

PEAR Team Meeting 26 – Meeting Notes – September 10, 2025, 12-2 pm

Facilitators Present:

Janette Chien, she/her, Parks DEI Director
Raechel Youngberg, Sustainability Specialist
Ryan Karlson, Climate and Sustainability Manager

PEAR Team Present:

Reco Bembry, he/him, President Big Tent Coalition
Denice Rochelle, she/her, The Bronze Chapter
Suzanne Kagen, she/her, Program Specialist 2
Jeff Vassallo, he/him, Tahoma Gateway Area Manager, NW Region
Natasha James, she/her, Business Support Services Deputy Director
Angela Smith, she/her, Recreation Professional and Community Builder
Curt Fackler, Camp Host Volunteer WA and AZ
Alyssa Smith, she/her, Boating Education
Stacey Coltrain, Ranger 1 Sequim Bay
Michael Mataya, he/him, Administrative Assistant

Observers Present

Phillip Nontell, IT Business Analyst
Heather Carrington, she/her, Central Lakes Area Administrative Assistant
Maddy Laoprasert, Community Member

Agenda

Janette welcomed the team at 12:01, and she reviewed our community norms and the agenda.

Agenda:

- Check in
 - EIR Topic: What is Climate Resiliency at State Parks?
 - Presentation from Raechel & Ryan
 - Breakout rooms
 - Regroup and recap
 - PEAR Committee Updates
 - Closing
-

Check in questions (type answers into chat)

- When you think about climate, what comes to mind?
- When you think about sustainability, what comes to mind?
- Climate: the look and feel of a system, physically, scientifically, even culturally.

- Climate: Climate change, natural disasters, flooding, pollution, also - generally the world around us
- Sustainability: Thinking long term for generations to come, building structures and systems to support that long term thinking
- Balance, or striking the right kind of balance
- Climate action must dismantle systemic barriers so that historically underserved communities have equal access to clean air, safe water, healthy food, and green spaces. Sustainability without equity is incomplete.
- Climate, always changing. Sustainability, keeping things so my grandchildren can enjoy.
- The people most impacted by climate change must lead the solutions. This means resourcing grassroots leadership, honoring Indigenous ecological knowledge, and ensuring youth voices shape the path forward.
- Sustainability: coming up with a system to protect the climate
- Outdoor spaces are not just resources — they are places of restoration, cultural connection, and resilience. Protecting them is both an environmental and a human rights imperative. From transportation to education to food systems, sustainability must be embedded in the structures we build, not treated as an afterthought or a one-off initiative.
- The first image that comes to mind is of the young girl who made national news for her fight for climate change. What matters to me is to make sure our nature is not extinct.

Check Ins until 12:12pm

Michael is going to record the presentation portion and stop the recording for the discussion.

Janette introducing our presenters from the Climate & Sustainability Program

Let's meet Raechel & Ryan (Introductions – reference PowerPoint)

[EIR Topic: What is Climate Resiliency at State Parks?](#)

What is the Climate & Sustainability Program?

- To further meet the agency's mission, Parks created the Climate & Sustainability program in 2022
 - The mission is becoming more challenging as the realities of climate change intensify. We're already seeing the effects in our parks with coastal erosion, more frequent flooding, prolonged droughts, and growing threat of wildfires.
- Built upon previous work but formalized a program to embed climate informed practices into how we plan, operate, and care for the parks system.

- Program is grounded in state law & commission policies that require reductions in our carbon footprint and prepare for long term impacts.
- The agency is in the process of adopting formal definitions for many of the terms here, but for this presentation we'll be working from these:
 - **Sustainability:** Meeting present needs while ensuring the health and availability of resources for future generations.
 - **Climate Change:** the long-term alteration of Earth's climate systems, including temperature, precipitation and other weather patterns, due to natural processes and human activities that alter the composition of the atmosphere.
 - **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** The release of gases, like carbon dioxide or methane, into the atmosphere that trap heat and contribute to warming of the Earth over time.
 - **Climate Mitigation:** Actions that aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance carbon storage, including investment in clean energy sources (reduce use of fossil fuels) and the conservation of forests, wetlands and other carbon-rich ecosystems.
 - **Climate Resilience:** the ability of natural and human systems to withstand, recover from, and adapt to climate impacts such as flooding, drought and wildfire while sustaining their core functions for the future.
 - **Climate Adaptation:** in the realm of park management means adjusting how natural systems and the built environment are managed to accommodate or adjust to changing climate conditions to keep them healthy and resilient over time.
 - **Climate-Informed:** Strategies and actions that integrate climate data and observations to guide decision-making to protect natural, cultural and recreational resources, and support their long-term resilience and sustainability.
 - **Overburdened Communities:** places where people are dealing with overlapping challenges such as higher exposure to pollution, climate impacts and economic or health stressors.

What is the Climate and Sustainability Program?

- Back in 2005 – State agencies were asked to take an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions (pollutants) to get a baseline understanding of what Washington State was contributing to these levels.
- 2008 State Park Commission created a Sustainability Policy and in 2009 developed a Sustainability Plan that laid out a path to reduce overall agency pollution through a resource reduction approach.
- The recession of 2009-2011 cause many things to be reprioritized and these plans took a few years to regain momentum
- In 2015 the Stewardship program's Climate Change Resolution was adopted by the Agency Commission but was more rooted in the natural & cultural resource management side of the agency.

