

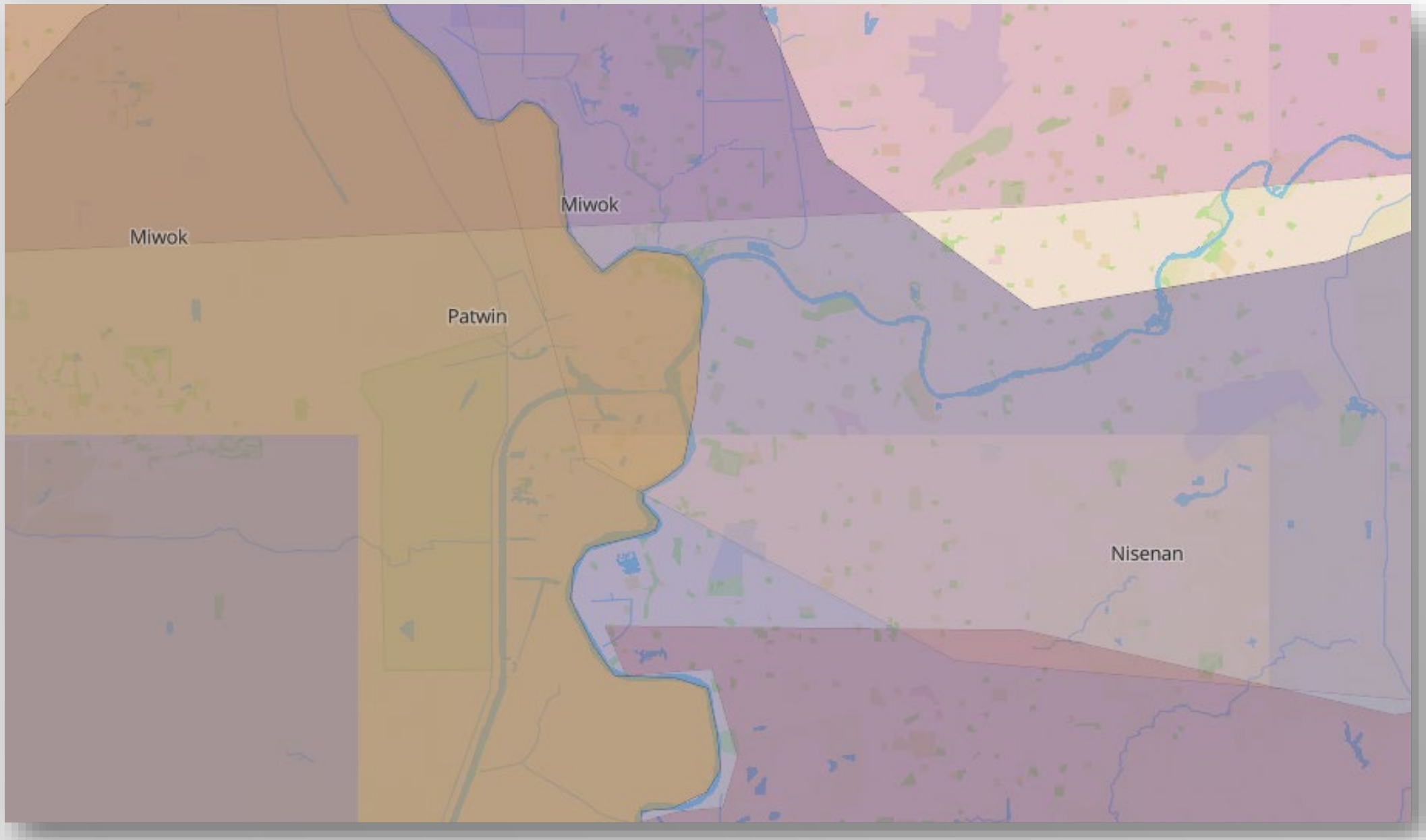
Operationalizing Equity

Bianca Sievers

Deputy Director of Special Initiatives



Land Acknowledgement



<https://native-land.ca/>



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
WATER RESOURCES



Agenda

1. Key Terms of Understanding
2. Intro to Environmental Justice (EJ)
3. Application of Equity and EJ Frameworks
4. California's Commitment to Equity
5. DWR Equity in Action



