



Strategic Planning Update, 9/21

For nearly 50 years, the Environment Council of Rhode Island (ECRI) has brought together environmental organizations to amplify advocacy for the health of our state's air, water, and forests. While the environmental movement itself has changed, ECRI has not. It's time for the coalition to refresh its mission, address capacity issues, and put racial justice at the forefront of our work as environmentalists. We need to build stronger relationships between the active members of ECRI and provide greater resources to empower participation. ECRI also must embrace racial justice and equity principles to ensure our work is inclusive and supportive of existing grassroots environmental organizing.

In June, the ECRI Executive Committee released a statement to support the Black Lives Matter movement and reflect on the oppressive practices within the organization. In addition to announcing the start of a strategic planning process, we named two commitments:

- identify the organizational barriers that prevent frontline community members from engaging with ECRI; and,
- organize anti-racism training to help our existing member base recognize and dismantle the racist practices embedded within our work.

Strategic planning will require discussions with our members and a hard examination of ourselves. Because ECRI is an affiliate, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), is supporting our work by contributing staff time and grant funding to hire a consultant to guide ECRI through a formal plan. ECRI has functioned as a volunteer organization with a single 10-hour-a-week employee for the last 18 years. We believe that, to bring more resources to ECRI, we must first use our resources to engage our membership and understand how to best serve the community.

To achieve an equitable outcome, we must move forward with an equitable process. We need your help to guide ECRI's strategic planning and make sure we create a vision that best serves our members and our communities.

How you can get involved and support strategic planning engagement: join the newly formed Strategic Planning Committee to move forward with this vision of a more inclusive, stronger ECRI coalition. The Strategic Planning Committee will meet once a month and work closely with ECRI's President and Executive Committee to help ECRI achieve key milestones throughout the strategic planning process. Contact: Greg Gerritt at environmentcouncil@earthlink.net