- This led to cooperation with the University of WA to create an agency Vulnerability Assessment in 2017 & then again in 2019 for a Climate Adaptation Plan.
- These represent the origins of Parks approaching climate related issues proactively rather than reactively.
- State Legislature got involved in 2021 with the WA Climate Commitment Act
 - Serves as a pollution control law that caps emissions and puts an economic value on emissions.
 - A 'pay to pollute' system basically that creates a large funding source.
 - An important aspect is to invest in overburdened communities who have already faced an unequal share of externalities caused by industry, pollution, and climate change.
- After the CCA, more legislation was passed that requires state agencies to reduce their carbon footprint by 95% over the next three decades.
- The legal obligations of the CCA combined with the implementation of the Climate Adaptation Plan takes us to where the Climate & Sustainability Program has been working for the last couple years.
- The program beginning to work across agency divisions and developing a large culture shift to move in a direction more aligned with these goals is the newest component.
- More recently Raechel's position was brought onboard for the program
 - Communications skills, develop an agency wide culture shift around these goals

Program Evolution and Guiding Principals

- To help guide the program and mainstream these priorities into State Parks, some climate communications were developed over the last biennium.
- This led to their key 'Guiding Principles':
 - Understanding of climate change is informed by science and traditional knowledge
 - The burning of fossil fuels (anthropogenic climate change) is causing our planet to overheat, accelerating the need to invest in clean energy solutions.
 - Climate change will have lasting impacts for natural & built environments and creates a need to holistically accommodate these changes.
 - Reducing resource consumption and investing in sustainable operating practices increases climate resiliency over time.

- Foster shared understanding through communication and collaboration with staff, Tribes, partners, and communities.
- These ideas and principals are still a work in progress; the program is very open to feedback.
- What questions or thoughts come up for the group here? Type into the chat.
 - Pleased we're relying on traditional knowledge
 - Thinking about the 'lasting impact' – and how it's not just on environments but also on people, communities through generations.
 - I'm curious if, in 2005 or other years, agencies were also asked to evaluate how their resources may offset greenhouse gases as well? Because I would assume that the trees in parks help to be an offset carbon emissions.
 - The simple answer is in 2005 that effort was just an inventory of the pollution created by agencies. It did not cover the offsets, sequestration, or otherwise mitigating these effects.
 - Where does the public see these principles, platforms?
 - Currently these are not posted externally, the team is rolling out a series of internal communications and will need to go through some vetting before a long term home is decided upon.
 - We're still in the early stages of the internal process but will then need to include an external process.
 - This principal process was drafted to simply state the agency's position and policy towards climate & sustainability. Some more editing and internal agreements are needed before the public outreach stage.
 - REDUCE RESOURCE CONSUMPTION: How to suggest changes to our agency as simple as paper use reduction and wondering if something like that warrants the effort.
 - Shared Understanding through "Communication and Collaboration" with COMMUNITY first partners, Tribes, and Staff tasked with implementing these findings with "CLIMATE and Sustainability ACTION"
 - I'd like to see more community engagement, specifically in marginalized communities with the least amount of engagement, representing a larger portion of our demographic in 10-15 years
 - Lasting impact and the plan? We have had a recycle program here in our area but the plan and support for it has been a difficult process. So as a whole, a plan and support need to be established.
 - PEAR team community member noted that this essentially means that this was a "closed process" and encouraged the climate team to consider bringing in community input throughout the process rather than just at the

end. If we are only bringing in community at the end, there isn't much room for collaboration or partnership.

- There will be community-based organizations that will want to know your principles. Sharing these principles publicly (even as a work in progress) opens the door for collaborations for those that align with your values.
- Something that stands out to me about the principles is - how can they **inspire** staff in the agency AND the public? There's a big focus on what we need to do less of (reduce use of resources, reduce X), but what can we do MORE of that invites us to imagine and build a more climate-sustaining future? What happens if we don't AND what happens if we **do**!

Climate Resilience Framework

- This framework is divided into 3 areas: Adaptation – Mitigation - Education
- Adapt: How do we prepare the parks system for the climate changes that are likely to occur?
 - This is very difficult because much of the climate work you see around you is community based, but this program is tasked solely from the Parks purview. But the parks system has visitors, infrastructure, and resources; so how do we adapt those?
 - This can take the form of policies & procedures, like standards for how much electricity can be used by park users.
 - This has often focused on the physical elements of a park but also needs to focus on what this means for the people who interact with parks.
- Mitigate: actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at their sources
 - This approach includes nature based solutions, technological innovations, renewable energy deployments, and conservation.
 - Clean Energy Transition Framework
 - Fleet Electrification: we're gradually adding electric vehicles to our fleet and building out charging capacity, but barriers around cost and upgrading building electrical capacity is significant.
 - Renewable Energy: a statewide preliminary assessment showed significant potential for rooftop and ground mounted solar arrays.
 - Building Energy Efficiency: converting historic park buildings to fully electric systems will be a long term challenge, but the team is evaluating the needs at high use/high mission parks to see where efforts can be focused.
 - Green Operations: our highest utility costs come from heating, garbage, septic, and water. So, we're working on ways to reduce

waste, conserve water, and improve the efficiency of our septic & electrical systems.

