



Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan and 2023 Timeline

Introduction

Orange County Coastkeeper believes all people have the inalienable right to clean water. We are committed to creating a community that has access to fishable, swimmable, drinkable water for present and future generations. We recognize that the long history of water injustice tells us that the mistreatment and misallocation of these natural resources disproportionately inflict low-income communities and communities of color. These same communities face systemic barriers that create inequitable access to natural spaces and spaces where decisions impacting these resources are made.

With the understanding that all people should be meaningfully involved and recognizing that certain communities have been systematically excluded from this movement, we are committed to intentionally working against this exclusion and centering justice in the approach to our mission. While several of our successes have benefited all communities in Orange County, we now need to intentionally center our most marginalized communities.

This plan should be revisited and updated annually to ensure JEDI principles are being implemented holistically into the organization.

Background

The purpose of this plan is to comply with Waterkeeper Quality Standard #14, which requires our organization to adopt a JEDI plan including the following:

1. A brief narrative or a map identifying where Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) or other disparately impacted communities are located within your watershed.
2. A specific explanation (or at least three direct examples) of how your organization conducts outreach to these communities and works to help them with their watershed-related issues.
3. A copy of your approved organizational JEDI plan, or equivalent document, to grow and maintain diversity within the structure of your organization (Board, Staff, Volunteers, Members) and ensure policies are in place to include diverse community perspectives.

Waterkeeper Quality Standard #14 defines JEDI as the following:

- **JUSTICE:** Dismantling systems of oppression and privilege that create systemic disadvantages and barriers to people's ability to access resources and opportunities or based on which people experience systemic mistreatment. Whereas equity is about

reapportioning or redistributing resources so people can access opportunities, justice is about dismantling barriers to those opportunities.

- **EQUITY:** Ensures everyone is given equal opportunity to thrive; this means that resources may be divided and shared unequally to make sure that each person can access an opportunity.
- **DIVERSITY:** Understanding and acknowledging that Waterkeeper Organizations and Affiliates can be described as a body of ethnically and racially different groups of people represented in the community and workplace. The differences among us are based on which we experience systemic advantages or encounter systemic barriers in access to opportunities and resources.
- **INCLUSION:** Understanding, recognizing, celebrating, centering, and amplifying the perspectives, voices, values, and needs of the different groups of people represented in the community and workplace who experience systemic barriers, mistreatment, or disadvantages based on their identities in order to ensure they feel a sense of belonging. Working towards an ongoing and organization-wide willingness to learn how to create and sustain an inclusive environment.

Our Watersheds

In order to serve the diverse population of Orange County in a just, equitable, and inclusive way, Coastkeeper must be aware of this diversity and the issues in our communities. To demonstrate this, the following section consists of a variety of maps taken from [CalEnviroScreen 4.0](#) depicting a multitude of water pollution issues and how they are disproportionately affecting certain areas of the county. The scores on CalEnviroScreen are based on both Exposures and Environmental Effects, which include the following measures: ozone concentrations, PM25 concentrations, children’s lead risk from housing, diesel PM emissions, drinking water contaminants, pesticide use, toxic releases from facilities, traffic density, solid waste sites and facilities, groundwater threats, hazardous waste, impaired water bodies, and cleanup sites.

The pollution burden in our jurisdiction is concentrated in north and central Orange County. Coastkeeper focuses resources on defending equitable clean water resources throughout the county by working with all members of the community, including those from both north and south county. We see the effects of poverty on access to outdoor spaces firsthand through our education programs: students living in north county are less acquainted with their local natural spaces than those living in south county.

While South Orange County relies heavily on imported water, North Orange County relies mainly on local water sources due to having the “largest water purification system” in the world (Groundwater Replenishment System [GWRS]). Because of this, we see that there are naturally many more opportunities for threats to groundwater in northern Orange County. Water bodies, aquatic habitats, and watersheds provide a multitude of beneficial uses, including drinking, swimming, fishing, and habitat for aquatic and semiaquatic species. OC Coastkeeper is not only an advocate for humans in the fight for clean water but for all animals and habitats.

