

Special June 2020 Statement from FREP

Dear FREP Members and Partners:

We are deeply saddened by the tragic events across our country and within our watershed. The killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and countless others before them, lay bare America's failure to address the systemic racism that somehow persists and perpetuates lethal violence against Black people. Now is the time for justice and to actively root out racism.

As a grassroots watershed group, FREP has a responsibility to be fully and visibly committed to the fight against racism and for justice, equity, and hope. We stand up against hatred and injustice. We stand up for respect and human dignity. We stand in solidarity with people of color and their communities calling for justice. We stand together with those demanding systemic change now, and we recognize their deep feelings of anger and frustration.

In particular we stand to support our watershed brothers and sisters in Aurora -- Illinois' second largest city that recently experienced significant violence, along with other places in our watershed. We join fellow environmental groups such as Chicago Wilderness, Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, and many others in standing for true equity for people of color. They must not be afraid to join us in being outdoors in our many preserves, in birding, in being volunteer stewards, in helping us fight invasive species. And nature must be nearby and available to all people of our watershed.

We must also not let the climate crisis be ignored or pushed aside while we battle COVID19 and racial injustice. These are all the global crises of our time that require our immediate attention and action, and we already know that COVID19 and climate change disproportionately affect people of color and the poor.

As a partnership, we stand for social and environmental justice and unequivocally condemn acts of violence and racist sentiments, behaviors, and systems that undermine humanity. We take responsibility to find solutions that make our communities better for everyone.

Respectfully Yours,

Jeff Mengler
FREP President