

Friends of WNC Nature Center
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement – Final Approved 6-2019

Friends of the WNC Nature Center (“Friends”) aspires to be an inclusive organization that engages and serves the rich dimensions of diversity, such as race, gender, ethnicity, sexual identity, socioeconomic status, age, ability and religion. Just as a diversity of animals and plants is essential to healthy ecosystems that serve all people, a diversity of people makes the Friends a stronger, more vibrant and more stable organization, better prepared to achieve its mission.

The Friends are actively working to become a more diverse, equitable and inclusive organization. Progress toward this goal requires a long-term approach of regular attention, reflection and improvement. Those efforts started before this statement and will continue and grow. This statement serves to formalize the Friends’ current intentions going forward.

The Friends will advance the organizational mission by:

- Making the necessary changes to our staff, interns, volunteers, members, board members, donors, vendors, partners, students and audiences in order to better involve and reflect the full diversity of people and communities that we serve.
- Respecting and learning from our rich variety of experiences, perspectives, values, opinions and ways of thinking, and leveraging our differences to be more effective in achieving our mission.
- Incorporating diversity, equity and inclusion into our strategic plan, job descriptions, job postings, training, website, marketing materials (including wording and image selection), programming and other outreach.
- Providing financial, volunteer and marketing support to advance efforts by the City of Asheville and the WNC Nature Center to make the facility and its programs more inviting and more inclusive of diverse audiences, such as through marketing materials, facility improvements, programming and other outreach.
- Evaluating, assessing and updating our diversity, equity and inclusion practices annually.

Definitions:

- **Diversity** includes, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, socio-economic status, nationality, citizenship, religion, sexual orientation, ability, and age. Diversity also encompasses differences and similarities in perspectives, opinions and points of view among both individuals and institutions. These differences are important to understand, but they cannot be used to predict any individual’s values, choices or responses.
- **Equity** involves creating an environment in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.
- **Inclusion** encompasses both involvement and empowerment. An inclusive organization promotes and sustains a sense of belonging; it values, respects, encourages and engages diverse people and diverse thought.