



Environmental Justice and our Waterways

October 3, 2023: National Waterways Conference, Navigation Caucus

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**This Presentation does not represent Agency Policy*



Warren County, NC, 1982

Appreciation & Acknowledgement



Farmworkers organizing, CA 1960s



Society of American Indians, early 1900s

Environmental Justice: Executive order 14096

The **just treatment and meaningful involvement** of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, Tribal affiliation, or disability, in **agency decision-making** and other Federal activities that affect human health and the environment so that people:

(i) are **fully protected** from disproportionate and adverse human health and environmental effects (including risks) **and hazards, including** those related to climate change, the cumulative impacts of environmental and other burdens, and the legacy of racism or other structural or systemic barriers; and

(ii) have **equitable access to** a healthy, sustainable, and resilient environment in which to live, play, work, learn, grow, worship, and engage in cultural and subsistence practices.

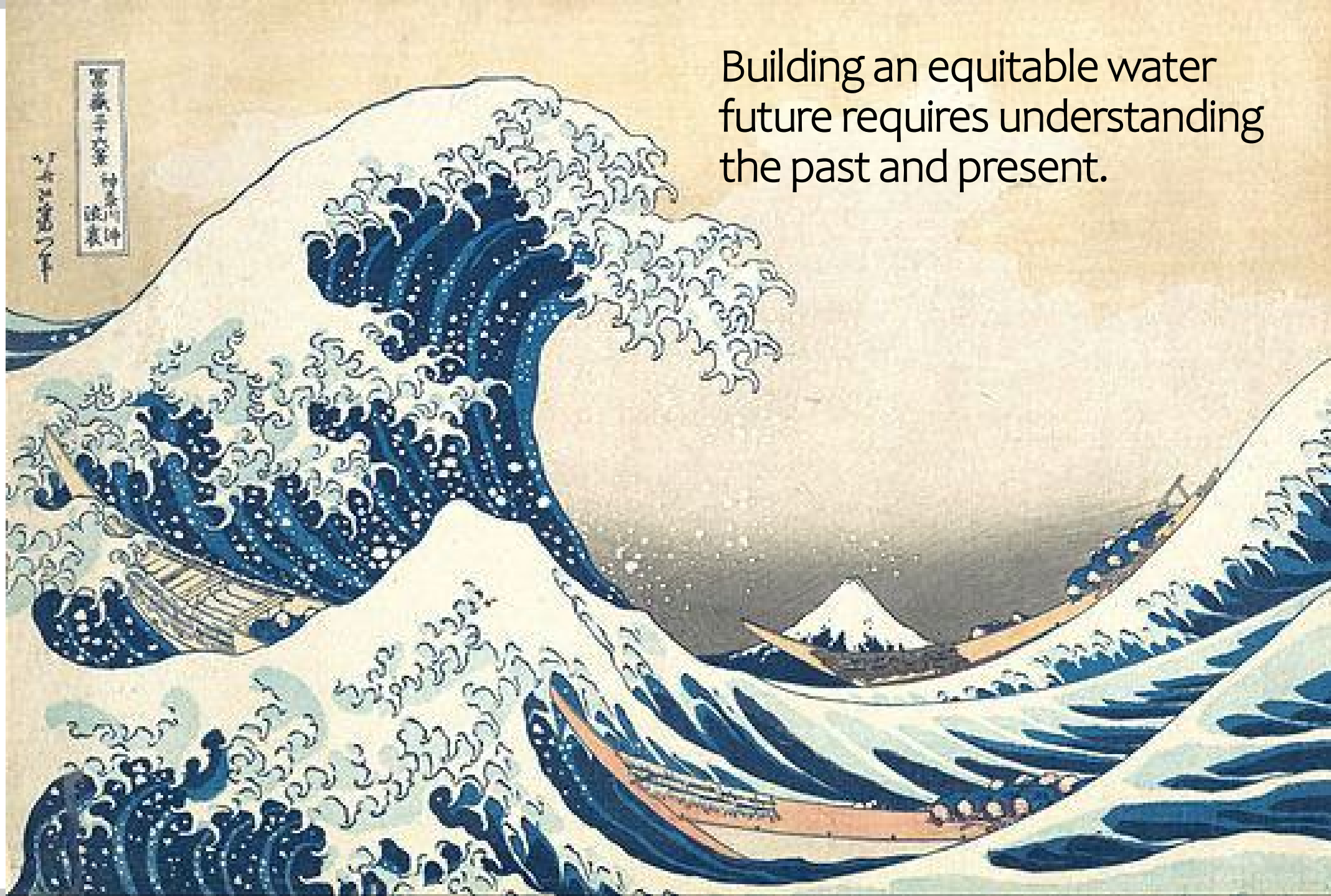




THE WHOLE COMMUNITY



Image source: <https://nightcourses.com/blog/representation-matters-lets-talk-about-it-panel-discussion/>

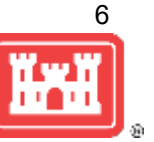



Building an equitable water future requires understanding the past and present.







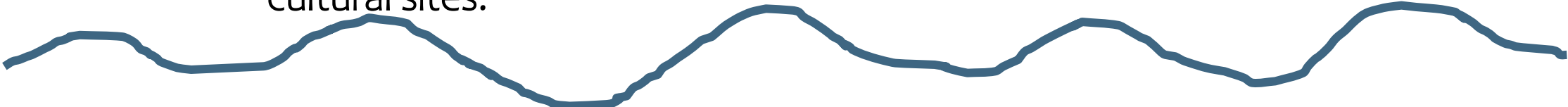
HOW WE DO THIS



 **Step 1.** Understand and **acknowledge** how the effects of colonization and structural inequality especially *land dispossession* are still with us today*
And how the inform where people live.

 **Step 3.** Radically increase participation of people with lived experience in decision making and the water resources workforce.

 **Step 2.** Center the needs of those who live with environmental injustice in solutions, policy, practice, activity. Solutions must include access to cultural sites.

