

PEAR Team Meeting 19 – Meeting Notes – January 8, 2025, 12-2 pm

Welcome & Icebreaker – Yelley 12:05 pm

Icebreaker asking the group to respond to the prompts below.

- Name
- Pronouns
 - (she/ her, they/them, he/him, etc.)
- Visual Description (highlights)
 - Race and/ or skin color
 - Hair (cut or style)
 - What you are wearing (glasses, jewelry, color of your shirt)
- Role(s) if you like
- Check in:
 - Something you're looking forward to in 2025
 - Highlight from 2024
 - "It's 2025, and I'm feeling..."

Facilitators' Present:

Yelley Taylor, they/them, Parks DEI Consultant

Janette Chien, she/her, Parks DEI Director

PEAR Team Present:

Lynn Makowsky, she/her, Community member

Alyssa Smith, she/her, Boating Education

Stacey Coltrain, she/her, Ranger Sequim Bay State Park

Curt Fackler, Camp Host Volunteer WA and AZ

Mary Brown, she/her, Guide Manager at Alpine Events International

MJ Mahan, Washington Trails Association

ChaCha Sawyer, she/her, Community Member

Suzanne Kagen, she/her, Program Specialist 2 Lake Sammamish State Park

Valeria Veasley, Policy & Governmental Affairs Management Analyst

Reco Bembry, he/him, President Big Tent Coalition

Jeff Vassallo, he/him, Tahoma Gateway Area Manager, NW Region

Natasha House, she/her, Deputy Director of Administrative Services

Nick Miron, he/him, Community Member

Nikki Williams, Human Resource Consultant

Clare Delong Tuminez, she/her, Communications Director

Denise Rochelle, she/her, Founder of The Bronze Chapter

Observers Present

Chris Carlson, he/they, Parks Construction Project Coordinator

Heather Carrington, she/her, Central Lakes Area Administrative Assistant

Tonna Jensen Sigler, she/her Administrative Assistant DEI/Communications

Phillip Nontell – IT Business Analyst

Maddy Laoprasert, Community Member

Chevon Powell, Community Member

Agenda

Janette welcomed the group at 12:05 pm. Janette reminded the team of our community norms. We can work to support one another to be accountable for these norms. At any point we can pause and come back to these norms, adjust and add as feels appropriate.

Agenda:

- Check in
- Reflect on our team
- 2025 Planning Meeting
- General updates
- Closing

Yelley and Janette guided the group through the check-in questions.

2024 Feedback

- Things are going reasonably well
- The return of the EIR presenters
- Microsoft Teams is here to stay...

Yelley thanked the team for taking the time to meet one on one to check in. If you haven't had a check in yet, expect an email. There were some great conversations with some trends. We are working on bringing back the EIR presenters to share about changes they've made after PEAR feedback. Janette shared that if you haven't checked in with Yelley please do. Yelley is newer and offers a fresh perspective.

2025 Meeting Schedule

We are working to schedule with other departments across the agency (page 16). Here are other topics we are hoping to schedule for 2025

- Discount Passes
- Youth Programming
- Communications
- Customer concerns
- Administrative Services
- Tribal Relations
- State Parks Foundation
- Everyone Outdoors update

Janette highlighted that we are returning to some norms. We wanted to revisit 2 norms and see how the group is feeling.

Recognize that each person has unique experiences

- Speak your truth
- Appreciate everyone's differences and commonalities
- Awareness of diversity within BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community

- Awareness of privilege (white, able-bodied, education, etc.)
- Notice and re-consider blanket statements

Support psychological safety

- Judgment-free zone
- Recognize this is an intergenerational space
- Consider the role(s) of silence and its impact in our space
- Take care of yourself
- Acknowledge intent, assess impact
- Honor confidentiality for the group's contributions

When have we supported one another to follow these norms well? When have we fallen short? Can you name specific examples? Janette asked the group to take three minutes to journal on this prompt

Janette shared the relationships continuum diagram (page 18) and asked the team to consider where our PEAR team is located on the continuum (type in the chat).