- So there are many barriers, but the long term goal is to work toward lower emissions, cleaner energy, and more resilient infrastructure to protect park resources and serve future generations.
- Educate: how do we talk about climate work and communicate the goals of this program in order to build a shared awareness
 - The amount of investment required to pivot and address these issues will be a continual challenge; it will involve significant shifts in how resources are allocated across the agency.
 - It raises big questions around what priorities will need to change over time to do climate work/projects and budget accordingly.
 - Other agencies are facing the same dilemma, so Parks isn't alone in that respect.
 - Right now, the education part is still focused internally, making sure they're communicating with peers and others within the agency. The second audience will be external.
 - The education is crucial to act as a glue and be the big 'WHY' behind it all
 - Why are we doing this? Who is impacted?
 - What happens if we don't do certain things?

Challenges

- Funding – The costs of mitigation and adaptation efforts are incredibly high. Grants are competitive and external incentives are disappearing. This makes it difficult to move forward at the pace needed to comply with state law & legislative goals.
- Aging infrastructure – we have roughly 2000 buildings, but many are not designed for energy retrofits and other utilities would be a better focus for sustainability practices.
- Fleet barriers – The majority of our 750 vehicles are trucks that are dispersed across the state, often in remote areas, and affordable EV options are limited.
- Culture shift – Transitioning to low-carbon operations requires new practices, training, and cross-divisional alignment.
- Equity impacts – the program's work within Parks makes it difficult to quantify and demonstrate how these kinds of changes provide tangible benefits to vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.
 - Meaningful and tangible benefits are the things focused on and asked about when seeking funding from the state or grant programs.
 - We would love feedback on ways we could demonstrate benefits to communities while accomplishing program and legislative goals.

Overburdened Communities & the Climate Commitment Act (CCA)

- CCA legislation requires at least 35% of funds to benefit overburdened communities (with a goal of 40%) and at least 10% of funds to benefit tribes.
- Benefits must be direct and meaningful; reduce pollution burdens, cut climate risks, or meet community identified needs.
- Agencies use various state mapping tools to identify communities, highlight needs, and track where funds are implemented.
- Our parks are often not located within a predefined boundary by the state or do not have census tracts because they're not a residential area.
 - Reporting requirements for the CCA and mapping tools don't align well with many aspects of Parks locations and operations.

Stopped PowerPoint presentation & recording at 12:54pm

Questions:

- How are the reporting/tracking issues affected if these mapping tools don't get to the communities in need? How can we get those tools to staff who are working with these communities and better inform the questions and issues?
 - Having a more interactive system process is needed, so there is a much better understanding of how climate changes are affecting specific communities.
 - Our program is tasked with the integration of all of this, the tools to engage and meet people where they are is a major challenge. We need to do both, create a framework **and** have a ground level understanding of the needs and concerns for those locations. Maybe creating a park level listening apparatus, to engage at the local level. This would need to involve the people who work there already, the 2FTEs for this program can only do so much. The community engagement component is lacking at this stage, for a number of reasons, but that's why we want to have these discussions.
- That third pillar of education is such a big part of the process to keep this chain going and cohesive.
- How are you actually going to learn what "community-identified needs" (part of the CCA requirement) there are if there are no mechanisms for community engagement? We can use all these mapping and data tools but these don't actually get to community members to identify what their climate-related needs are. What are the steppingstones of engagement? Perhaps the next need is to pilot some efforts apart from the HQ level, to engage communities where they are.
 - Would it be possible to partner with 1-2 pilot parks and field staff there, train them to lead community conversations about climate? This way we can learn about various community needs as well as what kinds of

conversations are happening in the community about climate and sustainability.

- Statewide responsibly for these initiatives do need support, but getting community input before anything is finalized is very important so that definitions and goals are formed and agreed from the start. So, these teams don't have to go back to the drawing board or are stopped midway.
 - We agree that subcommittees are needed and have been discussed for the overall Program approach
 - We'll keep raising this importance, that a non-closed system is very needed. The capacity for this has been requested multiple times and there are mixed messages from leadership & funding. But leveling the communications field for all the groups involved will remain a priority for this program.
- How closely aligned is this program with groups like 'Front & Centered'? There are large funds going into the WA Dept of Commerce, for example, a lot of grant money being implemented. When these come from internal agency groups, it's very hard for external groups to play catchup. Especially when legislation and such is fully formed, it's a major hurdle to ask communities to play a part & weigh in at this stage.
- On the ground community organizations need to be much more involved, so the constituencies being affected have a say throughout the process.
 - The Climate & Sustainability program has worked with Front & Centered, and that point is well taken, we'll be sure to continue giving that weigh however we can.
 - When we look at these kinds of grant opportunities (even when Parks is a good candidate) we fall short because we don't have a good way to show/connect how we're involved and benefitting these communities. As that is a heavy component in the approval process when we're competing with other applicants, and these grants are very competitive.
- There is a lot of possibility in youth stewardship engagement – a lot of young people care about our climate and are inspired to do more and contribute. What about partnering with youth groups for the on-grant process? This would play into the education part also, but how do we involve younger groups that feel strongly about the effects of climate change? That moves climate conversations from a strictly academic/scientific sense and more towards social issues and tangible day to day projects that relate to people's lives
 - That is a good question, the scale of that approach is often the intimidating part. Overreaching can be harmful when we don't meet goals and expectations for addressing climate change issues.
- I'm in a program that faces similar challenges when it comes to scale and the needs statewide. Our program, with 2-4 staff, is tasked to keep the public safe on all state parks waterways and 39 counties, it can be overwhelming. We also use

tools like the Environmental Health Disparities map to help us prioritize and focus efforts. We would start with the areas that are most in need, triage the work from that perspective.