Coastkeeper will use these maps and the information gained from them to inform our work moving forward to address the inequities in access to safe water resources. We hope to provide justice to our communities by engaging in work that includes voices across the lines of race, class, gender, age, and ability.

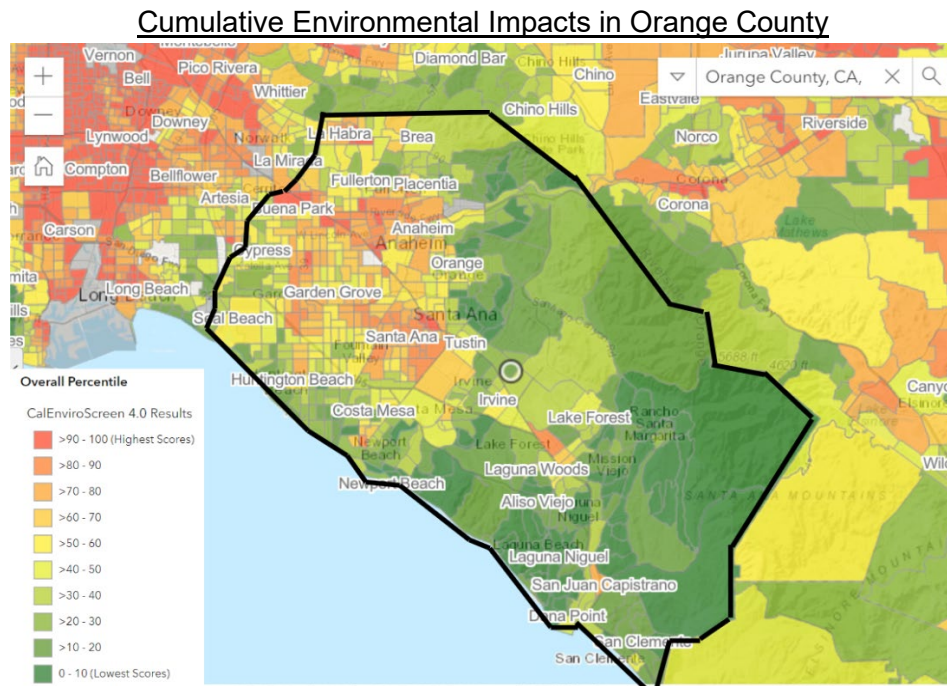


Figure 1. Map displaying cumulative impacts based on pollution burden (environmental effects and average of exposures) and population characteristics (average of sensitive populations and socioeconomic factors) throughout communities in Orange County, California by census tract. Data sourced from [CalEnviroScreen 4.0](#).