Chat responses:

- Planning and formalized leadership
- Common goals
- Working for common goals
- Working for common goals & working w/shared resources
- Working for Common Goals
- Planning and Formalized Leadership
- Between Planning and formalized leadership and working for common goals
- Somewhere between planning and formalized leadership and working with shared resources
- Somewhere between planning and formalized leadership
- planning and formalized leadership, with working for goals but the coordination of activities feels like it needs to fill out
- middle of the chart working with shared resources
- somewhere in the middle of the chart
- Coordination of Activities with each other/Working for common goals

Breakout Rooms

Yelley thanked the group for engaging in that reflection and asked the group to consider where you located our team on the continuum.

- What is challenging about a mixed space of community members and staff on PEAR team?
- What is generative and useful about a mixed space of community members and staff?
- What topics are more appropriate for a:

- community member only conversation?
- Parks staff only conversation?
- mixed group conversation?

We're going to send you into breakout rooms for 13 minutes to discuss – your rooms will be only staff or only community (minus facilitators). Janette asked each group to have one person share.

Room one

Challenges:

- Staff can use lingo, acronyms or dive into the weeds from a Parks staff perspective. Constant reminder to keep it inclusive.
- Slow to make changes because we're a public agency.
- Wondering if the community members are getting what they need out of this? Do they feel heard and part of a process?
- Laws surrounding what we can and can't do.

Generative and useful?

- They are our customers too, so it is always good to hear from them and hear how we're doing, what priorities they have etc.? What would it look like to evolve as parks, e.g. suburban parks – what would that look like? I like that our customer base is changing.
- Agency is being more forthcoming about their processes and why the agency is doing what it is doing. Agency is working to be more authentic and open. The PEAR team is vital to the conversation, especially around DEI etc. and bringing community/Friends groups.
- New ideas – the metro bus idea (hire a van in King County)

Topics appropriate for...

- Parks staff only
 - Internal conflict or issues
 - Budget cuts
 - Is ELT being in here helpful or should Parks staff have their own space?
 - Conversations about complex work that is sensitive
- Mixed
 - What people outside of agency staff want from us – what are their priorities? Broaden the field of input because community members can bring statewide perspectives
 - Events to happen in parks – we can work together to envision an event, maybe augment their goals or scale appropriately
 - Have a real conversation about what changes can be made and how, better understand the challenges the agency faces and the priorities of the community. Can also provide space to hear each other in a more nuanced, and engaged way.

Room two

Challenges:

- Don't want to burden community members to hear staff challenges
- Not sure quite yet about the function of community only and staff only spaces yet
- At times we get feedback that we can't actually implement because of legal parameters and that is challenging
- As a staff who works in admin services and mostly internal facing (the staff are my customers), I'm trying to find my place and value add to the PEAR team. I want to better understand and harness the value of community input
- I don't want to burden and bombard community members with questions AND I also want to ask community members a bunch of questions!! I want to explain how we do business and ask community members - what do you think?? And get their feedback

Generative:

- We are isolated on cubicle farms, and it is good to hear community feedback because I normally don't get it.
- I have blind spots because I don't have that lived experience and so I am craving that feedback
- The more open communication the better
- Want to know what the barriers are to community members getting out to the parks? Would like to hear directly from the community rather than trying to figure it out internally. We want to better understand
- We want to let community members have the opportunity to ask staff questions

Ideas/Questions:

- What do other .gov agencies do for community input? Shifting time to evenings, offering food and childcare, etc.
- What about our customer surveys? Suggestion boxes?

Topics for:

- Parks staff only: How will we take PEAR work further, support PEAR work across the agency beyond DEI time. Internal conflicts, budget cuts, sensitive material that we need to understand before sharing with the broader public in mixed groups
- Even if it is a staff only space all these discussions need to eventually come into mixed spaces for feedback before coming back for staff to implement
- Community only: What about a community member only retreat group for PEAR? to foster more connections
- Mixed group: A staff-only space should eventually flow to a mixed space. PEAR group is a good opportunity because it allows for continuous conversation and dialogue. Big topics like Cama beach and Fort Worden should be in a mixed group.