- Raechel & Ryan are very grateful to talk outside of their cohort, appreciate all the ideas in the chat

Additional questions / comments in chat:

- How to Make the Overlap Work
 - **Tie OZ incentives to climate metrics** — e.g., require carbon reduction, resilience, or environmental justice benchmarks.
 - **Center community voice** in project design, ensuring residents define what “climate action” means for their neighborhood.
 - **Leverage partnerships** between local governments, land banks, and grassroots organizations to align OZ capital with climate adaptation plans
 - **Greenwashing**: Some projects may claim sustainability benefits without delivering real climate or equity outcomes.
 - **Misaligned Incentives**: Investors may prioritize short-term returns over long-term community resilience. "Work with PEAR and partners to increase communication at the planning phases"
- If implemented at the park level, lean on partnership with other groups (i.e. Friends group, Mountains to Sound Greenway)?
- [Opportunity Zones and Land Banks on One Map: What to Know About OZ 2.0 | Center for Community Progress](#)
 - resource: [Reshaping the City: Zoning for a More Equitable, Resilient, and Sustainable Future - Urban Land Magazine](#)
- Train the trainer to empower the community. find champions to multiply your work
 - We leverage local technical high schools, aquatics and injury prevention professionals (also concerned about communities' resilience and support for them)
 - We have the WA Drowning Prevention Network and other groups we gather with to further our work, for example.
- Looking at DOH's HEZ group may be helpful: Washington Dept of Health's Health Equity Zones project: <https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/health-equity/health-equity-zones>
- Key Focus Areas:
 - Housing: Safe, affordable housing solutions for all residents.
 - Energy & Climate: Administers funding from the Climate Commitment Act to reduce climate pollution, create jobs, and improve public health.

- Economic Development: Supports business growth, job creation, and investment — especially in rural and underserved communities.
 - Local Government Support: Provides planning, infrastructure, and leadership resources to cities and counties.
 - Community Services: Partners with communities to advance equity, safety, and resilience.
 - Director: Joe Nguyễn — a former state senator and longtime advocate for housing, climate action, and equity coalition work!
- I wonder if your team could utilize community compensation to facilitate 1-2 focus groups with community members at the park level - perhaps piloting 1-2 park areas in overburdened communities? The DEI team is happy to share how we use community compensation with PEAR team and support. I could see your team leading a series of community focus groups – and we'd love to support you in this.
 - Do you ever tap into the list of applicants that apply for the discovery pass? Maybe if they opt-in for additional communication, they could be asked for various support or participation.
 - Great question!! We have sent them program related communication but not anything outside this - This group would be GREAT to tap into - thank you
 - YES Partnering with Communities as grantees
 - Dept of Ecology - no discharge zone. WDFW - aquatic invasive species, which will change/rise with climate change and impact communities that rely on foraging/harvest for additional food security.
 - What about partnering with 3-5 local health jurisdictions in the state with have the highest number of climate change related health incidents and working through those specific communities before going to the statewide system?
 - Meeting 1x per quarter with BIPOC and marginalized communities to learn and implement the plan c/o RCW

Climate & Sustainability Program - Contacting Us:

- Ryan.Karlson@parks.wa.gov
- Raechel.Youngberg@parks.wa.gov

Group Break at 1:19pm

Returned at 1:25pm

Questions to review as a group:

- **When you think about climate and sustainability at parks, what comes to mind? What matters to you? What impacts you?**
- **What climate and sustainability-related conversations are happening in your community? What conversations are folks seeking?**
- **What ideas and feedback do you have for this climate and sustainability team?**

Breakout Rooms

Group 1

Group 1
Names: Ryan Karlson, Angela Smith, Alyssa Smith, Maddy, Michael Mataya
<p>When you think about climate and sustainability at parks, what comes to mind? What matters to you? What impacts you?</p> <p>What climate and sustainability-related conversations are happening in your community? What conversations are folks seeking?</p> <p>What ideas and feedback do you have for this climate and sustainability team?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scale of this issue is what comes to mind, knowing where to start and what can be tackled is intimidating. • From the Parks perspective, getting community involvement & input is such an important part & challenge. Knowing the specific groups being included and who has representation is just as important as the feedback itself. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ We work with our trusted partners to align and standardize messages while supporting their community concerns that relate to our mission. What we do looks different in each community/region. • Creating opportunities for community partners and ways for these groups to feel invested in climate projects. • Depending on the areas of the state being reached, from urban to rural communities, the consistency of questions asked / data being gathered needs to be very intentional. • Vulnerability of infrastructure and impacts on users • The importance of community engagement, access, and community led data

Other thoughts? Ideas? Reflections?