Pollution Burden in Orange County

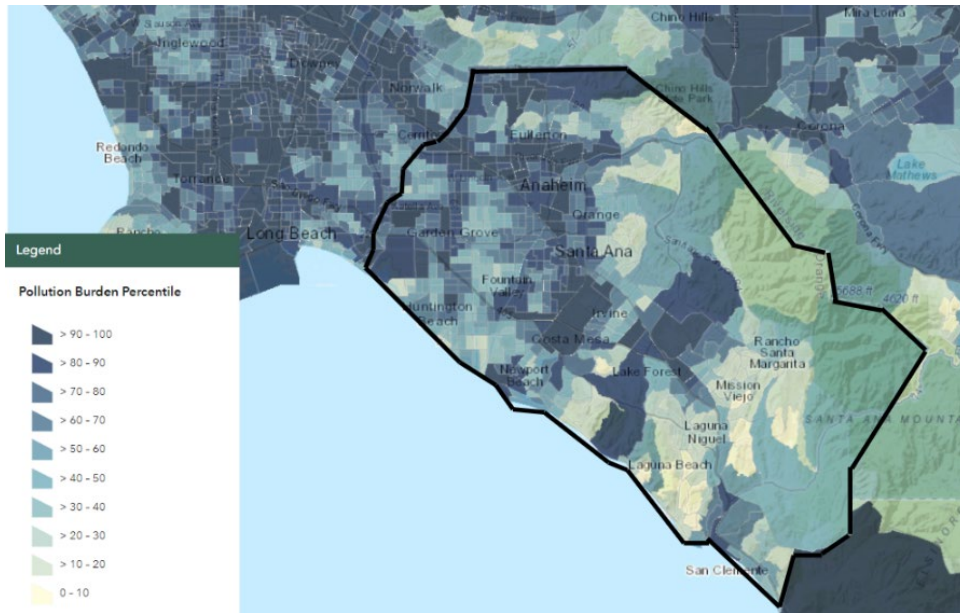


Figure 2. Map depicting the pollution burden percentiles in Orange County, California by census tract. The combined pollution burden score “represents the potential exposures to pollutants and the adverse environmental conditions caused by pollution.” Data sourced from [CalEnviroScreen 4.0 - Pollution Burden](#).

Distribution of Poverty in Orange County

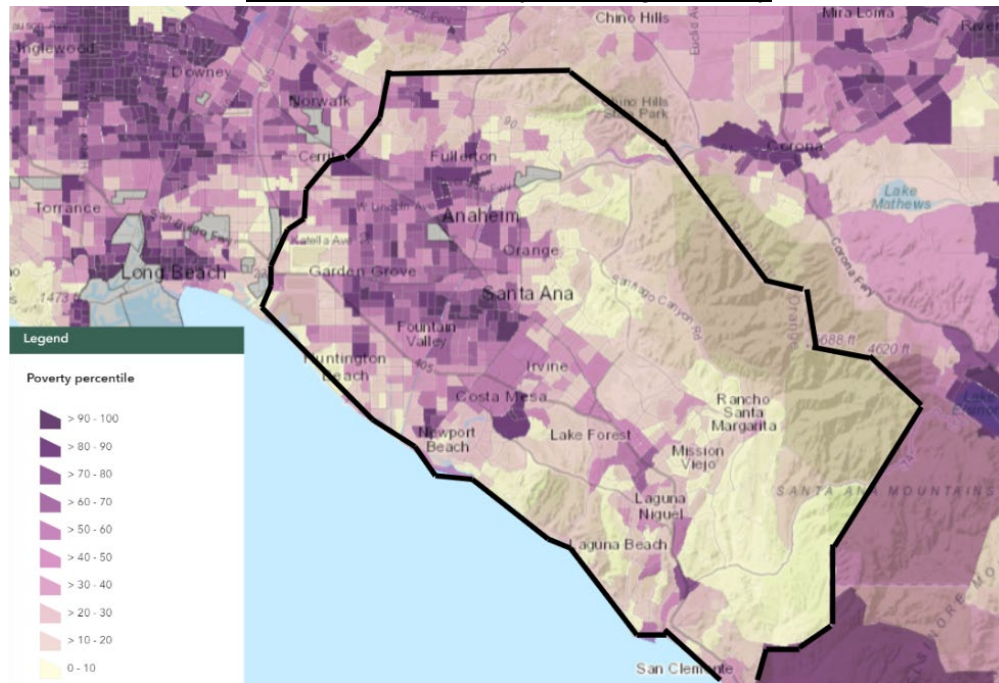


Figure 3. Map displaying the percentage of poverty in Orange County, California by census tract. Data sourced from [CalEnviroScreen 4.0 - Poverty Percentile](#).

