



Dear Virginia Environmental Educators,

Since we came together at the end of February the world has changed and continues to change on a daily basis. We came together to celebrate a vision: environmental education for everyone- regardless of age, education, economic status, political perspective, sexual/gender identity, creed, physical/mental ability, race, and the many other dimensions of diversity that make up each of our own identities and lived experiences. The past week has made it abundantly clear- there is so much work still to be done.

We support those of you who are frustrated, angry, and mourning over the ongoing violence, racism, and brutality that has been and continues to be inflicted on our communities of color including the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery as well as the weaponization of race against Christian Cooper while he was birding in Central Park.

As our organization continues to learn and grow, we want to express the need to create safe spaces in nature for all residents of Virginia. No one should be excluded from nor have their right to connect with our environment trampled upon. Our field has a responsibility to call out and shift the systems at work that perpetrate acts of racism and other systemic oppression.

In the days and weeks ahead of us we will be listening and learning. We will be listening to our members and partners. We will be actively paying attention as current events play out across our communities. We challenge you to join us in doing the same. As we learn, we will raise our voices and take the actions necessary to make good on our commitments to ALL members of our community. We commit to listening, learning, standing up, and speaking out about the injustices taking place and to make EE in Virginia a place for everyone.

Our friends at NAAEE have compiled [a collection of equity and inclusion resources](#). This collection includes videos, webinars, recommended reading lists, podcasts, and many other tools that can help you along your path towards understanding and pursuing racial equity. Like environmental literacy, antiracism work is a continuum and lifelong endeavor that is ever-changing and evolving. It also may be the most important thing that each of us can do. We would love to hear from you as we work towards building our own collection of resources; please let us know if you have suggested readings, videos, podcasts or other tools to contribute.

Finally, let it be stated that the Virginia Association for Environmental Education stands in solidarity with our communities of color. We unequivocally condemn racist behavior and commit ourselves to refocusing our efforts of centering equity in our work and continuing to create a stronger, more inclusive, and antiracist environmental education movement in the Commonwealth, the Mid-Atlantic region, and our country.

In Solidarity,
The VAEE Board of Directors

NOTE: In crafting this message, the VAEE Board of Directors borrowed content from statements issued by NAAEE and other Affiliate Network members. We thank them for their collaboration and continued leadership as we continue to work together towards a more just and sustainable world.