- 'Salmon Safe' presentation example - emphasizes how broad / multifaceted the issue of climate change & sustainability is for everyday groups.
- What matters to people about Parks? With such a big target within climate, understanding where to focus efforts is half the battle.
- Example: climate respite centers, health respite centers (local health) that certain programs run, do those sorts of projects have a good chance of attracting grants/funding?
- Outdoor cooling centers?
- Focusing on attracting future parks users and driving interest, that certainly ties into what matters to people about parks.
- The cultural component within communities, where staff can leverage generational knowledge/wisdom is an invaluable resource and should be considered when meeting the needs of communities.

Group 2

Group 2

Names: Janette, Heather Carrington, Raechel Youngberg, Philip Nontell, Curt Fackler, Denice Rochelle, Jeff Vassallo, Natasha James, Reco Bembry

When you think about climate and sustainability at parks, what comes to mind? What matters to you? What impacts you?

- Water use - restroom facilities, fountains, using solar power in parks
- How much electricity is being used, dropping water levels
- From the agency level, we don't invest in sustainability - all improvements occur at the ground level
 - Frustration with programs we have tried to start in our park areas (recycling program) but have not had support.
 - Support looks like:
 - Transition through staffing changes for climate and sustainability related support. Clearcut contacts of who to go to - rather than just throwing it back onto the park to be responsible
 - Centralized support: Is there a place we can go to for support and answers to questions

- 2 of our parks have gone to electric equipment (chainsaws, mowers, EV truck) - but concern if these initiatives will stay. A lot of initiatives are focused at the local level, but do not have the statewide backing.
- The Climate & Sustainability team are not given the resources to actually address their scope of work
 - Lack of funding to impact real long-term change is a huge challenge
 - Challenge: Receiving directives from up high. Staff on the ground who are in charge of implementing and know how to do so. But THEN A GAP in between.
 - Too many levels between the leadership (where directive comes in) and operations field staff on the ground implementing these initiatives
 - Community members were surprised by how many layers of authority are between a park ranger and the Director
 - Also need better documented levels of decision-making authority, so much stuff goes through leadership that can slow down progress
 - We need education for how to implement - especially for those in the position of implementing
- **Can we create successful programs without the infrastructure to keep them going?**
 - The chicken and egg - infrastructure before program, or program before infrastructure.
 - Right now it feels like we have momentum and newness, but will it die down? We don't have a clearcut path and people who will lead us and lead us well?
 - Is there another state agency or other park system that is doing this well?
 - Climate & Sustainability team connected with PA state parks for solar incentives + national parks service - decently funded systems we are trying to model
 - Is there private sector engagement
 - <https://www.dcpowerplants.com/> - Training people in how to install solar, one of the few BIPOC owned power plants in the state
- Upgrading infrastructure to withstand flooding, storms, and wildfire risk
- Mainstreaming climate resiliency into everyday policies and operations
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy use
- Using green building techniques for new facilities
- Expanding recycling, composting, and water conservation efforts
- Teach visitors about climate change impacts in Washington
- Showcase renewable energy and green technology in action
- Foster a culture of stewardship, especially among youth and community groups

What climate and sustainability-related conversations are happening in your community? What conversations are folks seeking?

What ideas and feedback do you have for this climate and sustainability team?

- If you do everything internally, it's going to take you FOREVER
- **Geographic Overlap:** Many parks are near or within communities that also qualify as *Opportunity Zones* — meaning there's potential to align climate-resilient park investments with economic development incentives.
- **Youth Leadership Pipeline:** Parks can be living classrooms for climate careers, from habitat restoration to renewable energy installation.
- **Cultural Relevance:** Outdoor spaces can be designed and programmed to reflect the histories, traditions, and needs of the communities they serve.
- **Co-Design Pilot Programs** Propose a youth-led climate stewardship program in one high-need park as a model for replication.
- **Leverage Funding Streams** Combine BSK grant resources with state climate funds and potential OZ investment for infrastructure and programming.
- **Tell the Story** Use podcast to showcase youth voices in these park-based climate projects — blending narrative sovereignty with public education.

Other thoughts? Ideas? Reflections?

- **Compile a short, specific list of Washington State parks** that meet *all three* criteria:
 1. Climate adaptation priority site
 2. In/near an Opportunity Zone
 3. Within reach of underserved communities
- Thank you for engaging us in this spirited conversation about something so important to all of us!
- Recommend connecting with Adam from Key Labs: [Key Tech Labs Website](#)

General Updates

- Office of Equity "Plain Talk" Change Guidance
 - Now that this recommendation is out, Parks/DEI needs to decide if we should adopt a similar change or keep the PEAR terminology.
 - Focus is answering these questions: "Is government making a positive difference in the lives of the people who call our great state home? Do people feel a difference?"
 - Thoughts/Comments:
 - Community Access and Impact Plan? Who thinks that language is clearer than PEAR?