Distribution of Drinking Water Contaminants in Orange County

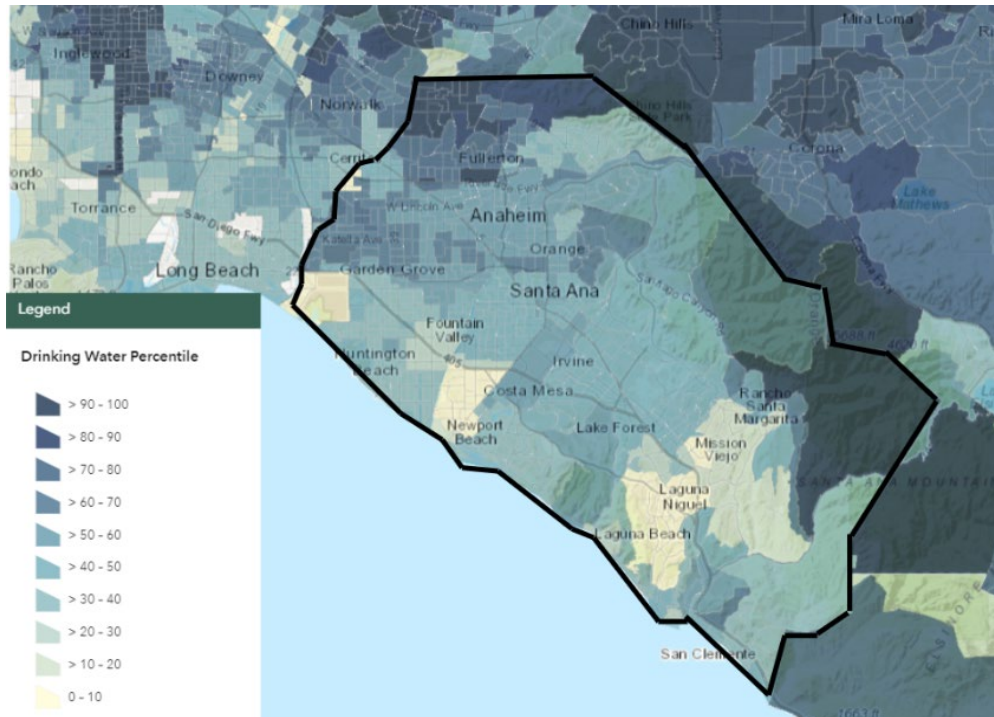


Figure 4. Map demonstrating the drinking water percentiles in Orange County, California by census tract. Drinking water percentile includes the “relative concentrations of different contaminants and whether multiple contaminants are present.” Data sourced from [CalEnviroScreen 4.0 - Drinking Water Percentile](#).

