

These points of unity were written to help define the shared perspectives of the core Confluence organizers, and to ensure that the Confluence is a space that truly embodies different communities and movements coming together. No participant will be turned away for their perspectives, but we ask that all workshop presenters familiarize themselves with these points of unity and make connections between climate change and structures of oppression, helping to make the confluence a space framed by these points.

Northeast Climate Confluence: Points of Unity

We recognize that the systems that are destroying the planet are systems rooted in colonialism and oppression. We recognize, therefore, that combating climate change is not solely a matter of addressing carbon emissions, but also confronting the institutions that attack our communities and cultures as well as our earth.

This understanding informs our points of unity, which are:

* We are committed to working as a horizontally structured multi-racial group that promotes a culture of anti-oppression. We reject the power inequalities and structural violence based on privileges of class, race, gender, sexuality, religion, nationality, ability, and age.

* We recognize the pervasiveness of environmental racism, and the fact that the people most hurt by the extraction and burning of fossil fuels, as well as those hardest hit by natural disasters, have been and will continue to be those most disenfranchised by the dominant structures of power. Worldwide, the poor, women, and people of color are least responsible for greenhouse gas emissions and are targeted by the same systems of oppression that are the causes of climate change.

* We recognize that these same systems of structural violence extend to the human domination and exploitation of non-human animals, other organisms, and entire ecosystems for profit and power, and that this power imbalance is both supported by and perpetuates other oppressions. We believe in biodiversity and eco-centrism, which affirms the inherent value in all life forms and does not value any life according to its usefulness to humans or value in the market.

* We reject the unjust and false solutions to climate change handed down to us by corporations and governments, such as carbon (cap and trade) markets, clean coal, industrial biofuels, and nuclear power. False solutions create the illusion of progress while allowing the world's ruling classes and multinational corporations to continue their profit-driven practices which are the root cause of climate change. Moreover false solutions do not address the social injustices that are caused by these same systems, and in fact worsen these injustices under the banner of "saving the planet".

* We support Indigenous People's right to self-determination and reject colonialism, neo-colonialism, and Western imperialism in all its forms. We support all indigenous struggles for sovereignty, here in the Northeast, throughout the Americas, and throughout the world. This includes but is not limited to the protection of sacred sites, the return of stolen lands, and the cancellation of mineral, water, and atmospheric privatization.

* We recognize that support for indigenous struggles includes the right of Palestinians to freedom and self-determination on all of their historic land. We are against Zionism as a political ideology that equates Jewish heritage, religion, and identity with the colonial settler state of Israel. We also oppose Zionism as practice, meaning the support and maintenance of colonial settlement in any part of historic Palestine. We recognize that confronting Zionism is crucial to any movement against imperialism, militarization, and the oppression of indigenous peoples.

* We reject the militarization of borders and the anti-immigrant policies that criminalize communities here in the United States and elsewhere. We seek to create a space that exposes the cycles of displacement, from colonial land theft to economically forced migration, from gentrification to ICE raids.

* We believe that reproductive justice must be tied with climate justice. We understand that environmentally-based arguments around “overpopulation” have been used to justify racist and xenophobic population control programs, such as targeting women of color with sterilization campaigns and the dangerous testing of birth control drugs. As such, the politics of population control must be understood as a form of modern eugenics.

* We have seen with Hurricane Katrina that governments respond to climate disasters with an increased police state and with the same war machine that occupies lands to extract the resources that cause climate change. The entire police security state, including border security and the prison-industrial complex, is a dire threat to life that accompanies any “natural” disaster. Thus, we seek to build grassroots responses to the climate crisis that work within the framework of prison abolition and move towards building accountable community-based justice systems. We recognize that it is the responsibility of all movements for social and political change to resist political repression and fight for the release of political prisoners.

* We are inspired by international campesina movements, and we affirm the values of food sovereignty. We believe that food, water, seed saving, and access to fertile land are a human right rather than a resource for profit, and that people, not markets, should define food production.

* We believe that successful solutions to climate change and social injustice will be community based, defined by those most affected by climate change, and practiced by those who have been systematically excluded from institutional decision making.

* We believe in community self-sufficiency; the power of our communities to reclaim control of our lives, our cultures, and our lands by becoming independent from the

industries and institutions that are destroying our earth. Our goal is that the Confluence will be a space to dissect these many problems and build the real solutions of community self-sufficiency and solidarity.