- **PEAR** as an internal or coalition planning tool
 - **Plan – Engage – Act - Reflect**
- Or in some orgs, PEAR is **Partnerships, Equity, Access, Resilience**, a way to frame program design.
- **IMPACT** could be your outcome lens:
 - **Inclusive – Measurable - Purpose-driven – Action oriented – Community led – Transformative**
- When fear shows up, ask, *“What’s the actual evidence? Is it true, or just a projection?”* *Courage isn’t the absence of fear — it’s moving forward despite it.* **Fear of Change:** In leadership transitions or new climate initiatives, fear often comes from uncertainty, not reality. "It seems as if we don't actually have a participatory Governance choice; there seems to be more of a mandate to change!
- Let's not bend away from the initial intention, be mindful of why we exist!
- Factors to consider:
 - The initial committee came up with a long list of pros & cons for this change. It's going to be a hard decision either way.
 - Impact is already used internally in other programs and might be a confusing term.
 - Statewide Employee Engagement Survey – will be reflecting this change on future surveys.
- How do we move forward?
 - Share your feedback, however is easiest (chat, email, MS Form), please respond so the team can get everyone’s honest input on this.
 - Changes for state agencies aren’t being mandated currently, but it remains to be seen what effects this will have.
- Everyone Outdoors – Impact Report, SWOT, Goals
 - Share feedback
- Blake Island Marine State Park – Community Meeting
 - 9/18 from 6-7:30 at Seattle Public Library, Ballar Branch
- Yelley is back!
- Reminder to submit A-19’s for community compensation!

Closing at 2:03pm



PEAR Team Meeting 26

September 10, 2025

What is Climate Resiliency
at State Parks?



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



Why PEAR Team & Equity Impact Review (EIR) is essential:

- PEAR team supports our agency to make more equitable decisions
- Public serving agency: Collaboration between community and staff is vital to achieve our equity goals
- Elevates community voice in our processes to build equity into our systems and the way we do business



Agenda

- Check in
- **EIR Topic:** What is Climate Resiliency at State Parks
- PEAR Committee Updates
- Closing



Check in:

- When you think about "**climate**," what comes to mind? What matters to you?
- When you think about "**sustainability**," what comes to mind? What matters to you?

(Drop it in the chat!)



Welcome Ryan & Raechel!



