

Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge

Environmental & Economic Justice Strategic Plan

2017-2020 - Updated April 2018

Implementation Report - 2019

The Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge Environmental and Economic Justice Strategic Plan (EEJSP), authored by the Friends of Valle de Oro NWR (FVDO) and Los Jardines Institute (LJI) in collaboration with Valle de Oro NWR (Refuge), is a collaborative, intentionally inclusive plan to outline a strategic path forward for the Refuge, the community and partner organizations to match the needs, and aspirations of the community to the Refuge's conservation goals as the Refuge is restored to wildlife habitat with educational and recreational opportunities and facilities.

Beginning as research, outreach, and neighborhood surveying in 2015, this plan was published in 2017 and updated in 2018. It is the first site specific EEJSP for a public land site and is a step down plan of the US Department of Interior Environmental Justice Strategic Plan 2017-2020. As the first plan of its kind, one hope is this plan becomes a model for other public land sites and government agencies to help them and their host communities build an invested body of partners, collaborators, and future conservation stewards around mutual goals. Since its publishing, FVDO, LJI, and the Refuge – the Environmental Justice Leadership Team – and community partners began implementing the plan, which consisted of two phases with six overarching goals. These goals expand on and formalize the Refuge's goal to adhere and engrain environmental and economic justice within its daily activities and programming, while continuing to support and engage the underserved community surrounding the Refuge and Refuge missions.

Goal one in the plan focuses on ensuring and improving refuge staff and partners are knowledgeable of the history of the environmental and economic justice movement, and is underway as the EJ principles are now displayed in the welcome center and at Refuge events. EJ specific training for staff, volunteers, and partners is being developed. Additionally, the Refuge publishes a weekly construction report called "Transformation Thursday" via email, the Friend's listserv and on Facebook.

As stated in goal two, to ensure underserved communities are engaged in refuge planning, an outreach system is being developed to serve the surrounding Mountain View/South Valley community and then the Albuquerque

metropolitan area. Outreach distribution is conducted by Refuge youth crews and local community groups, in addition to Refuge staff's presence at community events and activities, such as local career and employment fairs at the Mountain View Community Center and Elementary School. The leadership team also strives to continue to strengthen and develop diverse partnerships with local grassroots organizations.

In support of goal three, the collaboration of the Refuge and partners to address and support efforts to study and remediate environmental and economic impacts to human health of the surrounding community, Refuge staff has and will continue to attend permit meetings for new industry and development proposed in the Mountain View community and share information from those meetings or other EJ issues with the community. Also, the Refuge will continue updating the community through meetings about Refuge activities to address community concerns and collaboratively work on solutions to those concerns.

Goal four expresses that the Refuge should continue to support inclusive and diverse perspectives on environmental and economic activities and programming within the surrounding community. This includes the purchase and use of translation and interpretation equipment or services at public meetings or distributed information, such as during the Environmental Justice Community Day hosted by the Refuge. Furthermore, the Refuge should train and provide interns, volunteers, or youth crews in EJ concepts for community and Refuge projects. To further inclusive and diverse efforts as listed in goal four and five, the Refuge should continue to support increases in accessibility, especially for transportation, diversity trainings for staff, partners, and volunteers, and to continue to practice and promote a culture of safe and welcoming spaces for wildlife and people.

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To spread the word about the EEJSP and implementation efforts, the team is pursuing outreach to and through appropriate Spanish, Pueblo, and English communication avenues, such as newsletters, marquees, information boards, radio stations, publications, and television stations to promote EJ and Refuge resources to the surrounding community and local Native/Indigenous Nations. A list of potential places or organizations where opportunities can be advertised through is still being identified as well as local partners and community members to help spread information. The EEJ Leadership team is identifying volunteers and paid experts to support with translation and interpretation of these resources and opportunities and identifying way to engage and maintain communication with local tribal nations to share information on environmental and conservation issues, as appropriate. A FVDO board member has begun work on identifying a potential marquee sign to better communicate with the community with a goal of making it available to local community organizations as well. The Refuge is investigating how to tie in this sign with Second Street improvements.

In support of goal five, the VDO staff updated the Safe Place Policy of the Refuge and offer annual urban training and monthly staff trainings including an upcoming scheduled land acknowledgement training for April 2019. The Refuge collaborated with Bernalillo County to apply and receive funding from Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP). The Refuge worked with contractors to improve access to the Refuge via 2nd Street improvements which include: a sidewalk, a multi-modal trail, storm water drainage, intersection improvements, railroad safety improvements, a signal light at Desert, and native landscaping specifically requested by the community for sound and air pollution mitigation. Additionally, the Refuge applied for and was approved additional FLAP funding for 2019.