Main room:

- One of the comments that came up a few times was that it's great for community members to gain insight into processes.

- There was an acknowledgement that while the external community can have really great ideas, those ideas can be restrained by the bureaucracy of the agency. It is generative to hear about the ways that folks experience parks
- There is a need for opportunities to have unbridled dialogue and talk frankly about how to create change.
- Staff are restricted by positions within the agency – the pressure of representing the agency and potential consequences for sharing their perspectives.
- How is the feedback from the PEAR team being pushed through the agency?
- We are working on developing the teams that will push DEI work forward within the agency. - The PEAR team is a valuable opportunity to get a mixed space conversation
- Companies with diverse executive teams are 33% more likely to outperform their peers on profitability.
- Companies with inclusive cultures have a 22% lower turnover rate.
- Organizations with strong DEI practices see a 2.3 times higher cash flow per employee over a three-year period.
- Inclusive teams make better business decisions up to 87% of the time.
Research/Resources: McKinsey & Company: Harvard Business Review: Cloverpop: Gallup: Deloitte
- Shared learning is a great aspect of this team and it'd be great if we could receive regular updates on outdoor resources from Parks

Topics for:

- Community member-only conversations can be particularly valuable for discussing topics specific to the experiences, needs, and perspectives of the community.
- Community only spaces allow them to think more creatively and not be restricted by the bureaucratic environment
- Mixed group convo: co-creating long term park programming to make more accessible, inclusive and equitable for different community groups, and feedback
- I guess I have a question about job opportunities in state parks teams/divisions but that also has to do with the state budget... but that's a whole other topic

Break

15 minutes return at 1:30 p.m.

2025 State Parks PEAR Plan

Janette shared that one of our goals this year is to reinvigorate our PEAR plan. Prior to this meeting we shared some examples of pear plans from the [Department of Natural Resources](#), Department of Licensing and the [Office of Equity PEAR Plan and Playbook](#). We want to create this plan collaboratively with this team, the DEI team and ELT. PEAR work is part of all our division work goals. Some of this work is already happening, it's just not streamlined in one place. We want to include the historical context of how DEI

Division started in 2021, demographic data, customer surveys, roadshow data. We see this plan as a living document to,

- Create collaboratively with DEI, PEAR Team and leadership team
- Bring together and articulate how PEAR work is part of all division goals
- Communicate the current state of DEI work at WA State Park, including:
 - Historical context
 - Baseline data, research, studies
 - Our approaches, values, assumptions
 - Current projects & programs
 - Changes in the past 2-3 years
 - Future projects
 - Ways to get involved

Our audience for our PEAR plan is internal AND external. What do we want our audience to, feel, think and be moved to do.

Internal state Parks staff should feel:

- **Informed** about what PEAR is and what it means for State Parks to be PEAR
- **Reflected/represented** - See themselves in this plan's collective work
- **Empowered** to get involved

External partners and the public should feel:

- **Informed about what PEAR is and the actions that State Parks is taking to be PEAR**
- **Reflected/represented** - See how community input has shaped our plans and decision-making and how we will continue these relationships
- **Connected** to the process

Before that, we need to:

- Know what Pro-Equity Anti-Racism means
- Know that State Parks wants to be PEAR

And even BEFORE THAT, we need to:

- Recognize why state agencies need to be Pro-Equity Anti-Racism
- Recognize the issues that being Pro-Equity Anti-Racism is solving in our government systems.

So, to do this work, what are our assumptions (things that *we* accept as true)? Janette shared this is how the office of equity defines the current state of Washington based on their listening sessions with community members and state employees. Parks staff read a paragraphs below from the Office of Equity PEAR Plan & Playbook.

Jeff: Some Washingtonians question the legitimacy of state government because decisions are consistently made without them.