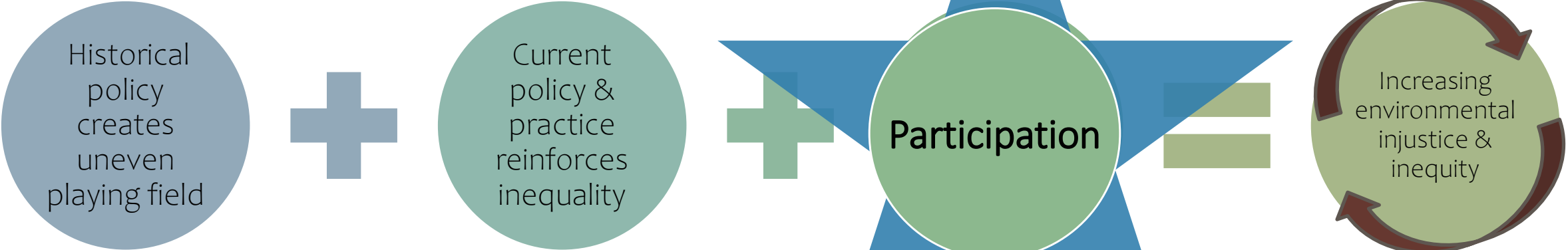




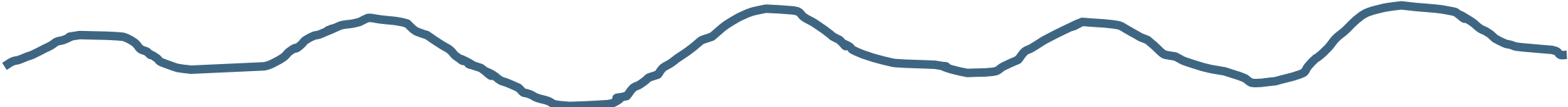
3 ISSUES DRIVING INEQUITY IN WATER RESOURCES

★ Step 1. Understand and **acknowledge** how the effects of colonization and structural racism, especially *land dispossession* are still with us today.

★ Step 3. Radically increase participation of people with lived experience in decision making and the SLR workforce.

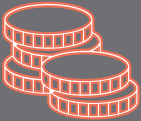


★ Step 2. Prioritize resources and target solutions for those who live with environmental injustice. Solutions must include access to cultural sites.



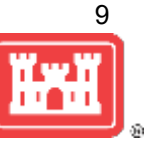
OBSTACLES AT EVERY TURN

BARRIERS TO POLITICAL PARTICIPATION FACED BY NATIVE AMERICAN VOTERS





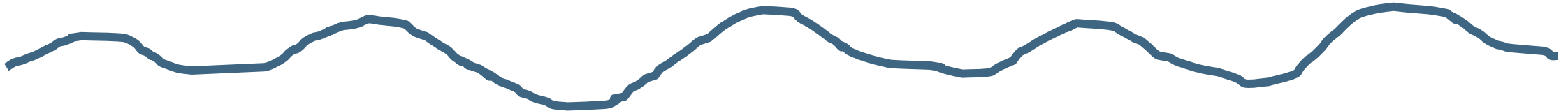
AGENDA



Celebration of
and inequity
in waterways

How we got
here

How we
change





Ode to our national waterways





Salmon in northwest, Peter Mather



Water protectors, Standing Rock



Yolo Bypass

WATERWAYS AS LIFE GIVING



Hetch Hetchy Reservoir in Yosemite National Park supplies water to San Francisco and other Bay Area cities in the summer. (Photo: KQED)



WATERWAYS AS LIFE SUSTAINING

Yosemite River (Photo: Jeff We



WATERWAYS AS RECREATION



THE RIVER LINES

SAN FRANCISCO *Daily* SACRAMENTO
LEAVE 6.30 P.M. ARRIVE 5.30 A.M.



Waterways as leisure and luxury



Lake Providence Baptism. Photo: Susan Roach.



Chef Lop (Edward Youman) cooked up 10,000 pounds of crayfish each day of the Isleton Crawdad Festival. (Photos by Steve Martarano)

A Crayfish Craze in the Delta

Crawfish Festival, Isleton, CA



Sunrise ceremony, Alcatraz Island

WATERWAYS AS CULTURE,
TRADITION, CEREMONY

Port of Stockton



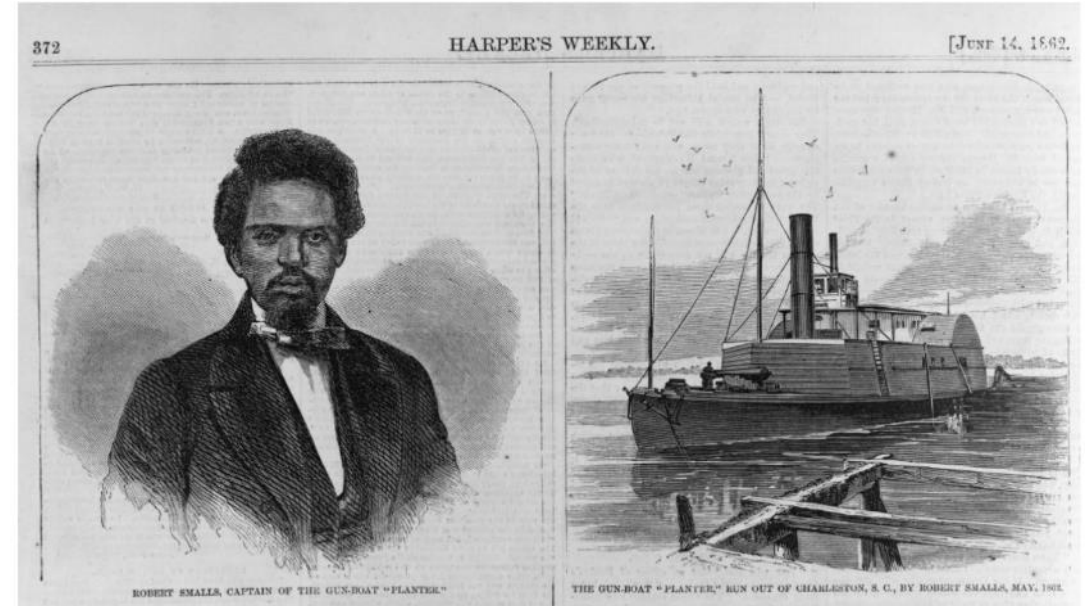
Logs awaiting spring flood on the Columbia