1. Key Terms of Understanding

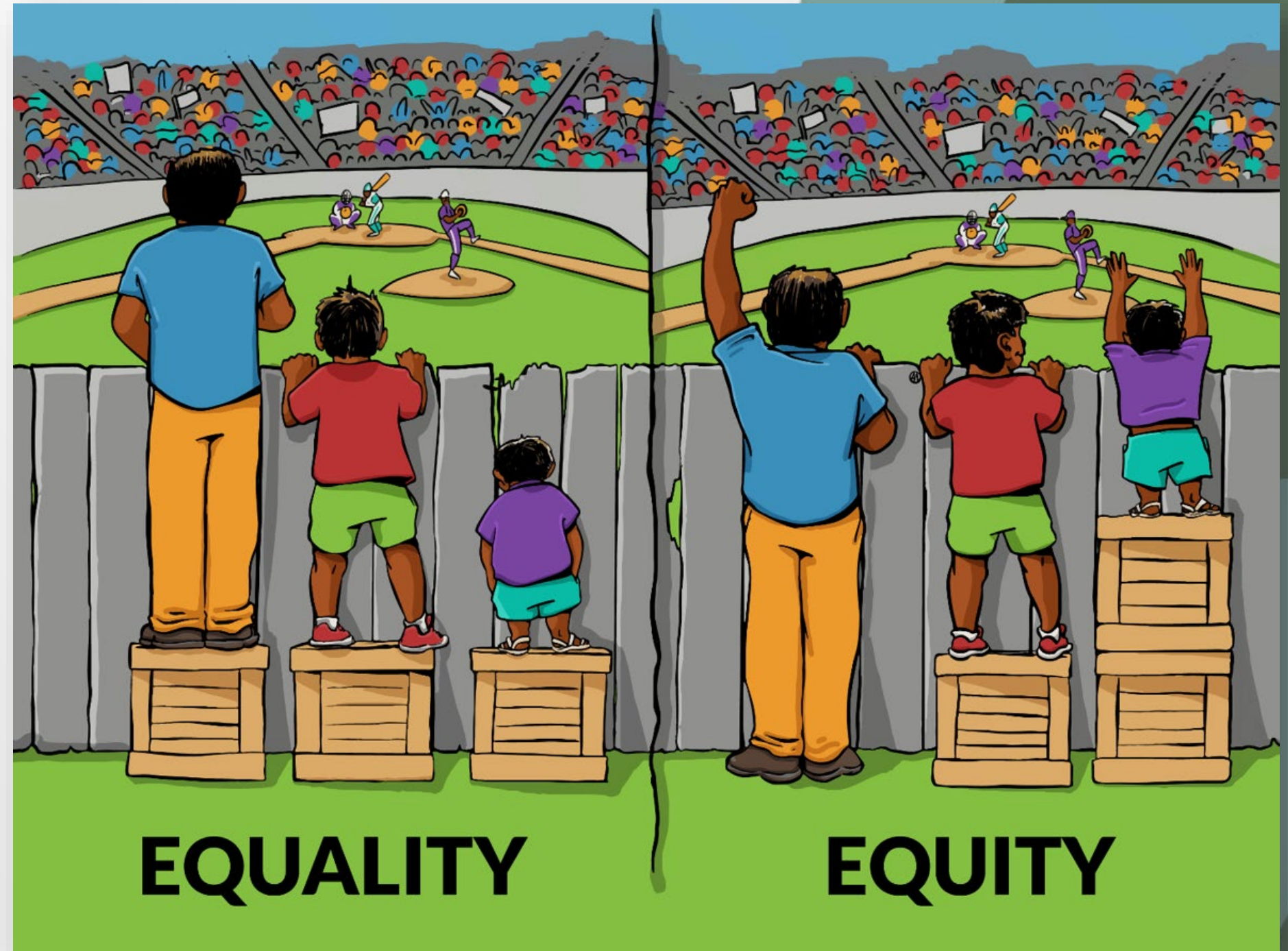
****The following terms will help support understanding of equity and environmental justice concepts, but is not inclusive of all terms****



1.1 Equity

Equity: Ensures that outcomes in the conditions of well-being are improved for marginalized groups, lifting outcomes for all. Equity is a measure of justice.

Equality: Is sameness; everyone gets the same thing. Equality focuses on everyone getting the same opportunity, but often ignores the realities of historical exclusion and power differentials among whites and other racialized groups.



1.2 Race

Race: A social construct that categorizes people based on physical characteristics and ancestry to justify inequitable distribution of resources and power.

Individual Racism: Bigotry or discrimination by an individual based on race.