Alyssa: Some Washingtonians question whether state government is effective because it is not delivering services that meet their needs. People feel devalued and often cannot access services.

Natasha: Some Washingtonians do not trust state government because of its history of oppression and marginalization. People are left behind, hopeless, homeless, frustrated and disconnected.

We reflected on this current state, and we thought about if we identified our current state at Parks what would we accept to be true. Yelley shared that one of the things that stands out to our team is that we need to be more specific about the issues we are trying to address. We need to consistently name the injustices, and the role Parks plays. Yelley, Philip and Clare each read a paragraph on slide 23. Staff each read a paragraph below.

Yelley: We have a responsibility to engage the public in our programs, processes and decisions. We have work to do across the agency to ensure that communities have a meaningful say in the decisions that impact their lives.

Philip: There are gaps and disparities in the services that communities receive across the state. People from historically and currently marginalized groups do not have access to the same opportunities to experience health, wealth and well-being as their nonmarginalized (privileged) counterparts.

Clare: State government has a history of oppression and marginalization. Consequently, many communities experience a lack of trust with government systems.

Yelley: Racism is historically baked into the systems of this country, including public lands and state parks. Addressing racism requires intentional systemic changes on our part.

State parks staff do not reflect the racial and cultural diversity of the communities of Washington state. Communities of color are underrepresented in the natural resources and outdoor industry. Addressing this imbalance requires changes to our recruitment, retention and agency culture to grow a diverse workforce.

As land managers, we have a responsibility to educate ourselves about the histories of public lands, including treaty rights, Indigenous sovereignty, systemic racism, and environmental injustices.

As we are getting more specific about naming, we need to think about what we want our future state to be.

Our aspirational future state:

- State parks is actively pro-equity in its programs, processes and systems...
- State parks staff and visitors reflect the racial and cultural diversity of Washington State.
- State parks staff are educated about the histories of public lands, including broken treaty rights, Indigenous sovereignty, systemic racism, and environmental injustices.

What else? What resonates with you about these assumptions? The group shared out

Nick: One thing we need to be mindful of is not to just focus on looking diverse versus actual diversity. The agency could reflect the diversity of WA in its staff but that doesn't mean that it changes the way the agency handles power, conflicts, language, dress code, etc. I would change it to incorporate racial and cultural diversity into the structure and the way we do business, decision making, structures, etc.

MJ: Brainstorming: Keeping community members or individuals that recreate on state parks land to embark on the experiences of x y z of state parks?

Suzanne: If we were to truly address the issue of Indigenous sovereignty, we would have to address giving lands back to Native American tribes. We would also have to reframing our ranger structure from the law enforcement focus, including the enforcement style uniforms that rangers – and interpreters wear. If the interpretation team for example would wear something that looks less like law enforcement. These are big cultural shifts.

Alyssa: As a program that uses federal funds to save lives, regional equity, why don't we have a regional coordinator on the eastside to be more reflective and responsive to our partners. I would love to have staff on the east side to help with our programming.

Committee Proposals

Janette shared that we have a proposal for three committees made up of PEAR team members. We only have 2 full-time DEI staff. We see the PEAR team as helping build our DEI team compacity. DNR has an entire people and culture team. DOL has a larger team as well. These are some of the challenges we are experiencing developing this plan. We also want to open these committees to non-pear members for greater representation. For example, we don't have a Tribal Relations team member on PEAR. These committees would meet once a month for one to two hours.

1. Committee dedicated to working on our **PEAR Plan** language
 - Meet more often before March to develop this
 - Help to define our PEAR values, assumptions, naming the systems we seek to change.
 - Open to non-PEAR team members for greater representation
2. Committee dedicated to defining what we mean by "**a welcoming park system**"

- Articulate the role of community engagement in our work
 - Focus on the visitor experience
3. Committee dedicated to PEAR team **governance**
- Further develop how we run meetings, build relationships, work together
 - Identify and address representation gaps (identities, roles, etc.)