For goal six, the Refuge should continue to adhere to its Standards of Excellence for urban NWRs and be a




model for interagency and community involvement to strengthen EJ efforts nationally and locally. This includes the publishing of the EEJSP in 2017, support for community-based research and the collaborative process that produced the plan, and continued coordination with the Department of Interior (DOI), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), other federal and state agencies, local grassroots and community organizations, and local elected and community officials or representatives. Additionally, a Emergency Preparedness Team as formed and is meeting with plans to promote emergency preparedness to the neighborhood at our upcoming Abrazos: Environmental Justice Community Day 2019.

Many of the goals listed above are ongoing and in progress efforts for the Leadership Team, especially the Refuge and its partners. In addition to these ongoing efforts, the Leadership Team has identified a number of priority objectives for 2019. These objectives include the creation of a community and employee accessible and inclusive EJ Resource Center with interpretive exhibits ingrained with EJ concepts. To further accomplish EJ goals, the team strives to identify and raise funds to hire a dedicated EJ employee, continue conservation stewardship developmental programs, create an EJ curriculum to train Refuge staff, interns and community members, and host programs in accessible spaces. The EJ employee would help the team partner with other government agencies to seek and apply for grants to meet the goals of the EEJSP, support interagency planning and delivery of local emergency response and evacuation plans and drills, and address the community's desire for expanded and accessible public transportation options.








Lastly, FVDO, LJI, and the Refuge wish to recognize and give sincere thanks to Mountain View Neighborhood and South Valley residents and the many organizations, institutions, and individuals whose work, input, and valuable contributions were integrated throughout this important plan. Some of those organizations include Apprenticeship for Leaders in Mosaic Arts (ALMA); Albuquerque Metro Arroyo Flood Control Authority (AMAFCA); Bernalillo County; Environmental Education Association of New Mexico (EEANM); the Environmental Justice Interagency Working Group; the Middle Rio Grande Employment and Environmental Education Network (MERGE); Mountain View Community Center (MVCC); Mountain View Elementary School (MVES); Mountain View Neighborhood Association; Mountain View Community Action Team; Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (RMYC); Ancestral Lands – a Southwest Conservation Corps Program (SCC-AL); and The Wilderness Society.

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


Chart Key
















-  Complete
-  In Progress/Ongoing
-  Coming Soon

Goal 1: Ensure Valle de Oro NWR staff and partners are knowledgeable about the history of environmental and economic justice.

-  A1 – Create an EJ Resource Center
-  A2 – Create an EJ Document File
-  A3 – Display EJ Principles at Refuge
-  A4 – Include EJ concepts in Interpretive Exhibits
-  A5 – Assure EJ Resource Center is Accessible to community
-  B1 – Identify and create a list of EJ Trainers
-  B2 – Develop & Conduct EJ Training for staff, interns, and volunteers

Goal 2: Ensure people of color, low-income, and native nations are provided with early and ongoing opportunities to engage in meaningful involvement in Refuge decision-making processes.

-  A1 – Conduct outreach to MV Community first then the greater community
-  A2 – Community involved in decision making
-  A3 – Be clear and transparent to MV community about reasoning for decisions

-  B1 – Strengthen and develop diverse partnerships
-  B2 – Support EJ Gatherings & Discussion about EJ Issues
-  B3 – Refuge will partner with grassroots orgs organizing in the MV Community
-  C1 – Budget for Door to Door Flyer Distribution & Mailings to MV & SV Communities
-  C2 – Youth Programs at Refuge will support information distribution to local Communities
-  D1 – Utilize newsletters, marquees, & info boards at MVCC, MVES to promote opportunities
-  D2 – Make Announcements on opportunities to MVNA, MVES
-  D3 – Continue presence at MVCC, MVES, MVNA events and activities
-  D4 – Rent or Purchase an outdoor messaging sign to promote opportunities to community
-  E1 – Include outreach to Spanish Language radio stations
-  E2 – Include outreach to Spanish Language television stations
-  E3 – Include outreach to Spanish language and pueblo publications and newsletters
-  F1 – Develop a list of SV & Isleta Pueblo schools, community centers, youth groups and orgs where opportunities can be advertised
-  F2 – Partner with local groups to host career and employment fairs for MV, SV, & Isleta Pueblo
-  F3 – Participate in local school career days



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Goal 3: The Refuge will, on its own or in collaboration with partners, identify and support efforts to address environmental and economic impacts that may result in disproportionately high and adverse human health, economic or environmental effects on people of color, and low income communities, with a primary focus on the Mountain View Community and Isleta Pueblo.