WATERWAYS AS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY & DEVELOPMENT



Freedom Schools, St. Louis Area

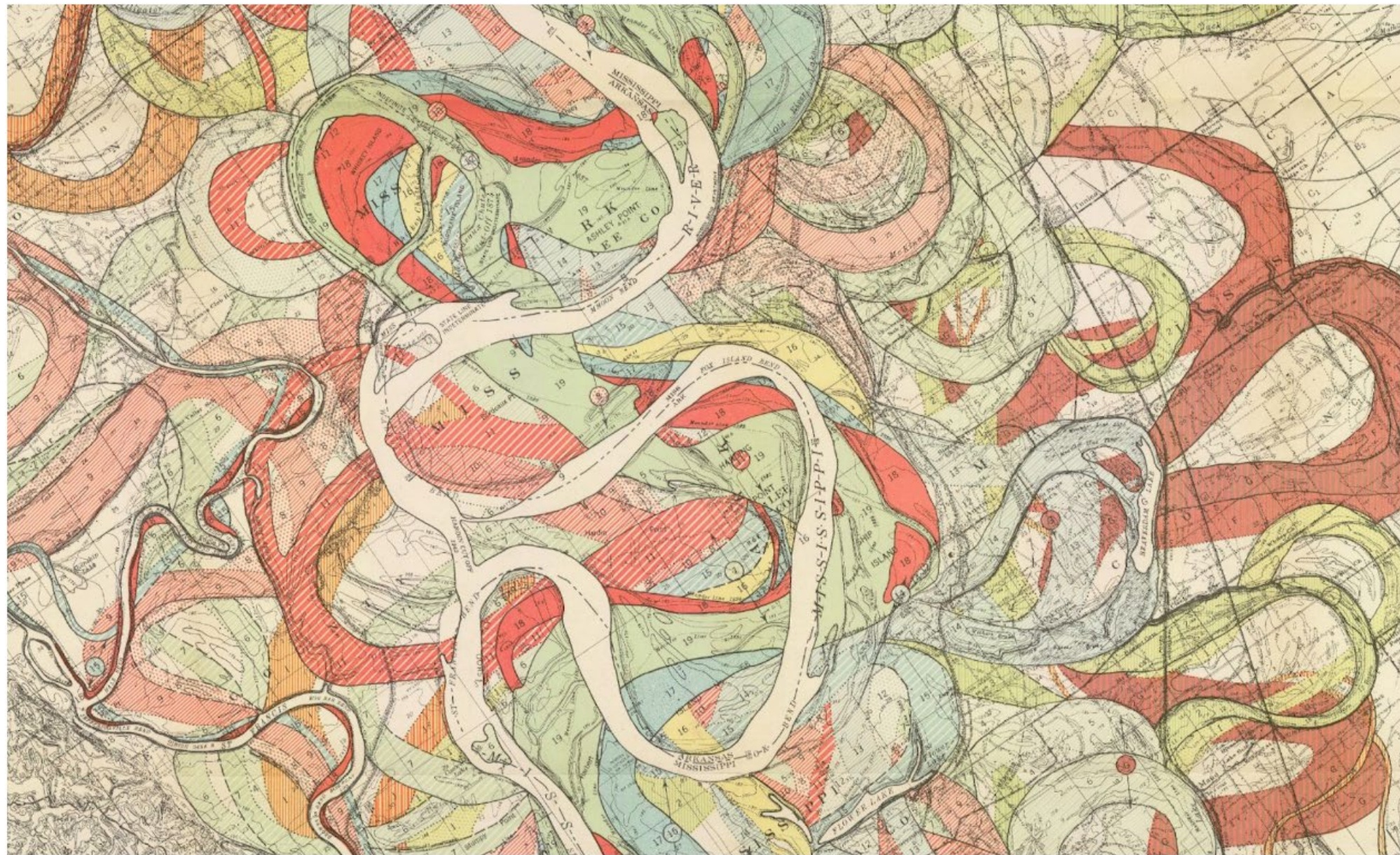


Robert Smalls, *The Planter*

WATERWAYS AS FREEDOM



WATERWAYS EVER CHANGING





Waterways, inequality, navigation



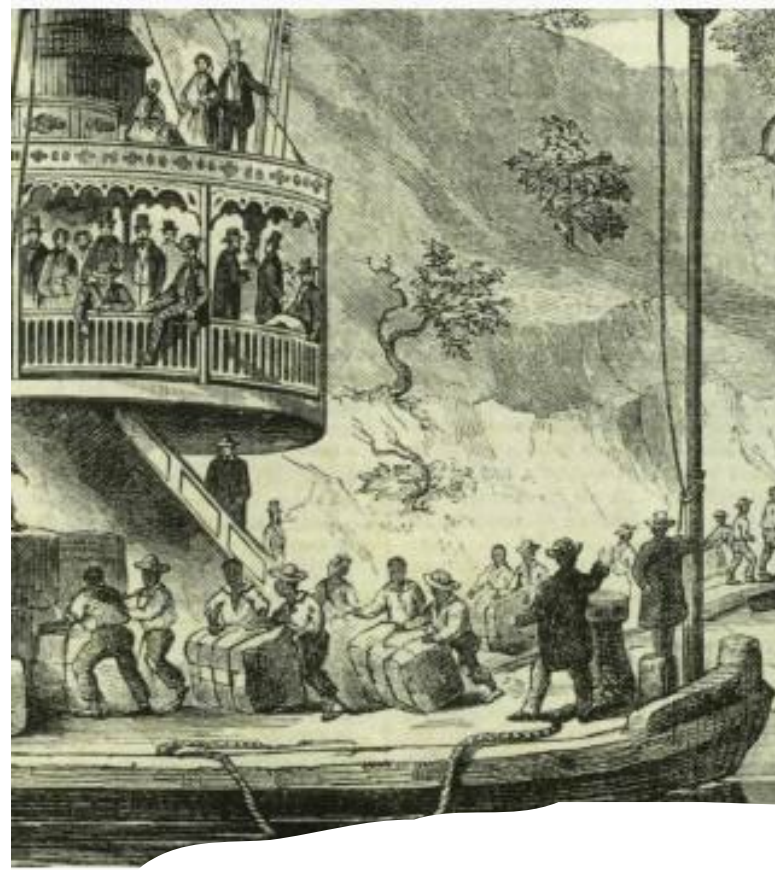
The Land Was Ours

African American Beaches from Jim Crow to the Sunbelt South



Waterways where economic opportunity and the freedom to leisure safely vanished during Jim Crow





Map by Laszlo Kubinyi. Map sources: Digital Scholarship Lab, University of Richmond; Edward Ball; Guilbert



Freedoms also vanished along waterways



IMPACTS OF NAVIGATION TO NEAR PORT COMMUNITIES



Air pollution from emissions

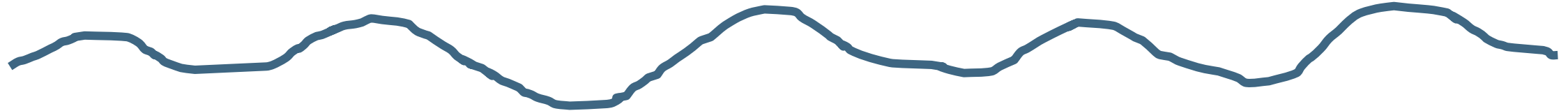
Water pollution

Related Health Impacts

Light and noise pollution

Quality of life impacts?

- Neighborhood disinvestment
- Disproportionate chronic disease
- Poor/no access to jobs/services
- Lack access to sidewalks, street trees, safety infrastructure
- Barriers to grocery stores, health services, pharmacies, etc. due to port-related infrastructure