These committees will be outside of these regular PEAR meetings. In the regular PEAR meetings, we will continue to have EIR topics, and an opportunity for committees to share out. The committees will be an opportunity for more in-depth work on specific topics. We recommend that if you are interested in joining a committee select one or two not three. Please type in the chat or email us later which you are interested in.

General Updates

- Free Days & Free Ways to State Parks project
 - A UW graduate student majoring in public health is working with us and the department of Health to develop a resource to identify parks that are accessed by public transit. She will be joining a PEAR meeting to share about this.
- Everyone Outdoors Program – we have distributed 1031 passes so far!
- Emerging Leaders Program kicks off January 22
- February PEAR meeting: EIR topic: Folk & Traditional Arts Program

Closing

The meeting closed at 2:01 p.m.



PEAR Team Meeting 19

January 8, 2025

2025 Planning Meeting



Community Norms	Practices
GOAL ORIENTED & STRUCTURED MEETINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitators provide agenda, meeting notes, and organization • Time checks – limit tangents to keep us on track • PEAR Team meetings recorded during presentation portions
THOUGHTFUL PARTICIPATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center PEAR goals to empower discussions • Raise your virtual hand • Balance speaking and active listening • Open-minded observations and feedback, lean into curiosity, ask questions before assuming, seek to understand • Use accessible language (explain acronyms, terms, etc.) • Practice compassion, patience, and understanding • Trust the process; be open to feedback • Trust that we are stronger together than alone
RECOGNIZE EACH PERSON HAS UNIQUE EXPERIENCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak your truth • Appreciate everyone’s differences and commonalities • Awareness of diversity within BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community • Awareness of privilege (white, able-bodied, education, etc.) • Notice and re-consider blanket statements
SUPPORT PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgment-free zone • Recognize this is an intergenerational space • Consider the role(s) of silence and its impact in our space • Take care of yourself • Acknowledge intent, assess impact • Honor confidentiality for the group’s contributions



Agenda

- Check in
- Reflect on our team
- **2025 Planning Meeting**
- General updates
- Closing



Let's check in!

- **Name**
- **Pronouns**
 - (she/ her, they/them, he/him, etc.)
- **Visual Description** (highlights)
 - Race and/ or skin color
 - Hair (cut or style)
 - What you are wearing (glasses, jewelry, color of your shirt)
- **Role(s)** if you like
- **Check in:**
 - Something you're looking forward to in 2025
 - Highlight from 2024
 - "It's 2025, and I'm feeling ..."



Based on feedback from 2024 ...

- Things are going reasonably well
- The return of the EIR presenters
- Microsoft Teams is here to stay...



2025 Meeting schedule

Date	EIR Topic	EIR Priority Category
Jan 8	2025 Planning	
Feb 12	Folk and Traditional Arts Program	Community Engagement
March 12	Retreat Center Partnership Criteria	Visitor Experience
April 9	Ranger Hiring Process	Workforce Development
May 14		
June 11		
July	NO MEETING	
Aug 13	What is SEPA? Public input on SEPA decisions	
Sept 10		
Oct 8		
Nov 12		
Dec 17		

To be scheduled:

- Discount Passes
- Youth Programming
- Communications
- Customer concerns
- Administrative Services
- Tribal Relations
- State Parks Foundation
- Everyone Outdoors update



Returning to some norms...

Recognize that each person has unique experiences

- Speak your truth
- Appreciate everyone's differences and commonalities
- Awareness of diversity within BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community
- Awareness of privilege (white, able-bodied, education, etc.)
- Notice and re-consider blanket statements