Distribution of Groundwater Threats in Orange County

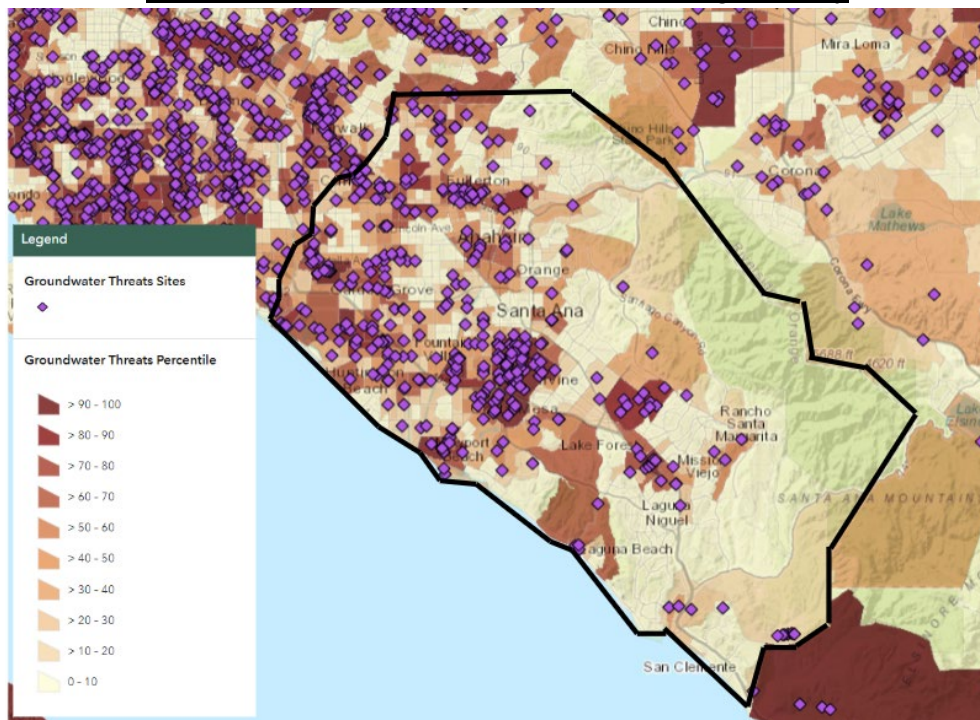


Figure 5. Map showing groundwater threat percentiles by census tract and specific groundwater threat sites in Orange County, California. Data sourced from [CalEnviroScreen 4.0 - Groundwater Threats](#).

Impaired Water Bodies of Orange County

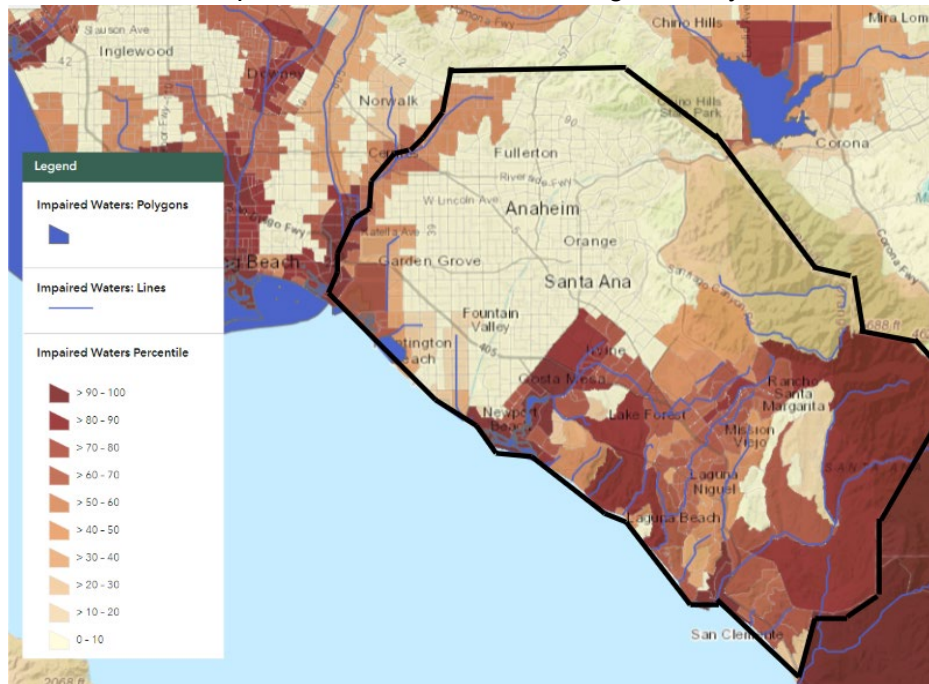


Figure 6. Map depicting impaired waterways and water bodies throughout Orange County as lines and polygons; and impaired water percentiles by census tracts. Data sourced from [CalEnviroScreen 4.0 - Impaired Waters](#).

Our Plan

We are committed to conducting work that is informed by and reflects the values of the diverse community that we serve. The following plan shares our vision for the future of Orange County Coastkeeper and how we will hold ourselves to greater inclusion and diversity.

We will focus our efforts on four areas:

- 1. LEARN:** Require all staff and board members to complete Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training on an ongoing basis. Commit to ongoing learning, questioning the status quo, and taking accountability for how we may benefit from and contribute to harmful systems.
- 2. TRANSFORM:** Challenge our dynamic with power, privilege, and oppression by being self-aware and showing solidarity. We will strive to create a just world where everyone has access to safe, clean water resources as a basic human right by ensuring our work supports building new systems that uphold our mission of a sustainable healthy water supply.
- 3. ACT:** Taking accountability, showing up with trust and respect, and being ready to listen and learn will lead to the recruitment and engagement of diverse stakeholders and staff:
 - a. Begin by electing diverse board members
 - b. Follow with new staff opportunities
 - c. Divest from harmful systems and share resources

4. ENGAGE: Respectfully engage in collaboration that supports just, reciprocal, collective work. We will take the time to build trust within our community and engage in intentional listening to build consensus through healthy deliberation and solidarity. Our partnerships will intentionally dismantle inequitable power structures.