Ryan Karlson, Climate and Sustainability Manager



Raechel Youngberg, Sustainability Specialist





Climate and Sustainability Program

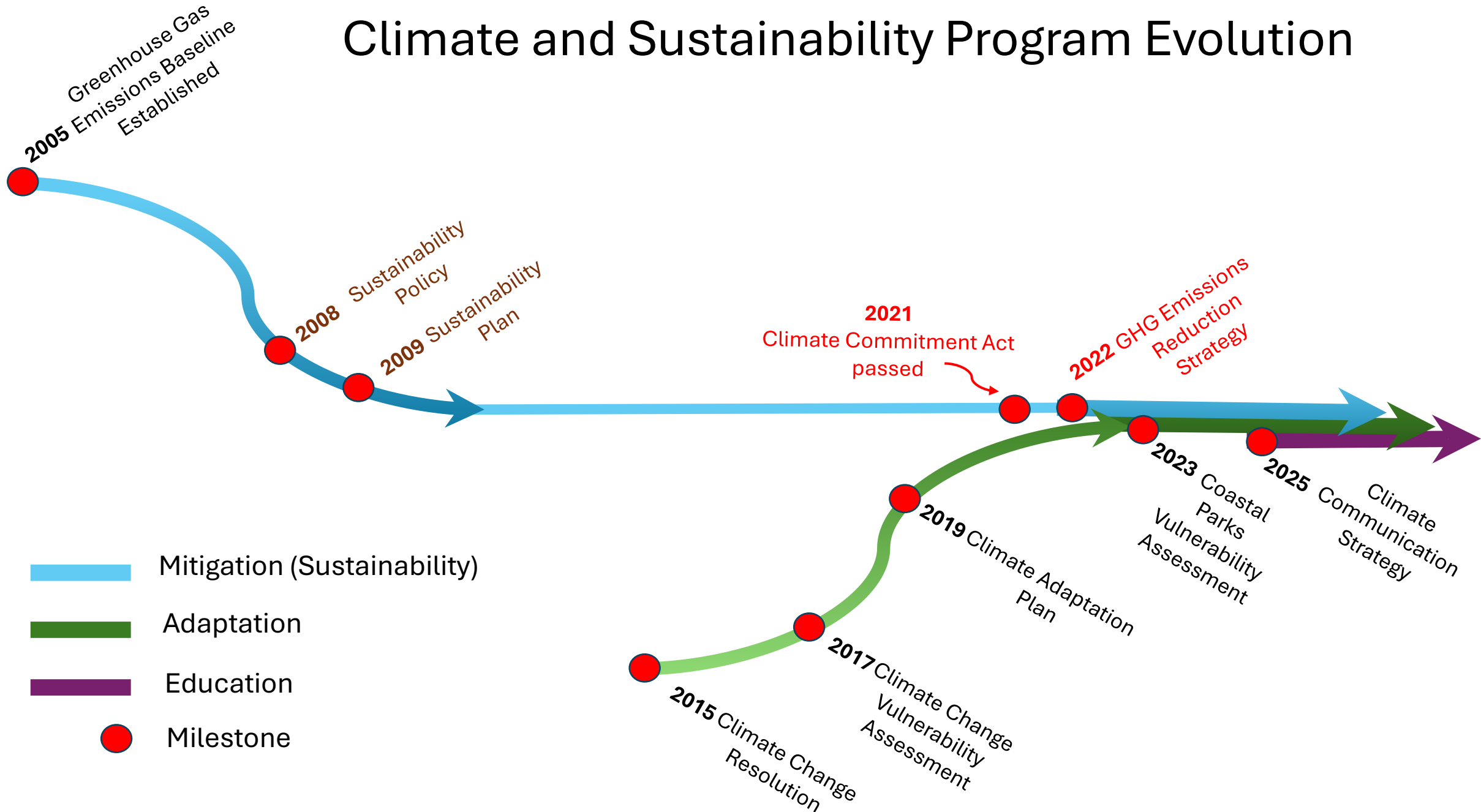


What is the Climate & Sustainability Program

- Cares for Washington's most **treasured lands, waters, and historic places**
- Climate change creates rising challenges:
 - **Coastal erosion, flooding, drought, wildfire**
- Climate & Sustainability Program (2022)
 - Mainstreams **climate-informed practices** into planning, operations, and stewardship
 - Guided by **state law & Commission policies** to reduce our carbon footprint



Climate and Sustainability Program Evolution



Our Guiding Principles:

- Grounded in **science and traditional knowledge**
- Fossil fuels are overheating our planet → invest in clean energy solutions
- Climate change will have **lasting impacts** on natural and built environments → we must plan holistically
- **Reduce resource consumption** and use sustainable practices to build resilience
- Foster shared understanding through **communication and collaboration** with staff, Tribes, partners, and communities



Climate Resilience Framework

Adapt

Preparing the park system for emerging climate realities

Mitigate

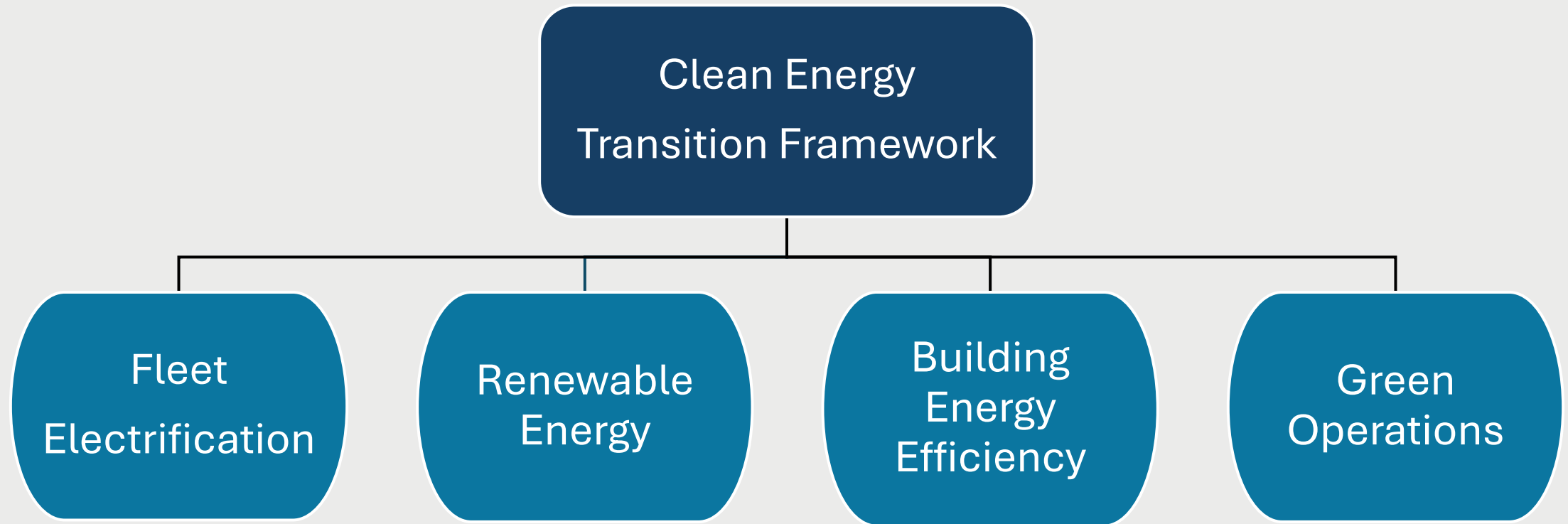
Addressing the agency's contributions to climate change

Educate

Building a shared awareness of climate impacts on the park system

Mainstreaming climate-informed practices into the development, operation and stewardship of the Washington state park system.

Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Strategy (RCW 70A.45.050)



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Challenges

- **Funding:** Competitive grants and shrinking federal incentives
- **Aging Infrastructure:** Most sites require major electrical upgrades to support EV charging, building weatherization, and transitions off fossil fuels
- **Fleet Barriers:** Trucks make up most of the fleet, and affordable EV options are still limited
- **Culture Shift:** Transitioning to low-carbon operations requires new practices, training, and cross-divisional alignment
- **Equity Impacts:** Our work is internally focused, yet reporting requires us to show meaningful benefits for overburdened communities. We struggle to provide clear examples of how internal efforts achieve this.