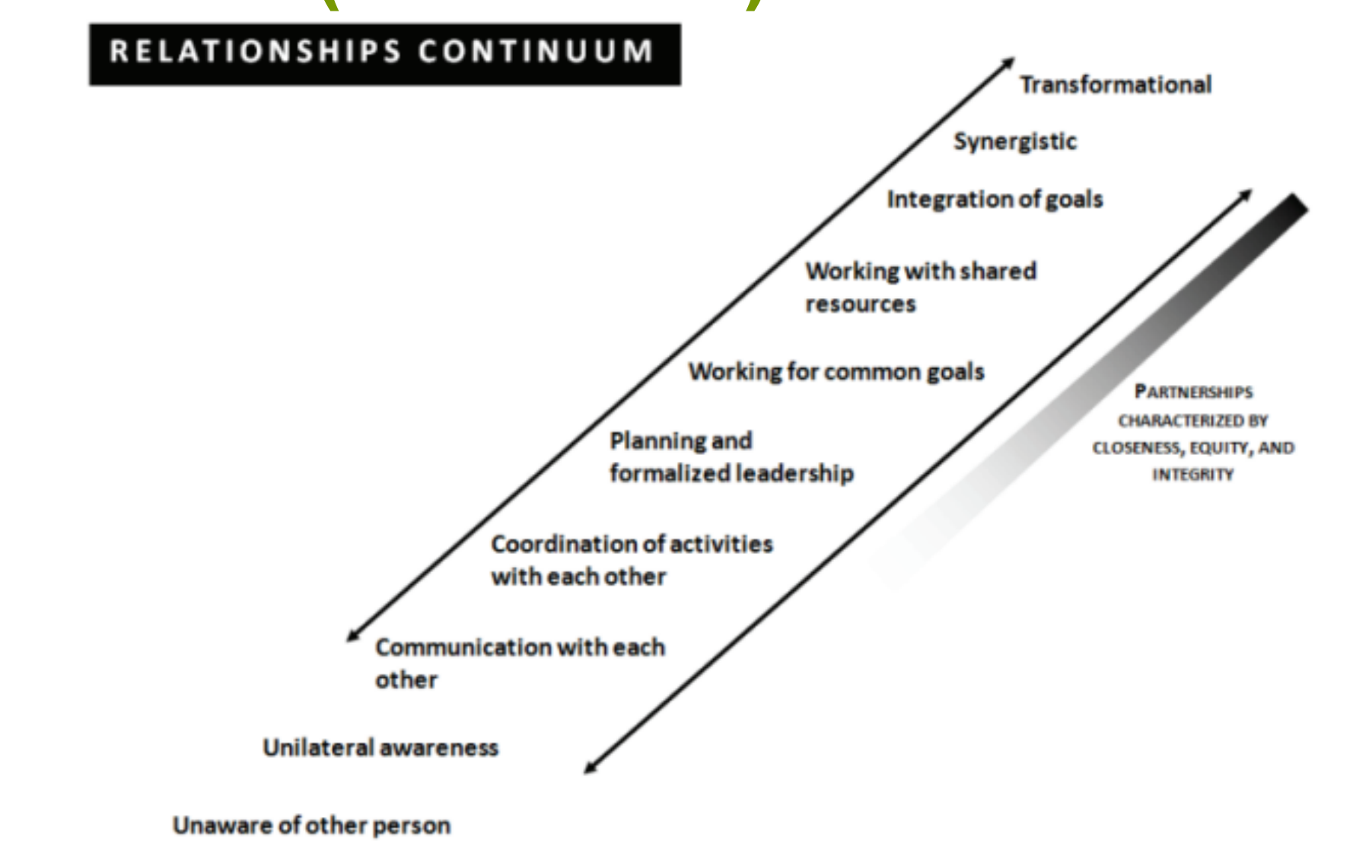
Support psychological safety

- Judgment-free zone
- Recognize this is an intergenerational space
- Consider the role(s) of silence and its impact in our space
- Take care of yourself
- Acknowledge intent, assess impact
- Honor confidentiality for the group's contributions

**When have we supported one another to follow these norms well? When have we fallen short?
Can you name specific examples?**



Where are we (PEAR team) on this?



Consider our team:

- What is challenging about a mixed space of community members and staff on PEAR team?
- What is generative and useful about a mixed space of community members and staff?
- What topics are more appropriate for a:
 - ...community member only conversation?
 - ...Parks staff only conversation?
 - ...mixed group conversation?



