ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN WASHINGTON STATE: STRATEGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR HISTORICALLY-WHITE LED ENVIRONMENTAL NONPROFITS
Jessica Hartman*, Program on the Environment, University of Washington
Site Supervisor: Kat Holmes, Washington Environmental Council
Faculty Advisors: Elizabeth Wheat, Program on the Environment, University of Washington; David Suárez, Evans School of Public Policy and Governance, University of Washington

The Environmental Justice Movement is a rising social movement that explicitly links environmentalism, racism, and injustice into one frame. This intersectional view of environmentalism creates more appeal to people of color and of low income in ways that mainstream environmentalism did not. In Washington State, the City of Seattle’s Equity and Environment Initiative recognizes the connections between environmental issues and race, and the need to address both. Additionally, Washington’s environmental organizations are beginning to follow suit by looking internally to practices that promote injustice and how their work can create stronger, more inclusive social change. The purpose of this study was to understand the current strategies of organizations that wish to incorporate environmental justice, racial equity, or similar initiatives; identify areas of opportunity; and uncover pathways for more organizations to follow. To conduct my research, I administered a literature review, nine semi-structured interviews of nonprofit employees, and an online survey of nonprofit members. Despite myriad challenges, three themes were clear: internal processes and institutional growth, communication and member education, and relationship building.