Institutional Racism: Policies or practices that work better for White people than for People of Color, often unintentionally or inadvertently.

Structural Racism: A history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions, combining to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.



1.2 Racial Equity

Racial Equity: Eliminating race-based outcome gaps so that race cannot predict one's success and improving outcomes for all. This approach centers those who are worse off and moves from a service-based approach toward focusing on policies, institutions, and structures.

Racial Justice: is a vision and transformation of society to eliminate racial hierarchies and advance collective liberation, where Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, in particular, have the dignity, resources, power, and self-determination to fully thrive.



1.3 Frontline Communities

Frontline Communities: are those that experience the “first and worst” consequences of climate change.

- These are often communities of color whose communities were placed in the least desirable areas of cities, often with high exposure to climate impacts like flooding.



1.4 Community Capacity

Community Capacity: Encouraging the capacity of local communities to develop, implement, and sustain their own solutions to problems.

The capacity of an entity to participate in state-led funding processes may be impacted by:

- existing financial resources,
- ability to attract capital, finance public infrastructure, or fundraise outside State-led processes, or
- technical expertise of community.



1.5 Technical Assistance (TA)

Technical Assistance: is the process of providing targeted support to an agency, organization, or community with a development need or resource gap.

Technical assistance may be delivered in many ways, such as:

- one-on-one consultation,
- small group facilitation,
- technical resources and analysis, or
- through a web-based clearinghouse.



1.6 Inclusive Language

Inclusive Language: refers to the words and phrases you use that avoid biases, slang, and expressions that discriminate against groups of people based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, and ability.

General guidance includes:

- Avoid Department or team acronyms.
- Use plain language in your writing rather than expressions or jargon.
- Refer to a theoretical person as “they” instead of “he” or “she”.
- Ensure designs or images reflect a diverse group of people.
- Be mindful of terms related to race, ethnicity, nationality, and culture.
- Be mindful of medical conditions and ability terms.
- When in doubt, ask individuals which pronouns they prefer (but make it clear they can choose not to identify, as well).



2. Introduction to Environmental Justice



2.1 Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice (EJ): is defined by California statute as “the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of all environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”

- Environmental Justice calls for the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food for all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income.
- Core to the Environmental Justice movement is that the people most impacted (frontline communities) are the ones identifying and leading solutions.
- The Department of Water Resources (DWR) Human Right to Water Policy (2019) is the first reference to Environmental Justice in the Department Administrative Manual.



2.1 History of Environmental Justice

- Environmental Justice is a relatively new concept.
- The movement was not officially recognized until the 1980s when the U.S. Government Accountability Office released a report tying for the first-time hazardous waste landfills to low-income communities and communities of color.
- In 1991, 1,100 delegates gathered in Washington, D.C. for the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit.
- This led to a variety of federal offices being established, federal actions, such as:
 - 1992: Establishment of Office of Environmental Equity
 - 1994: Presidential Executive Order 12898

