Make land acknowledgments, acknowledge the racist history of universities and "public" lands.
- *Find seminar speakers from non-traditional backgrounds - use networks/"snowball sampling" strategies to do so.
- *May need more surveys and data-gathering to define define our problems. Work to create survey methods that include BIPOC in the design and execution. Need buy-in from everyone to get accurate data.

Things SCBNA can do:

- *Center inclusion and equity issues when planning conferences. Actually listen to members and diversity committee! Do not let "financial issues" trump concerns of underrepresented groups!
- *Center BIPOC voices - create safe forums for voicing and listening to concerns of BIPOC at conferences and beyond
- *Change the name? "Society for Conservation Biology" can be considered exclusionary! "Conservation" especially has some baggage attached to it.
- *Acknowledge that lack of compensation for doing SCB work and costs of attending NACCB/world congress are exclusionary - find ways to reduce these burdens or provide fair compensation.
- *Fund community conservation work (and communities!). Don't "parachute" into communities - co-design work with community members.
- *Give awards for DEI work and community-led projects.
- *Make DEI-focused talks and plenary viewable for the public.
- *Leverage the benefits of virtual meetings in reducing barriers to entry, while also finding ways to facilitate networking in this new format.
- *Make sure all aspects of virtual convention are accessible - closed captioning for video talks is one issue.
- *Create and provide real support for long-term mentoring relationships. Establish a mentoring program (eg. SFS's Instars program/ ESA's SEEDS program) that leverages SCB's connections to educational institutions, governmental organizations, and NGOs.

Things an SCBNA allyship group can do:

- *Provide resources for potential allies to educate themselves and plan actions to influence their home institutions. Provide training or connect allies with reputable groups that providing trainings.
- *Form accountability groups for allies to work together on training and education and to hold each other to training goals. Accountability groups can also provide a forum for discussing personal goals and successful/unsuccessful efforts to work on institutional change.
- *Produce video series featuring voices of BIPOC / minoritized conservation biologists relating their experiences in the field.
- *Act as a resource for diversity efforts within SCBNA - provide time and effort needed to write grant proposals, work on theory of change, find speakers and plan conference.
- *Put pressure on SCBNA to shift in the right direction. Echo concerns of underrepresented groups and make these concerns mainstream!