



SURFers Kicking Off Environmental Justice Technical Initiative

Environmental justice (EJ) is a growing public and legislative movement. A quick google search for the term generates millions of results, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) definition of EJ is at the top of the list: "Environmental justice (EJ) is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies." A few more clicks reveal various EJ plans and policies (see [past SURF Break issues](#) for highlights). At SURF's Spring Membership Meeting, SURFers discussed the practical implications of the EJ movement as it relates to remediation. After the meeting, some SURFers gathered to explore the issue further. The result? A new SURF technical initiative (TI) with a mission to encourage direct consideration of environmental justice community needs and concerns into sustainable remediation. Interested in participating? Contact co-leaders [Katherine Blair](#), [Rich Evans](#), [Melvin Stroble](#), or [Nicole Tucker](#) for more information. Please note that, to participate in a SURF TI, you must be a SURF member. Sign up for membership [here](#).



Dive In! Refocused and Realigned: EPA's New Strategic Research Action Plans

Last month, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Office of Research and Development (ORD) published strategic research action plans for each of its research programs for the next four fiscal years (FYs 2023-2026). In each plan, the ORD commits to exploring ways to improve research processes by using a solutions-driven research approach (see "Did You Know?" for more details). The six plans are available [here](#). The box below provides a list of the plan programs and highlights the major changes since the last iteration (FYs 2019-2022).

Air, Climate, and Energy

- Increases emphasis on developing and evaluating science-based solutions overall and particularly for science-based interventions to decrease adverse public health and environmental impacts.
- Creates integrated, interdisciplinary research areas to characterize problems and develop solutions that consider technical, social, and economic dimensions.

Chemical Safety for Sustainability

- Realigns focus to new priorities, such as addressing climate change, environmental justice, potential for early life-stage susceptibility, and cumulative impacts (mixtures, real-world exposures).
- Accelerates the pace of chemically assessing contaminants of immediate and emerging concern. Health and

Environmental Risk Assessment

- Creates new or increases emphasis on research associated with children's environmental health, chemical mixture evaluations, and cumulative risk

assessment practices.

- Commits to leveraging assessment expertise, approaches, tools, and technologies to support climate change impact assessments.

Homeland Security

- Provides greater focus on community needs and vulnerabilities to ensure equitable incident management.
- Creates a new research area (Communities, Resilience, and Remediation).

Safe and Sustainable Water Resources

- Evaluates the impacts of changing climate patterns and other stressors on communities and ecosystems, nutrient dynamics, coastal acidification and hypoxia, and harmful algal blooms.
- Expands water reuse research to include alternative water sources.

Sustainable and Healthy Communities

- Increases focus on Administration priorities, such as working with communities to identify solutions to address cumulative impacts and environmental justice concerns.
- Increases emphasis on research addressing critical minerals and innovative strategies to reduce waste generation (especially plastics and food waste) through recycling and reuse.



Did You Know? Promising Practices to Improve Stakeholder Engagement

Meaningful engagement? No, it's not a from-the-heart proposal on the Hallmark channel. It's a two-way method of communicating that focuses on outcomes instead of process, which is why it is, by definition, an important part of sustainable remediation. But how do we do it and how can we make it more

effective? In the recently published six strategic research action plans (see “Dive In!” for details), the EPA’s Office of Research and Development encourages solutions-driven research (also known as translational research or translational science) to engage partners and stakeholders, integrate tasks, and allow researchers to apply results in a way that produces effective solutions. Like sustainable remediation, solutions-driven research involves engagement with stakeholders throughout the process. At a site in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, a pilot study is being conducted to (among other things) assess the usefulness of this approach. Canfeld, et al. (2022) assesses the pilot and provides take-aways for others using this approach. Click [here](#) to read the article.

Upcoming Events

Webinar: Nature-Based Solutions for Coastal Resilience

Society of American Military Engineers

December 8, 2022

1:00 p.m. EST

For more information and to register, click [here](#).

A Community on Ecosystem Services (ACES)

December 12-15, 2022

Greater Washington, DC Area

For more information, click [here](#).

Webinar: Remediation to Restoration to Revitalization as An Approach to Connect Programs, Research, and Societal Needs

EPA’s Office of Research and Development

December 14, 2022

3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. EST

To register, click [here](#).

International Conference on the Remediation and Management of Contaminated Sediments

January 9-12, 2023

Austin, Texas

For more information, click [here](#).