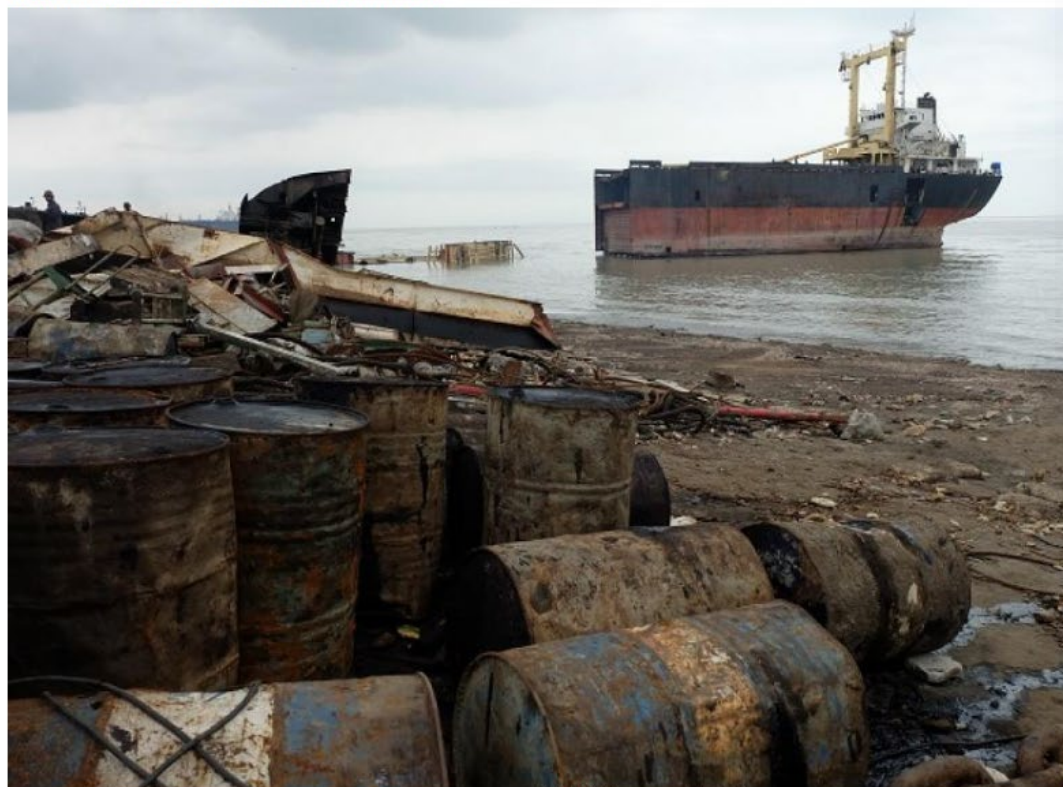


SHIPPING LIFE CYCLE CONCERNS



The toxic trade of obsolete ships

Nicola Mulinaris and EnvJustice | 15th October 2018



The Chittagong shipyard



ELSEVIER

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Marine Policy

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Full length article

Ship scrapping records reveal disturbing environmental injustice

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

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Environmental justice
Shipping industry

ABSTRACT

Ship demolition is a significant source of marine pollution. Not recycled properly, toxic chemicals and pose great dangers to both the environment and public health. By investigating vessels' business records ranging between 2000 and 2019, we find how business owners in disguise ships' true identity by registering them in developing regions with loose environmental protection, thus creating a leeway to violate environmental justice. Inter-

Environmental justice and human rights groups call for greater regulation of the hazardous process of demolishing obsolete ships.

