


Volume 2017 Issue QTR 1

WASTE FOR USE

Community Forum for Sharing Ideas About Ecological Issues



This forum features a collection of conversations from community contributors and writers about relevant environmental issues



Derek Burns / Photographer

Towards Solidarity

Chinelo Arinze

Our quest at Waste for Use to advance public awareness about critical environmental issues leads us to seek opportunities to make environmental education available for public access. In our journey to bring education to the public, we are mindful that environmental issues intersect with social issues. This intersection is illustrated through many events of environmental injustice. For example in 2016, environmental injustice awareness ascended to global conversations about social justice issues. This was evident in social movement that challenged the development of the Dakota Access Pipeline in the United States. Those present on the frontline to challenge progress of the Dakota Access Pipeline recognized an undesirable environmental impact of the pipeline project and the underlining political and social abuses that the pipeline project represented. What became remarkable about the movement to challenge the pipeline project is the presence of social unity.

The movement to challenge the Dakota Access Pipeline development gained support of a large public fundamentally as a result of social unity. This solidarity expanded the reach and relevance of issues experienced by communities immediately impacted by the pipeline project. Such solidarity served the movement's prolificacy by casting all as 'one' rather than creating partitions of 'others'. Solidarity is duplicated in many instances across the

world and in the United States we can pinpoint additional instances of social unity through some grassroots movements.

Illustrations of solidarity in grassroots movements are reflected across the United States and are anchored by individuals and community organizations. For example, the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) is a community organization responsible for leading a movement that establishes rights for the natural world and humans over the institutions that oppress them. By creating an opportunity of hope for all through policy reform, the CELDF approaches solidarity across the United States. In 2017, this solidarity was vivid in Atlanta, Georgia.

Education as Solidarity

On February 04, 2017, some residents of the Metro Atlanta area joined the Waste for Use hosted film screening and Q&A event for the film 'We the People 2.0'. The event took place at the Georgia State University (GSU) Cinefest Theater and marked an opportunity for the public to become socially involved and receive free education about specific human accounts of environmental injustice and the work CELDF produces to help resolve environmental injustice.

The GSU Cinefest Theater was a relatively small gathering space with just over 100 seats. Attendance at the event included less than 100, but included a total number of guests that yielded a well-attended atmosphere for the occasion.



Activist Tish O'Dell: Derek Burns / Photographer

Through audible remarks we learned that many guests in attendance at the event perceived the space to be an intimate and viable space for the occasion.

The occasion unfolded in a manner underscored by proverbial technological constraints but flowered into a productive exchange between community and activism.

Tish O'Dell, CELDF Ohio Coordinator and activist, joined the occasion as a special guest and led Q&A for the event.

The Q&A session opened after preliminary and contextual remarks by Tish. Opening remarks were followed with invoking communication and critical questions from guests in the audience about environmental injustice issues. The film screening for 'We the People 2.0' would follow the event's opening remarks, but first, the event unfolded through collaborative communication filled with engagement and fluid interaction between Tish and the community audience. Questions from guests in the audience included probing for information about an array of issues such as land mineral rights versus property rights, how the CELDF approaches policy reform, and how one might get involved in helping to eliminate present environmental injustice issues that the CELDF works to resolve.



Community Audience: Derek Burns / Photographer

Through conversations between Waste for Use contributors at the event and guests who attended the event, we understood that guests at the event had a willingness to understand instances of environmental injustice and to get involved in helping to stop environmental injustice.



Event Guest Check-in: Derek Burns / Photographer

Guests who attended the event reflected a multitude of cultural backgrounds but joined the occasion with a common intent, understanding the experiences by some and recognizing that the experiences of some could signal the future experience of all. This occasion was a stepping-stone for some to enter unity with humans that experience abuses inflicted by hegemonic institutions that have traditionally structured and defined democracy in societies like the United States.

Taking action and developing solidarity imposes being informed. The events of the February 4th film screening and Q&A offered event participants a chance to be informed and framed education as an important way to facilitate social solidarity. Our mission causes us to seek opportunities to offer public education that might help inform and prepare many to unite for causes that improve the conditions of living beings. The education provided at the February 4th film screening and Q&A aided some in Atlanta to approach solidarity and facilitated opportunity for constructive social change.

For more information about the CELDF and how to join the movement led by the CELDF visit <http://celdf.org/join-the-movement/>