- A1 - Attend Meetings about permits for new industry & development that could negatively impact the Refuge & MV community
- A2 - Share info gathered about EJ issues in community with the community
- B1 - assist in ID of initiatives to address cumulative impact
- B2 - Host & support research related to the Refuge and Community
- C1 - Monitor the impact of Refuge activities on community, especially those that create economic burdens, and work together on solutions to burdens
- C2 - Attend meetings and community with local orgs to mitigate developments & Activities that may have a negative impact
- C3 - Host meetings to elicit and address community concerns about refuge development and work on solutions
- C4 - Work with partners to ID local Residents that can disseminate information to community & Isleta Pueblo

Goal 4: Use existing and develop, as needed, funding opportunities, training, and educational opportunities to aid and strengthen people of color, low-income, and native nations in their efforts to build and sustain environmentally and economically sound communities in the Mountain View Community and Isleta Pueblo.

- A1 - ID & Raise Funds to Hire Staff to Accomplish EJ Goals

- B1 - Develop a Budget and ID Resources for elementary EJ Curriculum
- B2 - Develop and EJ Curriculum for MVES that can be shared with other schools
- B3 - Continue programs at MVES and MVCC to develop land and wildlife stewardship ethic
- C1 - Develop bilingual brochures that include environmental and economic justice issues
- C2 - Integrate EJ in public presentations, tours, workshops, and education programming
- D1 - Publish all refuge materials in English, Spanish, & Native languages when appropriate
- D2 - Integrate in budget funding for interpretation & translation
- D3 - ID volunteer and paid experts to support translation & Interpretation
- D4 - Research & Purchase translation audio equipment
- D5 - Offer translation services at public presentations when appropriate
- E1 - Develop work group to address economic or environmental burdens in community
- E2 - Support work group in addressing community development that results in gentrification to preserve community history, culture, and authenticity of community
- F1 - Address wishes of community to establish more green space for sports and recreational fields
- F2 - Address wishes of community for expanded public transportation options within MV
- F3 - Address wishes of community for lighting and sidewalks in residential area of MV
- G1 - Train Youth Corps working on Refuge Projects on EJ
- G2 - Share Youth Corps and Interns for community project needs

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Goal 4 (Continued): Use existing and develop, as needed, funding opportunities, training, and educational opportunities to aid and strengthen people of color, low-income, and native nations in their efforts to build and sustain environmentally and economically sound communities in the Mountain View Community and Isleta Pueblo.

- H1 - Develop diverse list of young people for opportunities at the Refuge
- I1 - Host Environmental Justice Community Day
- I2 - Host other EJ programs and educational activities
- I3 - ID local residents to support educational, historical and cultural programs

Goal 5: The Refuge will integrate its environmental and economic justice strategies with the DOI's environmental justice strategies and Title VI of the Civil Right Act. The Environmental and Economic Justice Strategic Plan (EEJP) will include diversity and inclusion goals and the Safe Place Policy of the Refuge.

- A1 - Diversity Training for Refuge staff, interns, partners, and volunteers
- A2 - Create practice and promote a culture of safe place
- A3 - Programming opportunities and employment is available and accessible to all
- B1 - Provide and increase transportation accessibility
- B2 - Host programs in spaces that are accessible
- B3 - Provide accommodations to employees and visitors to facility accessibility and inclusion

Goal 6: Use existing and develop, as needed, funding opportunities, training, and educational opportunities to aid and strengthen people of color, low-income, and native nations in their efforts to build and sustain environmentally and economically sound communities in the Mountain View Community and Isleta Pueblo.

- A1 - Maintain contact as appropriate with Isleta Pueblo and other local Pueblos and tribal nations
- A2 - Distribute materials about refuge resources to local Pueblos and tribal nations
- A3 - Share information on environmental and conservation issues as appropriate with Isleta Pueblo and local pueblos and tribal nations
- B1 - Continue collaborations within the DOI and USFWS with EPA and other relevant federal agencies, the Count, City, State, Government agencies, organizations, elected officials, and community representatives
- C1 - Partner with other government agencies to seek and apply for grants to meet the goals of EEJSP
- C2 - Attend, participate and share community needs at inter-agency meetings and bring back appropriate information and resource opportunities to community
- C3 - Support facilitation of interagency planning and articulation of emergency response, evacuation plans and drills
- D1 - Publish the Valle de Oro Environmental and Economic Justice Strategic Plan Online
- D2 - Continue to present on and advocate for the community-based research and the collaborative process that produced this plan