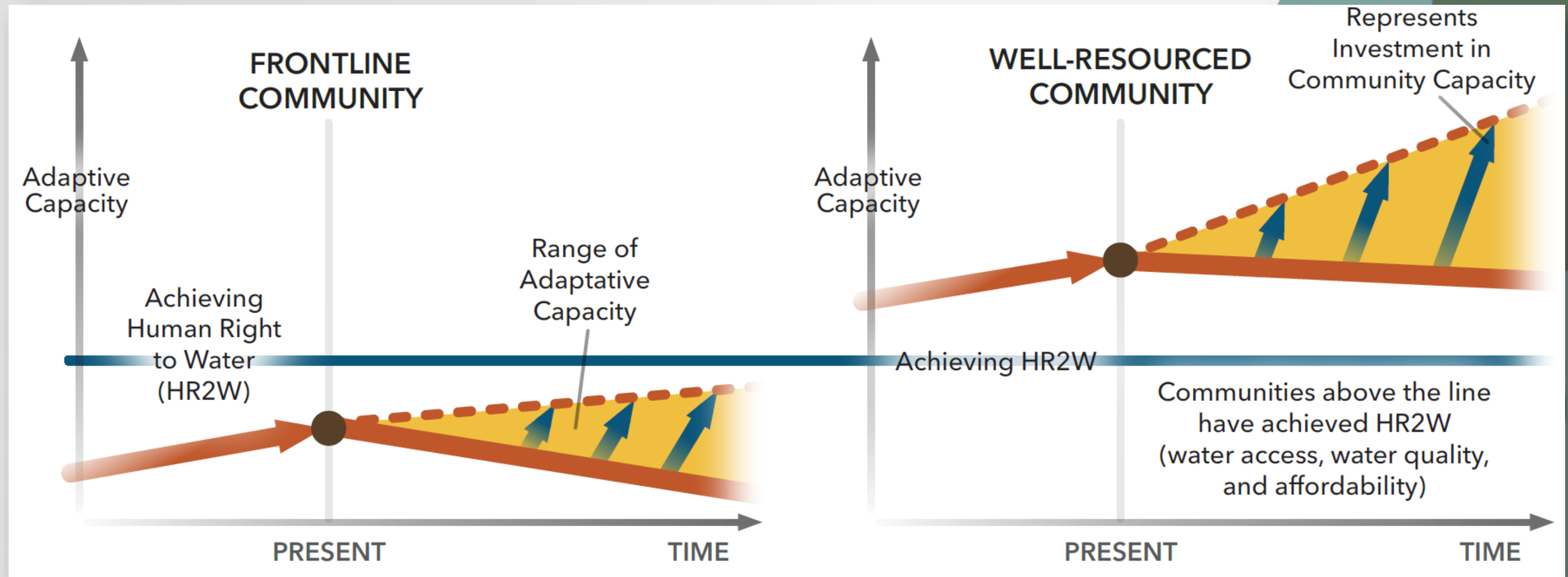


2.2 Pollution and Prejudice

- **Redlining:** is a practice through which federal and local governments and financing entities systematically denied public and private financial services to Black and other people of color.
- This set of practices included both race **and** environmental factors as criteria in assessing the perceived credit-worthiness of neighborhoods and led to many of the environmental disparities we see affecting communities of color across the state today.



2.3 Adapting to Future Conditions



2.3 Human Right to Water

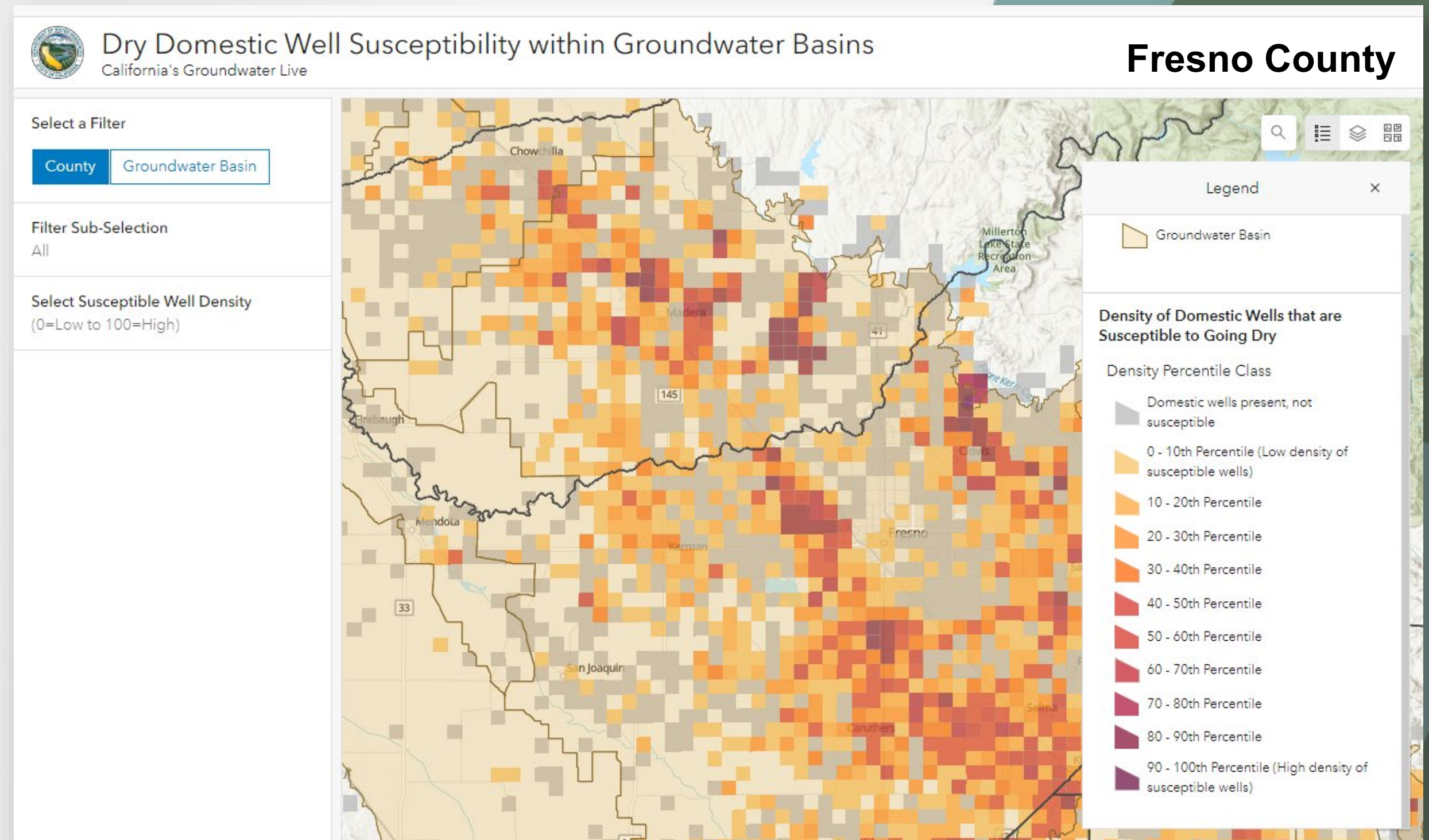
Cantua Creek, CA, Population: 379, 38% below poverty line.