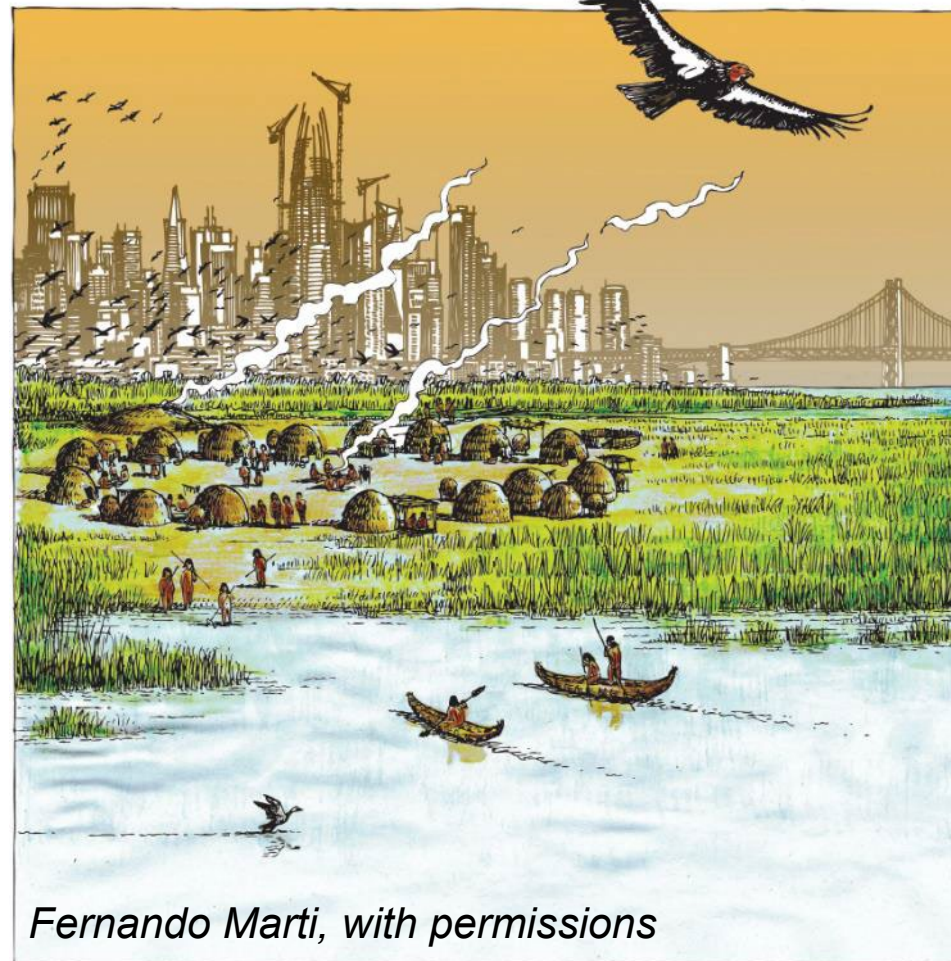
©Shipbreaking Platform



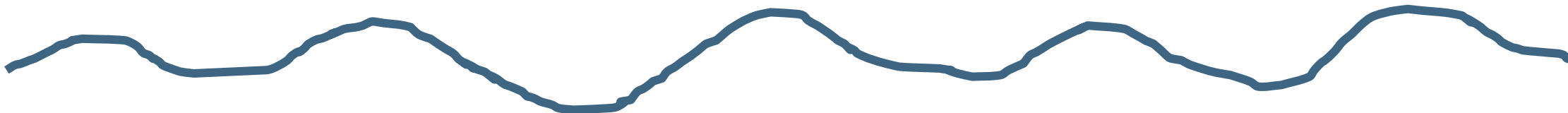
WATERWAYS, EXTREME EVENTS, AND CULTURAL SITES



A shellmound in San Rafael, as photographed by archaeologist Nels Nelson in 1909, from Nelson's report 'Shellmounds of the San Francisco Bay Region.'



Fernando Marti, with permissions





Who is most affected?





'Socially vulnerable' populations face disproportionate disaster risk due to a variety of social, economic, and political factors.'

- Natural Hazards Center

People with disabilities

LGBTQIA+

Incarcerated or formerly incarcerated people

Children

People experiencing poverty or homelessness

Women

African Americans, Indigenous people, and other People of Color

Older adults

Undocumented people or refugees

Just having these characteristics does not make someone vulnerable.
Their vulnerability is caused by external factors.



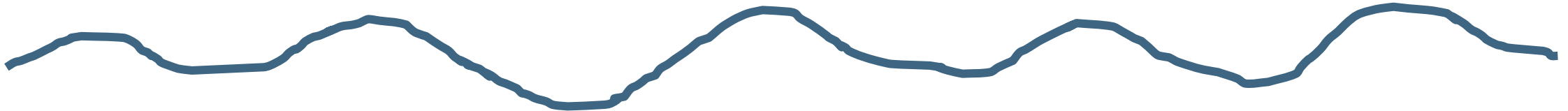
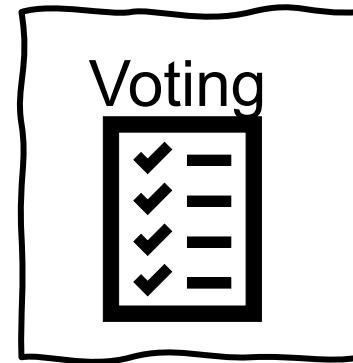
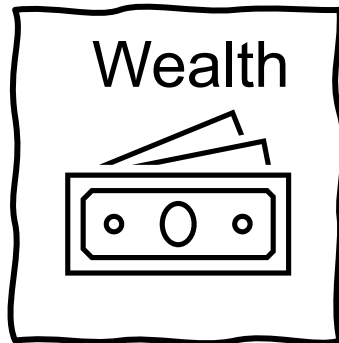
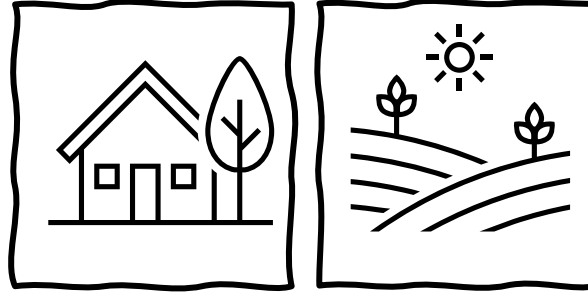
How did we get here? Historical practice and policy





LINK BETWEEN PROPERTY, WEALTH, AND VOTING UNITED STATES

Land ownership





LAND DISPOSSESSION –INDIGENOUS PEOPLE



Map, National Geographic

The Indian Removal Act (1830), relocated over 46,000 Native Americans in the southeast (in green) from their ancestral lands to “Indian territory.”

