

November 6, 2023

Dear Tahoma Audubon Board,

As the second staff hired by Tahoma Audubon and a former executive director, I wish to add my voice in favor of the Board voting to change the organization's name.

Tahoma Audubon has a long history of conservation advocacy, environmental education and support for bird watching. This history is rooted in the hard work of like-minded volunteers who worked tirelessly to advocate for birds and their habitats they depend on.

While I was with the organization, we worked hard to attract a more diverse audience to the organization, beyond the base of older white women who have carried the organization forward. But it was a struggle.

Today representation matters, inclusion matters. What you call things matters in terms of creating an inclusive space that new faces and new voices feel comfortable. I believe the future success of the organization will rely on how it works to be more inclusive and attracts a more diverse audience to the cause.

The proposed new name brings a renewed sense of place with 'Tahoma' and opens up the conversation to new partners with the word 'Alliance'. Alliance is also a good way to hold together the three audiences of the organization – education, advocacy, and bird watching.

It was my pleasure to work day-in and day-out with Thelma Gilmore. Thelma worked as a teacher on the Eastside of Tacoma, at Lister Elementary and work her entire life to educate diverse generations about the wonders of the natural world.

I have never, and would never attempt to speak for Thelma, but I do know that she would do what-ever she could bring a passion for the environment to new audiences.

I encourage you to be bold and join other chapters in creating the future for the organization.

Sincerely,



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P.S. I do hope you keep the Towhee logo.