2.3 Human Right to Water Continued

May 2022: DWR released an interactive mapping tool called the [Dry Well Susceptibility Tool](#).

For communities with limited capacity, developing predictive tools like this one is a huge value add. This is a form of technical assistance.



2.4 Environmental Justice Assessment

- 2016-2020: California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) released annual assessment of how California state agencies develop, implement, and monitor environmental policies.
- The 2020 Assessment reported an overall decline in agency performance for frontline communities.

Name	2020 Grade
California Air Resources Board (CARB)	C-
California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR)	C
California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)	D
California Department of Water Resources (DWR)	C-
California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM)	D+



3. Application of Equity and Environmental Justice Frameworks

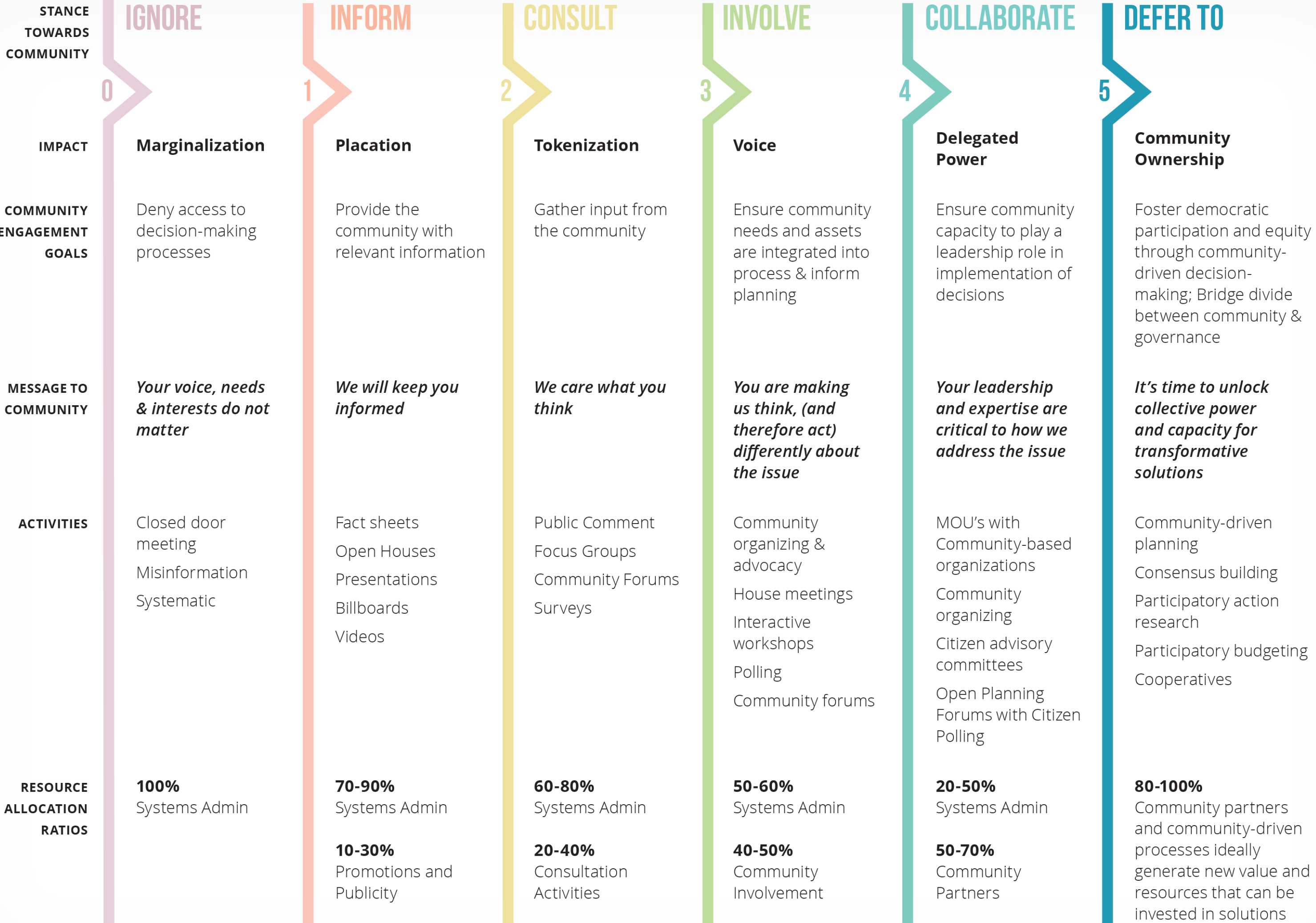


3.1 Reported Challenges with Engaging with Communities

- Inconvenient meeting times offered for working members of the public
- Public meetings that do not provide multiple options (e.g., in-person or virtual) to participate.
- No or limited language services support.
- Public meetings are scheduled with little advance notice.
- Requesting community “buy off” on a grant-funded project when they have not been involved in planning efforts.



3.2 Spectrum of Community Engagement



3.3 Recommended Outreach Strategies

- Create advisory committees (e.g. youth, environmental justice)
- Provide community members with stipends and reimbursements for their participation
- Provide language translation services (written and audio) that reflect the community.
- Offer public meetings at various times to allow folks with full-time jobs opportunities to attend (after 5:00PM or weekends)
- Conduct targeted outreach activities to most impacted communities to ensure awareness and collaboration in the development and implementation of state resources
- Consider hosting public meeting in most impacted communities if resources allow



4. California's Commitment to Equity