The Allotment Acts took another 90,000,000 acres of land from indigenous people.

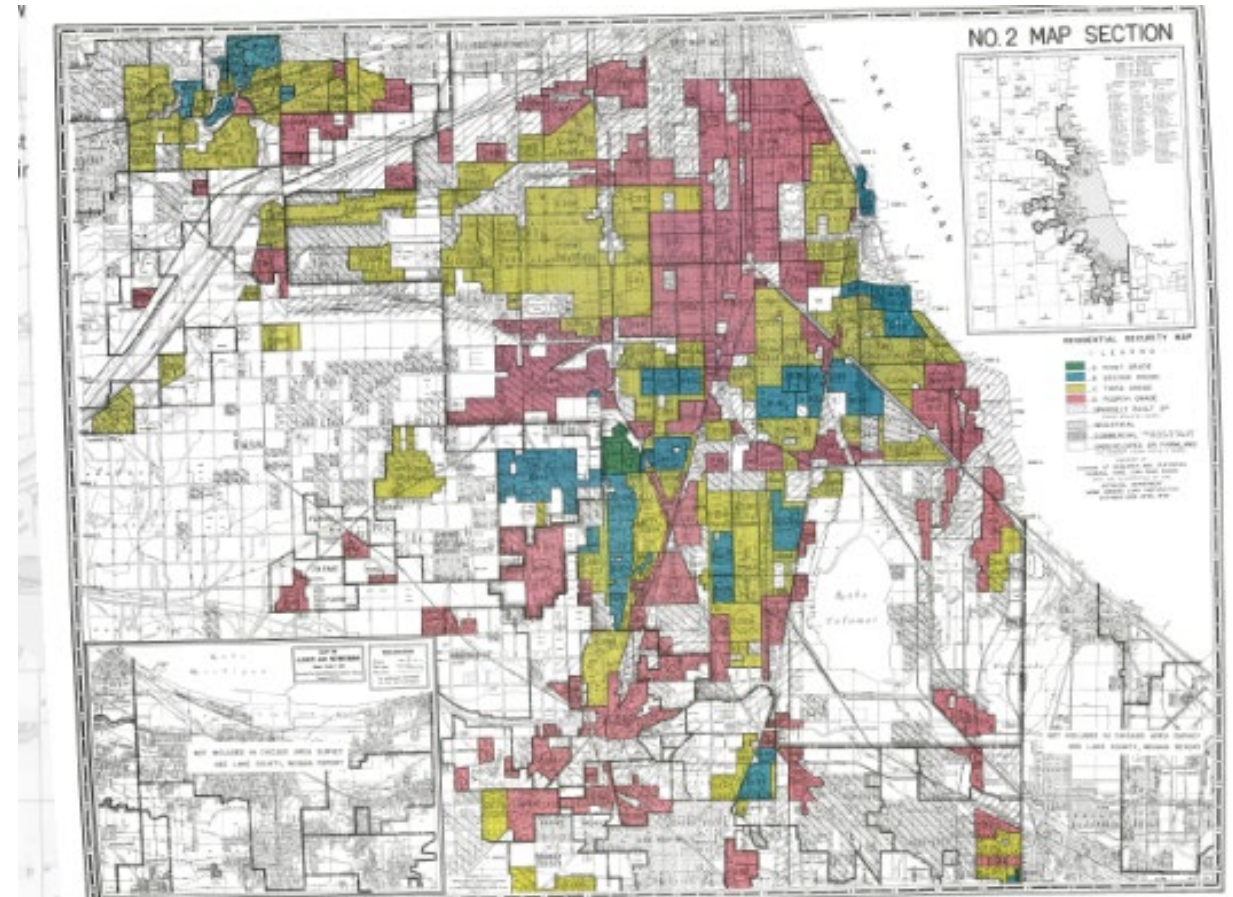
LAND DISPOSSESSION – RACIALIZED PEOPLE OF COLOR

New Deal Legislation in the 1930s provided loans to *some people to encourage homeownership.

'Redlining' denied people of color homeownership, devalued property; and segregated them into areas with:

- Flooding, Pollution and toxic facilities
- Poor quality infrastructure
- Substandard housing

Source, *Mapping Inequality Project*,



[CHAPTER 688.]

AN ACT

June 22, 1936.
[H. R. 8455.]
[Public, No. 736.]

Authorizing the construction of certain public works on rivers and harbors for flood control, and for other purposes.

Flood Control Act of 1936.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

DECLARATION OF POLICY

Declaration of policy.

SECTION 1. It is hereby recognized that destructive floods upon the rivers of the United States, upsetting orderly processes and causing loss of life and property, including the erosion of lands, and impairing and obstructing navigation, highways, railroads, and other channels of commerce between the States, constitute a menace to national welfare; that it is the sense of Congress that flood control on navigable waters or their tributaries is a proper activity of the Federal Government in cooperation with States, their political subdivisions, and localities thereof; that investigations and improvements of rivers and other waterways, including watersheds thereof, for flood-control purposes are in the interest of the general welfare; that the Federal Government should improve or participate in the improvement of navigable waters or their tributaries, including watersheds thereof, for flood-control purposes if the benefits to whomsoever they may accrue are in excess of the estimated costs, and if the lives and social security of people are otherwise adversely affected.



Benefits of federal flood control projects must outweigh the costs.

The Flood Control Act of 1936.

Leave low-income communities behind. Also bad for environment.





