



A Message of Solidarity from Pennsylvania Master Naturalist: Black Lives Matter

During the past weeks, the pain, helplessness, grief, and anger that comes from the ongoing discrimination, bigotry and violence of systemic racism and environmental injustice have been heightened in our consciousness. From the disproportionate impact of COVID-19, to the racist behavior against a black birder in Central Park, to the killing of George Floyd, these are just recent manifestations of the ongoing trauma that is a reality for people of color. While it is not within the power of a single organization to eliminate racism, it is the moral obligation of every organization to recognize and acknowledge it: Black Lives Matter.

Pennsylvania Master Naturalist believes that access to the outdoors, safe pursuit of natural history interests and the opportunity to effect environmental change through passion and volunteerism are rights that all should enjoy equally. Our organization seeks to foster a diverse community of naturalists and promote stewardship of our state's natural resources through training and service. We acknowledge the cultural and societal imbalances that have left people of color, and those in marginalized groups, to be under-represented in the environmental and nature conservation and education sectors. Addressing these imbalances must involve the removal of impediments to participation by all citizens. Our program must be relevant to everyone or it will not be relevant to anyone.

To that end, seeking full inclusion regardless of race, socio-economic background, gender or sexual identity, or age is not enough. Recent events in Central Park and Minneapolis have shown that it is not possible to protect environmental rights when basic human rights don't exist for all our citizens.

We have much work to do in building a society that ensures these basic rights. PAMN, then, stands in solidarity with all groups working to make our state, our country, our world a better, more inclusive place in which basic human rights are protected for all.

Together with our naturalists, our community partners around the state, the entire PAMN organization, we stand with those communities seeking peaceful change, the fair administration of justice, and a safe and inclusive environment.