4.1 State Equity Actions

- Executive Order N-16-22 (Sept 2022)
 - Racial Equity Commission
 - All State Agencies and Departments must develop Equity Action Plan
 - Call to improve language access for state programs
- 39 State Agencies/Departments have completed Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity (CCORE)
 - a racial equity capacity-building program for California State employees



4.2 CNRA Equity Actions

- Agency-Wide Environmental Justice and Equity Working Group
 - Planning Environmental Justice Summit
- Developed 2023 CNRA Equity Action Plan
 - Environmental Justice Policy & Tribal Policy Adoption
 - Technical Assistance Training with Strategic Growth Council
 - Outreach and Engagement Training
 - Language Access Best Practice Document



5. DWR Equity in Action



5.1 DWR's Racial Equity Vision

All people in California are healthy, financially stable, and safe.



5.2 Desired Outcomes

1. Workforce is reflective of the people of California
2. Improve community engagement with communities most impacted by structural racism
3. Embed racial equity into our projects and programs



5.3 Policy & Planning Efforts

- Human Right to Water Policy (2019)
- Racial Equity Action Plan (2022)
- Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (2022)
- DWR Strategic Plan (to be released in 2023)
- California Water Plan (to be released in 2023)



5.4 Organizational Changes

- Appointment of Deputy Director of Special Initiatives
- Creation of Racial Equity Office and Racial Equity Officer (Pending)
- Established Wave of Hope (16 members)
- Removal of "Chief" in working titles
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) language incorporated into all duty statements



5.5 Resources Provided

- DEI Champion Curriculum (LinkedIn)
- DWR Accessibility Training
- Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Webpage on DWR intranet
- Hiring Policies & Guidance
- Outreach and Engagement Best Practices (In Development)
- Inclusive Language Guidance (In Development)



Contact Information

Bianca Sievers

Deputy Director of Special Initiatives

Bianca.Sievers@water.ca.gov



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