



Where Do We Grow from Here?

Environmental Justice and the Politics of Hope in the Planetary Age

Call for Proposals for Hybrid Conference

Fort Collins, Colorado, April 13-14, 2026

The Center for Environmental Justice at Colorado State University is hosting a hybrid conference to continue the dialogue and inspire action on environmental justice. We invite proposals for papers, performances, events, and panels across the full scope of society and nature, encompassing all spatial and temporal scales, and all perspectives. These may include scholars, students, and researchers from all disciplines, policymakers, practitioners, advocates, and community-based experts. We will do our best to accommodate the time zone of those presenting virtually. The in-person component will take place in Fort Collins, Colorado, a vibrant, welcoming university community in the United States.

This hybrid gathering relaunches the series of conferences on environmental justice (EJ) that was envisioned by various EJ centers back in 2017 but interrupted by the pandemic. We aim to deepen connections amongst EJ scholars, advocates, and practitioners across South and North, East and West, across different political and theoretical traditions and substantive interests. Collectively we will assess and update the EJ manifesto from the 2017 Colorado conference to reflect a rapidly changing political landscape and identify steps for research and action.

In that spirit this conference aims to explore and promote EJ as the foundation of a politics of emancipatory hope during this historical moment when democratic and environmental values are challenged while society and nature are increasingly

integrated on a planetary scale. We situate the politics of hope as a critical and creative impetus to frame and conceptualize the future of EJ as a core ingredient of a socially and ecologically democratic world. Civil, if difficult, dialogues amongst those who value democracy and environmental justice, across political views and theoretical approaches, are a central element of this politics of hope.

CONFERENCE THEMES

Over the last several decades, the study and practice of environmental (in)justice has become more diverse, particularly as researchers and advocates globally have engaged, contested, and enriched the concept in their own ways. Analysts, advocates, and practitioners are examining environmental (in)justice within and across scales, from the local to the planetary. EJ has also become richer in scope, ranging across substantive areas and across humanity and nature, including the role of work/labour in connecting the two. The broadening scale and scope of environmental (in)justice does not imply theoretical or political convergence or agreement. Instead, it engenders profound discussions and debates among people approaching environmental (in)justice from different political standpoints, research agendas, identities and positionalities, ontologies and epistemologies. This conference invites submissions that explore these and other discussions and debates.

The collective reflection that will take place at this conference is even more pressing given the resurgence of nationalism and geopolitical competition, climate denialism, environmental skepticism, and associated challenges to democracy and justice. To that end, we propose several broad themes:

The Many Meanings of Environmental Justice

How do various political standpoints, cultures, communities, and disciplines understand environmental (in)justice during this planetary age? How has the practice and study of EJ changed as it has become globalized? How has research and practice from the Global South and hitherto marginalized social forces contested and enriched EJ? How can we distinguish between approaches that include all affected and those that include some while excluding others? Recognizing

that there are many imaginaries of justice, how can we investigate and compare narratives and stories, theories, and practices of environmental (in)justice, at a time when hopeful and effective visions of EJ are essential? Where will the joy and hope that will allow us to transcend the challenges to EJ emerge?

Environmental Justice and Democracy

Persistent inequalities and growing authoritarianism, coupled with geopolitical competition, affect the study and practice of EJ and democracy everywhere. What are the relations between environmental justice and democracy? How can we address the contradictory role of the state as both an obstacle to and as a means for advancing democracy and EJ? How can EJ and civic capacity reinforce one another? How can we envision and craft strategies that address both the causes and the symptoms of ecosocial injustices and undemocratic practices? What kinds of research and practice cultivate the communities, organizations, networks, movements, and narratives essential to nurturing hopeful spaces of ecosocially just and democratic thought and practice?

Just Transitions in a Planetary Age

Despite current challenges, the pursuit of justice is both necessary and ongoing. What strategies will enable transformative just transitions across all human activities and global divisions of labor, while taking humanity and nature into account? How can EJ for all beings, at all scales, contribute to building more intersectional, socially, and ecologically equitable and democratic worlds? What kinds of new epistemologies and ontologies can reveal such worlds and visions in this planetary age while preempting authoritarian ones? What types of institutions and strategies are required to sustain a politics of hope for a thriving planet?

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Use this Whova link to submit your proposal: <https://col.st/x7UTy>

Process

We welcome all types of proposals, academic and non-academic, highlighting a diversity of EJ action and topics. Advocates, organizers, academics, and all EJ

practitioners from any part of the world should feel welcome to submit proposals, the format and content of which can reflect their practice, from community-based work to training to research. The proposals will be reviewed by panels of reviewers. If you have any questions about the appropriateness of your proposal, please email us at cla_environmentaljustice@colostate.edu.

All submissions, communications, registration and other conference related activities will take place on the conference platform, Whova. Use this Whova link to submit your proposal: <https://col.st/x7UTy>

You will see the following questions, amongst others, on the submission form:

All submissions, communications, registration and other conference related activities will take place on the conference platform *Whova*. You will see the following questions on the submission form:

- a. **Proposals/abstracts** for *individual* papers, performances, contributions to roundtables and small interactive workshops or other imaginative events should be a maximum of 300 words.
- a. **Contact information and short professional bio** (not more than 100 words).
- a. For **panels** of the above, please include an *overall description* of not more than 250 words, as well as information about each individual proposal and presenter in the panel (250 words each).
- a. Whether you plan to attend in person or virtually.

Timeline and Fees

- **Proposals are due by 11:59 PM Mountain Daylight Time (UTC-6) on October 20, 2025.**
- **All applicants will be notified by November 21, 2025** if their proposal is accepted.
- **Applicants must confirm their participation by 11:59 PM Mountain Standard Time (UTC-7) on January 12, 2026 in writing and by paying the registration fees.**

There will be **sliding registration fees between \$50 and \$150**, based on income and country of origin. We also hope to provide some modest scholarships that will cover registration fees and some travel and lodging costs.

CO-SPONSORS [In Progress] Contact us if you are interested in co-sponsoring this event with us!

Center for Environmental Justice at Colorado State University

<https://environmentaljustice.colostate.edu/>

EnJust-Network <https://enjust.net/uber-enjust/>

EJJE (Environmental Justice/ Justice Environnementale)

<https://justiceenvironnementale.inrae.fr/>

Global Atlas of Environmental Justice, Institute of Environmental Science and Technology, Autonomous University of Barcelona ejatlas.org

Global Environmental Justice Group, University of East Anglia [Global Environmental Justice group](http://GlobalEnvironmentalJusticegroup.org)

JUSTES (Justice Ecologique et Sociale) <https://justesfnrs.wordpress.com/>

Sydney Environment Institute

<https://www.sydney.edu.au/sydney-environment-institute/>