



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**ECODiversity™ Announces Inaugural “Women in Conservation & Environmental Justice” Award Winners**

*Awardees are selected for trailblazing efforts to advance conservation and environmental justice issues through advocacy, innovative programming, and solutions benefitting women and diverse communities.*

**Washington, DC** - ECODiversity today announced its inaugural awards recognizing women that have demonstrated a commitment to the advancement of conservation and environmental justice issues through advocacy, innovative programming, or solutions benefitting women, diverse communities, and Americans overall. Selections are based on a review of nominations submitted by community members, environmental leaders, and members of our editorial board.

"These awards recognize the importance of embracing diversity and inclusion in conservation and environmentalism," said Noemi Lujan Perez, ECODiversity co-founder and vice president of government and media relations. "Women play a key role in the management and protection of the environment, and we celebrate their trailblazing work."

The 2018 ECODiversity Top Women in Conservation and Environmental Justice recipients are:



**Betty Reid Soskin, U.S. National Park Ranger**, was selected for her role in the development of the Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park and helping the National Park Service (NPS) document the role of African American “Rosies” during WWII. As a Park Ranger, she has been instrumental in helping NPS document and interpret African American social unrest during the 1960s. At the age of 96, she is also the nation’s oldest park ranger.

**Rose Marcario, CEO of Patagonia, Inc.**, was selected for her fearless leadership in protecting National Monuments, supporting the protection of tribal sacred lands, and being an advocate for diversity in conservation. Under her leadership, the corporation has filed a lawsuit challenging the federal government’s Bear’s Ears National Monument land reduction and has established *Patagonia Action Works* to support and encourage environmental activism.



**Susan Jin Davis, Vice President Environmental Affair and Chief Sustainability Officer for Comcast/NBCUniversal**, was selected for her trailblazing work establishing linkages between Asian American stakeholders and NBCUniversal, and her leadership driving sustainable strategies and priorities and implementing the Company’s sustainability program across all of Comcast NBCUniversal business units and functions.

**Elyse Rylander, Executive Director of OUT There Adventures**, was selected for her trailblazing work establishing the nation’s first national LGBTQ-focused outdoor recreation and conservation organization designed to build the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts and LGBTQ conservation stakeholders. Her work has led to the establishment of the *LGBTQ Outdoor Summit*, a national gathering for LGBTQ-focused programming, enthusiasts, and allied friends.



**Angela Mooney D’Arcy, Founder and Executive Director of Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples**, was selected for her trailblazing work founding and leading an Indigenous-focused effort to build capacity among Tribal Nations and Indigenous peoples to protect sacred lands, waters, and cultures. As a Water Protector, she works as a bridge builder to connect diverse groups to protect oceans and coastal lands from drilling interests.

**Irene Vilar, Founder and Executive Director of Americas for Conservation + the Arts**, was selected for her trailblazing work establishing an international platform to raise awareness about environmental issues through the arts, and innovative programming to connect youth to nature and STEM opportunities. She is an award-winning author, publisher, Guggenheim fellow, and serves on the advisory council of the Colorado Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry. She founded the *Americas Latino ECO Festival*, and is currently leading a post-hurricane environmental initiative in her native Puerto Rico to help farmers reestablish ravished farms.



**Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.** was selected for its trailblazing role as the first national women’s organization to partner with the federal government on wildlife and habitat conservation. The organization’s role connecting African American youth women to America’s public lands is helping to build a pipeline of talent to STEM opportunities in the biological sciences, as well as raise awareness about national wildlife refuges and their ecological importance.

**Desiree Patno, CEO of NAWRB – Women in the Housing and Real Estate Ecosystem**, was selected for her trailblazing work leading women real estate professionals in advocating for eco-sustainable housing and environmental-friendly policies at the state and federal level. NAWRB has also been at the forefront to position women-owned businesses to benefit from LEED construction contracts.



**Andrea Delgado, Legislative Director for Earthjustice**, was selected for her trailblazing work co-founding *GreenLatinos*, a national Latino coalition of environmental justice and conservation advocates driving policy change at the local, state, and federal levels. Working at the nexus of environmental and occupational health, she has led national campaigns to engage diverse and impacted communities in the development, implementation and defense of policies that protect children, workers and broader public from exposure to solid and hazardous waste, toxic chemicals and pesticides.

**Victoria Sanchez De Alba, President & Owner of De Alba Communications**, was selected for her journalism and philanthropic efforts to raise public awareness about the dangers of pesticide exposure on farmworkers and the link to blood cancers including non-Hodgkin-lymphoma, and engage the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) in advocacy and cancer research for this vulnerable population. Her behind-the-scenes work has led to increased news coverage of the use of hazardous pesticides in the agricultural industry, and EPA regulatory policies.





**Danielle Purifoy, environmental justice attorney and social scientist**, was selected for her innovative work curating multimedia exhibits documenting the long-lasting effects on communities that were settled on land often considered undesirable through policies dating back to the post-Civil War era. Her research work, and exhibit, is a visual tapestry of the arts documenting the socio-cultural realities of land-based health maladies.

**Donna Hope, CEO at Mt. Eastern Joy LLC**, was selected for her innovative work driving eco-diversity practices in the private, non-profit, and government sectors. She serves on the Green 2.0 environmental diversity board as an advisor on public affairs and strategic communications, is a managing partner of the *HBCU Greenfund*, and was a founding co-chair of the NYC chapter of the Environmental Professionals of Color (EPOC).



“We salute the 2018 awardees for everything they do for the benefit of the environment and diverse communities nationwide,” said Hector Perez-Pacheco, ECODiversity Top Leaders Awards Councilmember and Los Angeles County Action Board Commissioner.

#### **About ECODiversity™**

ECODiversity™ was launched in 2016 to give a voice to champions of diversity in conservation and environmental justice; and to drive diversity and inclusion as a business imperative in the eco, green, and conservation industries. A diversity-run and operated social enterprise, we produce the *ECODiversity Top 50 Diversity Leaders Awards*; *ECODiversity Magazine*, a national, online and print publication; and, signature programs. For more information, log on to [www.eco-diversity.com](http://www.eco-diversity.com).

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