

Racism is Not Sustainable

LSP's Statement on the Police Killing of George Floyd

We at the Land Stewardship Project were shocked, saddened, and outraged at the news that a Black man died while in police custody on May 25, three blocks from LSP's Minneapolis office. Video footage shows a Minneapolis police officer kneeling on George Floyd's neck for several minutes after he was apprehended for allegedly committing a non-violent offense. Other officers assisted in restraining Floyd and another stood by watching. Despite Floyd's protests that he could not breathe, the police officer continued to press down on his neck and he eventually became unresponsive. He was later pronounced dead.

This is yet another sickening example of how deadly racism is in America. The role of police officers and other public servants is to make our communities safer for everyone, no matter the color of their skin. Unfortunately, racism is ingrained in all of our institutions, and it has yet again claimed a victim.

Our thoughts are with George Floyd's family



This mural honors George Floyd and other people of color who have died at the hands of the police in recent years. Racist violence is a clear violation of LSP's strongly held values that every person has value that cannot be earned or taken away. (LSP Photo)

and the community. In this case, the local community where this occurred includes a neighborhood where LSP staff and members live and work. This tragedy has brought close to home irrefutable

facts: racism is in direct opposition to healthy communities, racism is real and deadly, racism is present in Minnesota and across the country.

Part of the Land Stewardship Project's mission is to develop healthy communities for everyone, no exceptions. Racist violence is a clear violation of our strongly held values that every person has value that cannot be earned or taken away. At the core of LSP's work is our drive to create a society

based on sustainability. Racism, along with the violence it spawns, is not sustainable. To see someone's life held in such disregard is unacceptable and harms us all. We must continue to demand changes and call for accountability.

We join our allies in calling for the officers involved in this deadly incident to be held accountable. We also demand accountability from the Minneapolis Police Department and all of our institutions which, directly or indirectly, create the environment where such tragedies are all too commonplace.

We need change and we need justice now. Getting that justice begins with standing together to express outrage and to push for change. ☐

LSP & Racial Justice

To learn more about the Land Stewardship Project's work related to racial justice, see www.landstewardshipproject.org/about/racialjustice, or call 612-722-6377.

Time to Level the Farming Playing Fields

Report Outlines the Challenges & Opportunities for People of Color in Ag

Farming offers a powerful path to build community wealth and resilience to challenges such as water pollution, droughts and floods, and lack of access to healthy food. However, U.S. agriculture — particularly the pursuit of sustainable agriculture — is rife with obstacles for Black people, indigenous people, and other people of color (BIPOC), including immigrants, migrants, and refugees. That's the conclusion of "Leveling the Fields: Creating Farming Opportunities for Black People, Indigenous People, and Other People of Color," a report published by the HEAL Food Alliance and the Union Of Concerned Scientists (UCS) in May. The Land Stewardship Project is an ally of HEAL and UCS.

The report outlines how these obstacles include difficulty securing capital, credit, land, infrastructure, and information. For these groups, such challenges are compounded by long-standing structural and institutional racism. HEAL and UCS reviewed opportunities for governments, the private

sector, philanthropies, and others to contribute to simultaneously building socioeconomic equity and sustainability in U.S. food systems. To begin overcoming the history of racist policies and exclusion, it is the report's recommendation that solutions be developed by and with — rather than for — Black people, indigenous people, and other people of color.

A few highlights from the report:

- BIPOC represent nearly a quarter of the U.S. population, they operate less than 5% of the nation's farms, and cultivate less than 1% of its farmland.
- A majority of the estimated 2.4 million farmworkers in the U.S. are people of color who do not own or operate farms of their own.
- BIPOC have less access to, ownership and control of key resources related to infrastructure and information for successful, sustainable farms.
- Black and indigenous farmers in partic-

ular have lower net cash incomes and fewer direct-to-consumer sales compared with their white counterparts.

- Black and indigenous farmers receive a disproportionately small share of USDA loans.
- Institutions can help create opportunities for people of color in farming firmly rooted in the farmers' lived experiences and leadership.
- Addressing injustice and increasing food system resilience go hand-in-hand.
- A truly sustainable food system must be both science-based and equitable.
- Also needed are continual learning and cultural shifts within institutions that have benefited from centuries of discrimination.

Read the Report

You can read "Leveling the Playing Fields" at www.landstewardshipproject.org/posts/blog/1298.