Discuss in Breakout Rooms!



Share out



Break



2025 State Parks PEAR Plan

- Create collaboratively with DEI, PEAR Team and leadership team
- Bring together and articulate how PEAR work is part of all division goals
- Communicate the **current state** of DEI work at WA State Park, including:
 - Historical context
 - Baseline data from Equity Impact Review, Unpacking DEI roadshow, demographic data, customer surveys, studies, and more.
 - Our approaches, values, assumptions
 - Current projects & programs
 - Changes in the past 2-3 years
 - Future projects
 - Ways to get involved



2025 State Parks PEAR Plan

Our audience is internal AND external.

Internal state parks staff should feel:

- **Informed** about what PEAR is and what it means for State Parks to be PEAR
- **Reflected/represented** - See themselves in this plan's collective work
- **Empowered** to get involved

External partners and the public should feel:

- **Informed** about what PEAR is and the actions that State Parks is taking to be PEAR
- **Reflected/represented** - See how community input has shaped our plans and decision-making and how we will continue these relationships
- **Connected** to the process



But let's pause for a second:

Before that, we need to:

- Know what Pro-Equity Anti-Racism means
- Know that State Parks wants to be PEAR

And even BEFORE THAT, we need to:

- Recognize **why** state agencies need to be Pro-Equity Anti-Racism
- Recognize **the issues** that being Pro-Equity Anti-Racism is solving in our government systems.

So, to do this work, what are our assumptions (things that *we* accept as true)?



Current state:



Some Washingtonians question the legitimacy of state government because decisions are consistently made without them.



Some Washingtonians question whether state government is effective because it is not delivering services that meet their needs. People feel devalued and often cannot access services.



Some Washingtonians do not trust state government because of its history of oppression and marginalization. People are left behind, hopeless, homeless, frustrated, and disconnected.

From Office of Equity PEAR Plan & Playbook



What **we** accept as true:

We have a responsibility to engage the public in our programs, processes and decisions. We have work to do across the agency to ensure that communities have a meaningful say in the decisions that impact their lives.

There are gaps and disparities in the services that communities receive across the state. People from historically and currently marginalized groups do not have access to the same opportunities to experience health, wealth, and well-being as their nonmarginalized (privileged) counterparts.

State government has a history of oppression and marginalization. Consequently, many communities experience a lack of trust with government systems.



Getting more specific about naming...

Racism is historically baked into the systems of this country, including public lands and state parks. Addressing racism requires intentional systemic changes on our part.

State parks staff do not reflect the racial and cultural diversity of the communities Washington state. Communities of color are underrepresented in the natural resources and outdoor industry. Addressing this imbalance requires changes to our recruitment, retention and agency culture to grow a diverse workforce.

As land managers, we have a responsibility to educate ourselves about the histories of public lands, including treaty rights, Indigenous sovereignty, systemic racism, and environmental injustices.



Aspirational future state...

State parks is actively pro-equity in its programs, processes, and systems...

State parks staff and visitors reflect the racial and cultural diversity of Washington state.

State parks staff are educated about the histories of public lands, including broken treaty rights, Indigenous sovereignty, systemic racism, and environmental injustices.

What else?



What resonates with you about these assumptions?



Committee Proposals – meet 1x month for 1-2 hrs.

1. Committee dedicated to working on our **PEAR Plan** language
 - Meet more often before March to develop this
 - Help to define our PEAR values, assumptions, naming the systems we seek to change.
 - Open to non-PEAR team members for greater representation
2. Committee dedicated to defining what we mean by "**a welcoming park system**"
 - Articulate the role of community engagement in our work
 - Focus on the visitor experience
3. Committee dedicated to PEAR team **governance**
 - Further develop how we run meetings, build relationships, work together
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Updates

- Free Days & Free Ways to State Parks project
- Everyone Outdoors Program – we have distributed 1031 passes so far!
- Emerging Leaders Program kicks off January 22
- February PEAR meeting: EIR topic: Folk & Traditional Arts Program