"Overburdened Communities" & CCA

- CCA requires $\geq 35\%$ of investments to benefit vulnerable populations in overburdened communities
- Benefits must be **direct and meaningful**: reduce pollution burdens, cut climate risks, or meet community-identified needs
- Agencies use **state mapping tools** to identify and track investments in these communities



Questions and Comments?



Potlatch State Park



Contacting Us

Climate and Sustainability Program

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Discussion Prompts:

When you think about climate and sustainability at parks, what comes to mind? **What matters to you? What impacts you?**

What **climate and sustainability-related conversations** are happening in your community? What conversations are folks **seeking?**

What **ideas and feedback** do you have for this climate and sustainability team?



Discuss in Breakout Rooms!



Share out



Office of Equity "Plain Talk" Change Guidance

From PEAR to Impact

The Washington State Office of Equity (EQUITY) believes in clearly communicating what we are doing. We understand some of the language we use has been confusing and unclear.

- We are transitioning from the phrase 'pro-equity anti-racism (PEAR)' to 'Impact'.
- Our office exists to make a positive change (impact) in how state government operates (RCW 43.06D), so we are changing our language, so our work is easier to understand.
- Our focus is answering the following questions:
 - *"Is government making a positive difference in the lives of the people who call our great state home? Do people feel a difference?"*.

Impact: Making a positive difference that people can feel.



Factors to consider

- Agencies following guidance – changing language of teams/plans
 - **Department of Natural Resources:** Community Access & Impact Plan
 - **Department of Fish & Wildlife: (TBD)** Impact Team or PEAR2Impact / PEAR to Impact
 - **Employment & Securities Department:** Impact Team
- Guidance is distributed through multiple channels (Communications, HR, etc.)
- Statewide Employee Engagement Survey – changing PEAR to Impact



Goals to ground us

- "Shared language and terminology" was a goal across all partners, champions, etc.
- Clarity for us (our team, implementation partners, agency leadership)
- Clarity for others (broader agency staff, community partners, community members, general public, etc.)
- Set the foundation for long-term and systemic change
- Adaptability, maneuverability to different climates/contexts, mitigating risks that would undermine our work
- Operate from a place of what is **just**: requires courage, boldness, imagining new worlds



...Continue with the language of PEAR?

Benefits	Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rooted in Executive Order 22-04• <i>Directs state agencies to partner with the Office of Equity to assemble a PEAR team and develop a PEAR Strategic Plan in a commitment to be an antiracist government</i>• 3 years as a state working to develop understanding about Pro-Equity Anti-Racism• Explicitly names "equity" -- and names racism as a system of oppression that shapes all our lives, including government• If we are not talking about "racism" then we're not talking about racism• Excitement and empowerment when it first came out because of consistency across agencies + moving towards shared direction, measurable across agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An EO from a previous governor• Confusion and misunderstanding about what is DEI and what is PEAR• Assumption that naming racism means not considering the other –isms• General resistance against naming specific systems, specific groups and pressure to move towards general language of serving "all" Washingtonians

...Change PEAR to "Impact"

Benefits	Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Alignment with Office of Equity and likely other agencies•Confusion of what is PEAR, what is DEI•A term that is generally understood and resonates with those unfamiliar with the term "equity"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General and can be vague, does not explicitly name equity, systems and power• Can feel like it's watering down messaging, moving away from explicitly naming unjust systems• Impact is not necessarily "plain speak" in all the contexts its being used – especially things like Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), social impact, etc.• Does it compel action?• Is there going to be shared momentum if all agencies are not using this language in the same way?• The language allows for people of dominant social identities to hold the state accountable for their discomfort

Change PEAR to...?

TERMS WE LIKED	NOTES
EQUITY INCLUSION ACCESS Community Engagement JUSTICE ANTI-RACISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To have inclusion, you must have access• For access – need to consult with our ADA Coordinator – Access work at parks focuses on ADA accommodations and compliance• It is critical to have the language of what we are about – EQUITY, and connecting to systems of power• INCLUSION - naming specifically underrepresented communities, historically excluded, marginalized groups• Half of PEAR team is community members – community is at the heart!• Create the connection between PEAR and any new language we decide...

How do we move forward?

- PEAR (Pro-Equity Anti-Racism) Team
- PEAR Impact Team
- Impact Team
- Equity & Inclusion Impact Team
- Equity, Inclusion & Community Engagement Team
- Equity, Inclusion & Access Team
- Other ideas?

Share your feedback in the chat, the form, etc.



Updates

- **Everyone Outdoors** – Impact Report, SWOT, Goals
 - Share feedback by 9/18!
- **Blake Island Marine State Park - Community Meeting**
 - 9/18 from 6-7:30pm at Seattle Public Library, Ballard Branch
 - Share [your Hopes & Concerns](#), [submit a public comment form](#) or watch recording on [our website](#)
- **PEAR Language Changes** – share your input through [this form](#)
- **Yelley is back!**
- **Reminder to submit A-19's for community compensation!**



Closing