How did we get here? Modern practice and policy



The application of benefit-cost analyses can result in prioritizing projects for communities *with* resources over those *with less* resources.

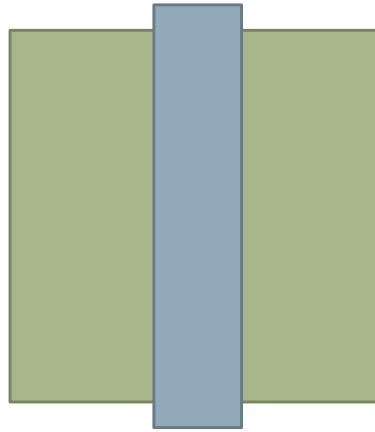




Economic
emphasis (NED)



Local cost-share



Limited regulatory authority



Administrative burden,
shades of “no”

Government programs pose many barriers to
communities w. environmental justice concerns



The experiences of the most affected are not well represented in the profession nor in decision-making.

Image source: <https://nightcourses.com/blog/representation-matters-lets-talk-about-it-panel-discussion/>

We do the best we can until we
know better. Then, when we know
better, we do better.

-Maya Angelou

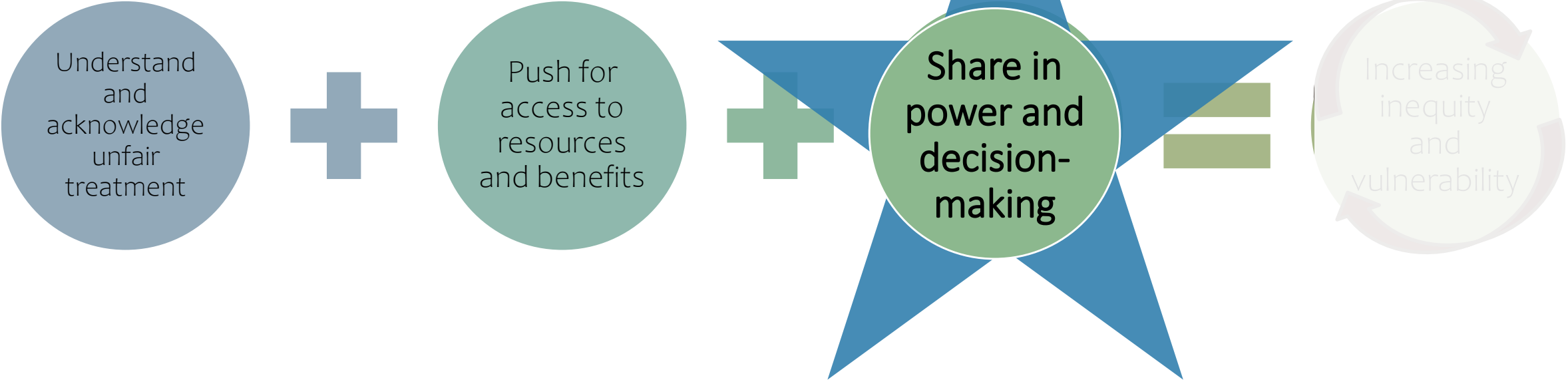




How we change *(see slide #1)*

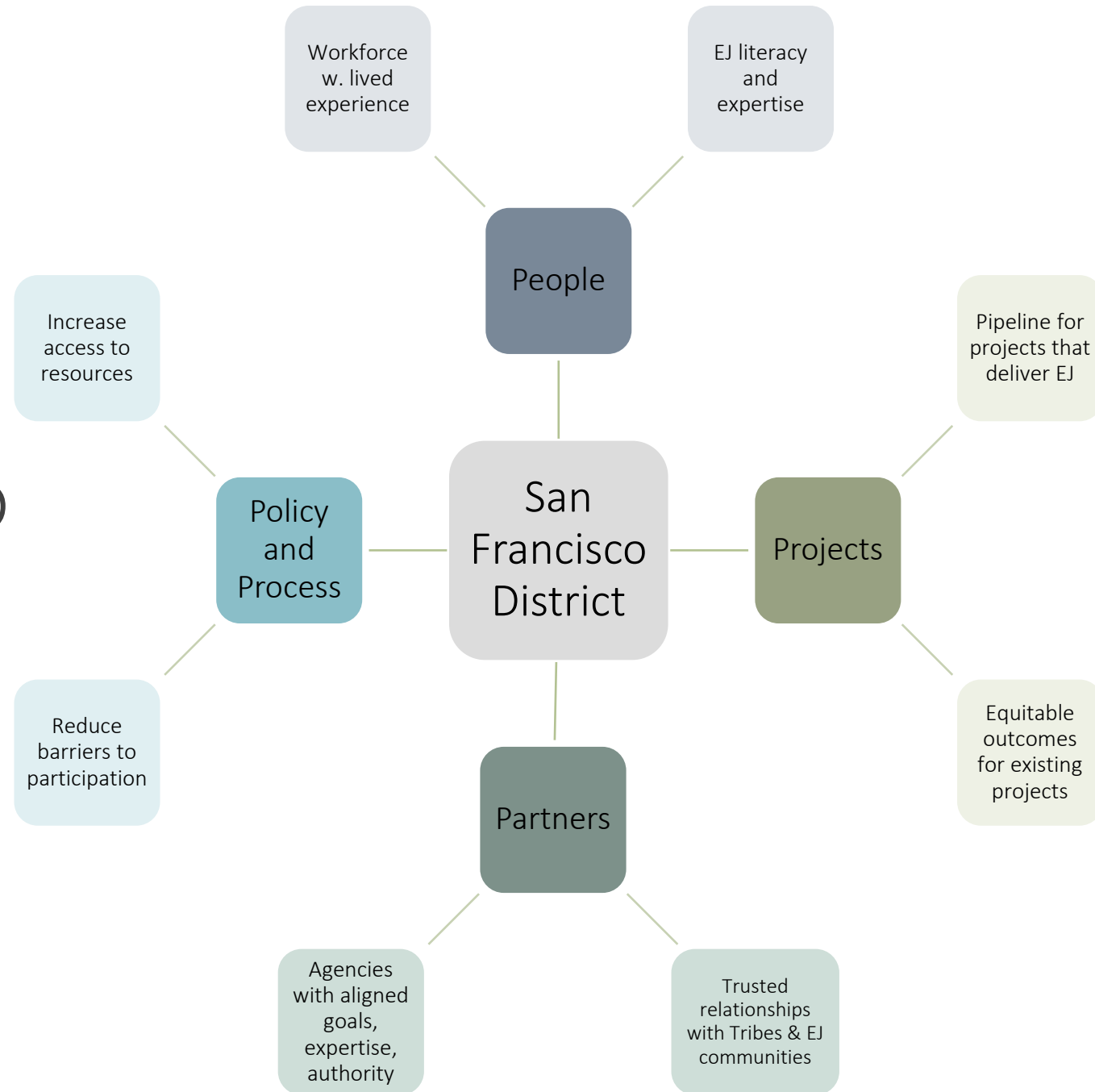


ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES: START SMALL





EJ AND EQUITY INTEGRATED INTO EVERYTHING WE DO

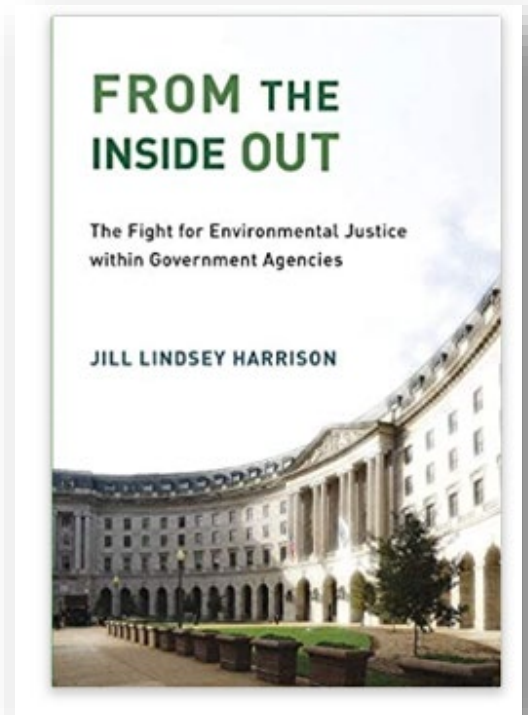
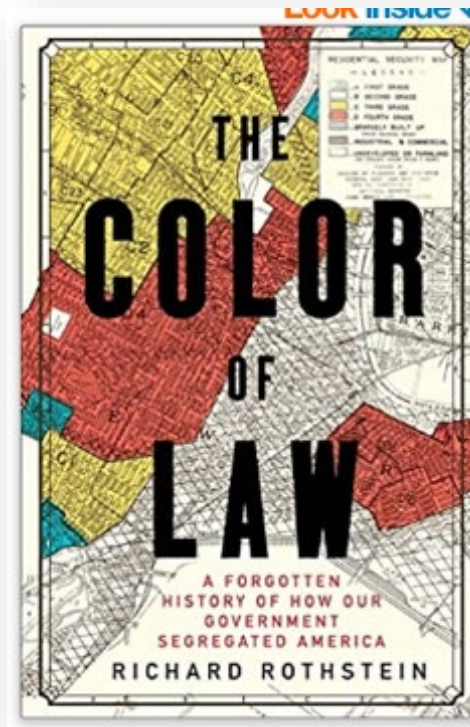
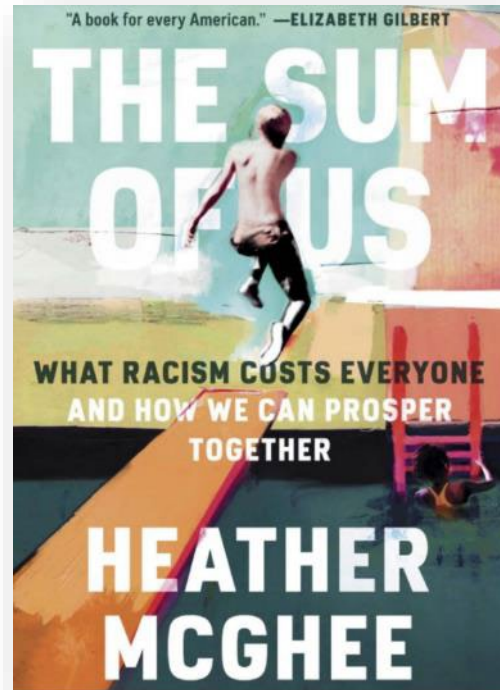
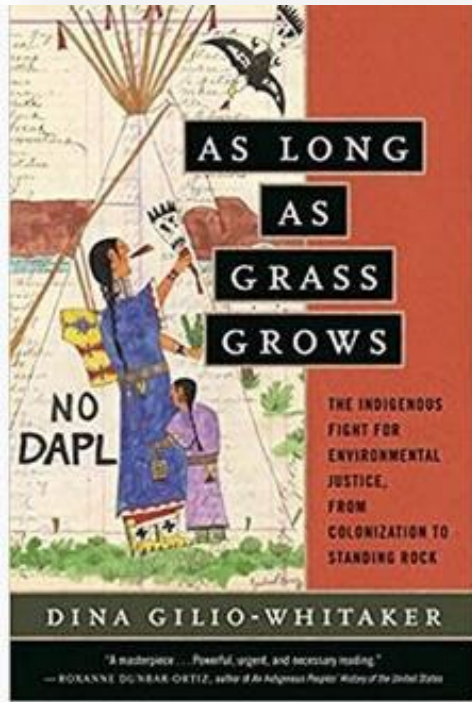




FIRST STEP: LEARN!



Learn how systemic inequity is baked into water resources practice, policy, and assumptions in our spheres of influence.





THANK YOU!



Just the beginning of the discussion

Please reach out!

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Artist: Ricardo Levins Morales*