2023 Timeline

We will implement this plan by doing the following:

LEARN: Require all staff and board members to complete Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training

By March 2023 – Orange County Coastkeeper staff and board members will complete a one-hour [diversity training](#). Following the training, we will lead conversations around how this affects our work and how we can improve our efforts in environmental justice. Staff and board will undergo training that is appropriate for their respective organizational roles. Training for board members will focus on supporting JEDI principles at the executive level. Staff training will focus on the implementation of these principles.

By April 2023 – Enlist a professional organization (i.e., [Justice Outside](#)) to conduct an organizational assessment to inform the development and implementation of this plan and the incorporation of JEDI principles holistically within the organization.

By April 2023 – Identify gaps in our representation with respect to our membership, volunteer base, staff, board, and communities that we serve.

By Soon – Create advisory boards working alongside our membership advisory board that ensure our work is being informed by communities whose voices have historically and systematically excluded from the environmental movement. (ie. Youth Advisory Board, etc.)

Ongoing – New board members and staff will be required to complete a one-hour diversity training during the onboarding process.

TRANSFORM: Challenge our dynamic with power, privilege, and oppression by being self-aware and showing solidarity.

By June 2023 – As a part of the organizational assessment listed above, the board of directors and executive director will seek an outside consultant that can advise our organization on how to recruit board members with diverse backgrounds in an ethical manner.

Ongoing – Develop and continually revisit a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) plan to hold staff and executive leadership accountable. In addition to the initial diversity training, the JEDI Committee (JEDI Committee defined under “Act” below) will

ensure that staff and executive leadership are meeting measurable outcomes informed by our work with consultants.

ACT: Taking accountability, showing up with trust and respect, and being ready to listen and learn will lead to the recruitment and engagement of diverse stakeholders and staff

By End of 2023 – Utilizing the skills gained from our consultant, our organization will have brought on two more Orange County community members who bring diverse perspectives to the board.

Ongoing – The organization has formed a JEDI Committee with staff and board members to meet quarterly. The JEDI Committee will use the current JEDI plan as a guiding document. The committee will ensure the new board members and staff are not tokenized but rather empowered to share their ideas as well as provide support and guidance for solidarity. The committee will brainstorm and recommend new ways to center JEDI values into our ongoing programs and work.

ENGAGE: Engage authentically and partner with various environmental justice and BIPOC organizations in Southern California

Ongoing – Orange County Coastkeeper will build trust and center partnerships with organizations that are led by or prioritize our most intersectionally marginalized communities and environmental justice issues. We will take as many opportunities as possible to divest resources that will help to balance inequities in our movement in all of our activities.

February 2023 – Set an organization-wide guideline and precedent for meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities with board approval and incorporate it as an Appendix to the JEDI plan.

November 2023 – Having taken every opportunity possible to make meaningful connections, we will have a goal of partnering and engaging in solidarity with a minimum of two new organizations by January 2024 through our programs and general organizational work.

Ongoing: Create internal policies, standards, and guidelines that will continually guide our organization in how to engage justly and equitably.

Budget and Implementation

Allocating funds to this work will further solidify our commitment to incorporating this JEDI plan. There will need to be a budget set for personnel time and consultant fees.

Personnel Budget

Consultant Fee Budget

Outreach Materials and Misc.
TOTAL: \$15,000

Sources:

CalEnviroScreen 4.0: <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40>

CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Report:

<https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen40reportf2021.pdf>

Orange County Water District: <https://www.ocwd.com/gwrs/>