

## **Metro DNA Equity Principles and Commitments**

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### **Why these principles and commitments exist**

To achieve the Metro Denver Nature Alliance (Metro DNA) vision, it is vital that Metro Denver residents have equitable opportunities to access nature through recreation, education, conservation, and other ways that are meaningful to them. Metro DNA aspires to recognize, celebrate, enhance, and protect the diversity of environments, communities, and people comprising the Metro Denver Area. We are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and integrating DEI principles into all Metro DNA efforts. We believe that individuals with unique voices and viewpoints must be heard and honored in meaningful, substantive ways.

### **Building A Learning Community**

Metro DNA is committed to continue learning and adapting together to best support a collaboratively built regional vision for people and nature. Metro DNA acknowledges that our collective goals will be best achieved by creating an open, shared, and adaptive learning environment that actively seeks to include broadly diverse perspectives. Recognizing that the nature of groups inevitably includes the making of mistakes and occasional conflicts, Metro DNA aims to facilitate an equitable and inclusive space for conversation and decision making in regards to natural spaces and people's connection to those spaces. These principles are a living document that will undergo regular review and revision and will guide Metro DNA's work internally as well as the collaborative projects of members and partners within the Metro DNA network.

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**Metro DNA has adopted the following tangible and sustainable equity principles that will guide our work:**

### **Reducing Institutional Barriers**

Metro DNA recognizes the presence of historical and institutional barriers that have been in place and disproportionately affect under-resourced communities based on race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, disability status, geography, age and other identity factors. Physical, socio-economic and cultural barriers create not only inequitable access to nature, but result in a lack of representation, employment opportunities, influence and overall participation in this sector for marginalized communities.

Metro DNA is committed to reducing institutional barriers that impact access to nature and participation in nature-based work by deeply listening to marginalized voices, leading and participating in projects aimed at barrier reduction, and creating opportunities for growth and learning regarding equity in the outdoors for Metro DNA partners.

### **Mutual Respect of Diverse Ways of Being, Knowing, and Experiencing**

Metro DNA acknowledges a broad definition of nature that embraces an equitably-diverse range of landscapes and nature-based experiences. Metro DNA is committed to fostering mutual respect for the many ways that people connect with, define, and engage with nature.

This commitment to equitable diversity includes continuously working to support the interdependence of people, cultures, and the natural environment. Metro DNA works to create space for various ways of being and knowing through seeking input, listening, and being mindful of the allocation of resources.

### **Recognizing Dynamics of Power and Privilege**

Metro DNA acknowledges and understands the inequalities of power and privilege, which shape our current systems. To understand the forces that cause disparities in our society, there is history to unravel and a need for us to take a thoughtful look at how race, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, disability status, geography, age and other forms of bias and oppression are embedded within the institutions and systems in our communities. We recognize that personal, cultural and institutionalized discrimination creates and sustains privilege for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others.

Metro DNA is committed to supporting leaders in better identifying, talking productively about, and addressing the many types of disparities and their consequences.

### **Supporting Representation**

Metro DNA strives to build a leadership team and network of partners that is representative of the Metro Denver Area.

We are committed to creating an environment that is equitably inclusive, safe, supportive, and free of harassment, prejudice, and discrimination.

### **Access**

Metro DNA strives to reduce barriers that prevent equitable access to outdoor spaces, decision making processes, and other resources related to engagement in nature and the outdoors.

We commit to working to reduce these barriers by supporting community voice in Metro DNA and partner projects, encouraging partners to engage in working toward equity in their own organizations, and bringing grassroots and institutional organizations together to collaborate in authentically building toward the Metro DNA vision together.

### **Collection, Use, and Dissemination of Data**

While data is critical to the work of Metro DNA, we acknowledge that historically the collection of data has not always benefitted, and has sometimes harmed, those from whom the data was collected.

Recognizing the complex history of the use and collection of data and information within marginalized communities, Metro DNA commits to responsible and ethical use of all data and information gathered for collaborative projects. The data will be used to increase equitable access and participation in nature and the outdoors and collected in ways that uplift people with marginalized identities.

## Definitions

### **EQUITY**

--the goal for all people to exist in an environment free of bias or systemic discrimination.

### **DIVERSITY**

– the unique experience and perspective you bring to your environment

## General Actions Forward

Commit the time, space, and resources needed to engage individuals and communities historically cut out of the conservation movement or systematically discouraged from participating in outdoor recreation and cultural preservation, on their own terms.

Align with a wide array of backgrounds, opinions, preferences, and strengths to ensure that our work is authentic, innovative, and representative. Diversity includes ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and other identities.