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# The Black-Led Environmental Movement

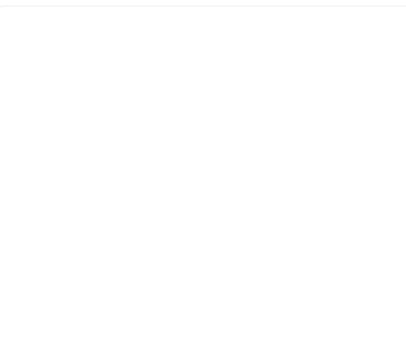


By [Gemma Alexander](#)

○ AUG 23, 2022 [African American](#), [Black](#), [conservation](#), [environmental justice](#), [environmental movement](#), [nonprofit](#)



The stereotype that environmentalists are all white and wealthy, and its corollary that **“Black people don’t do nature,”** are both clearly false. The **racist history** of the environmental movement does continue to make many people of color, particularly African Americans, feel unwelcome in mainstream environmental organizations. But people of all races care about the environment. In fact, a recent **survey by Yale University** found that Blacks take climate change more seriously than whites. And they aren’t waiting to feel welcomed by the mainstream movement.



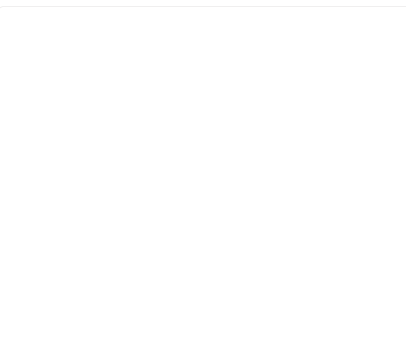
What Do You Think? ⋮

**Are you considering moving because of climate change?**

- No
- Yes
- I'm researching my options to decide

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Environmentally conscious African Americans are active in [every area of environmentalism](#).

## Environmental Attitudes

According to the Yale study, 57% of African Americans are concerned about climate change, compared to 49% of whites. What's more, they are also 14% more likely to join a campaign to convince elected officials to take action to reduce global warming. Blacks are also at the vanguard of the [environmental justice](#) movement.

The [beginning](#) of the environmental justice movement is generally attributed to the African American residents of Warren County, North Carolina, who in 1982 mobilized a sit-in against a nearby toxic industrial waste landfill. Five years later, a [study](#) found that over 15 million African Americans (as well as 8 million Latinos, and half of all AAPI and Indigenous Americans) resided in communities with at least one abandoned or uncontained toxic waste site. As climate change progresses, its [impacts](#) are disproportionately felt in communities of color. Here are a few Black-led organizations doing environmental work that could use your support – regardless of your ethnicity.

## NAACP Environmental & Climate Justice Campaign

The NAACP has worked for civil rights and justice for African Americans for more than a century. Recognizing that climate change is a civil rights issue because people of color are disproportionately affected, the [NAACP Environmental & Climate Justice](#) campaign works to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; advance clean energy and energy efficiency; and strengthen community resilience.

## Outdoor Afro

Founded in 2009 by Rue Mapp, [Outdoor Afro](#) highlights and develops African American leaders in the outdoors. Starting with little more than a Facebook page, Outdoor Afro has grown into a national network of trained volunteers who create one-of-a-kind outdoor experiences for African Americans. From swimming lessons to camping and exploring the national parks, Outdoor Afro meets people where they are, and then takes them a little further outdoors.



[Westlake Home – Luxury Organic Bedding](#)

Image: [Outdoor Afro](#)

## Hip Hop Caucus

The [Hip Hop Caucus](#) aims to connect the hip hop music community, from the grassroots to celebrities, to the political process. The caucus educates voters and advocates for climate action from the BIPOC perspective through two major campaigns. Respect My Vote advocates for legislation that protects the voting rights of people of color; Think 100% produces podcasts, films, and music that informs audiences about the climate justice movement. The campaign encourages action through policy advocacy, collective and individual participation in democratic processes, and pressure on the financial system.

## Afro Vegan Society

Meat plays a prominent role in African American food traditions, but it is not central to all Black communities. The [Afro Vegan Society](#) is a national nonprofit that provides resources, information, and support to people in marginalized communities transitioning to a vegan lifestyle. They advocate Afro-Veganism, a lens for approaching veganism as a tool to reject oppressive systems that harm both humans and animals.

## Generation Green

Established by students and alumni of historically black universities, the entirely Black youth and womxn-led [Generation Green](#) is an organization that focuses on community building and amplifying the voices of young Black climate activists. They pursue an ideological framework called Environmental Liberation that pursues a decolonized, regenerative, and autonomous future for Black people.



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Image: [Generation Green](#)

## Black Farmers Index

The [Black Farmer's Index](#) started as a project to provide a list of Black farmers to address the rising issues of food security during the pandemic. Today they list more than 1,000 Black farmers across the country who sell their produce directly to consumers. Among them are many who practice organic, sustainable farming methods. But all of them provide healthy, locally grown food that helps keep money in the community and out of industrial food systems.

## The National Black Environmental Justice Network

[The National Black Environmental Justice Network](#) is a national coalition of environmental justice organizations and activists of African descent. They are dedicated to improving the lives of Black people by addressing systemic racism. They work to protect the natural world and equitable access to it through environmental regulation; pursue emissions reductions and real climate solutions; invest in Black communities through finance, education, and healthcare; and expand voting access.

Image: [National Black Environmental Justice Network](#)

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## [We Earthlings: Let's Restore the Forests To Remove CO2 From the Atmosphere](#)



By [Gemma Alexander](#)

Gemma Alexander has an M.S. in urban horticulture and a backyard filled with native plants. After working in a genetics laboratory and at a landfill, she now writes about the environment, the arts and family. See more of her writing [here](#).

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