

Wildlife Viewing & Nature Tourism Working Group Notes
AFWA Annual Meeting
Wednesday September 9, 2020
3:15 pm-5:15 pm Central Time

Agenda

3:15 Call to Order/Review Agenda - Shelly reviewed agenda.

3:20 RAWA Update – Sean Saville (AFWA)

Legislative update: July 1 legislation passed on House Floor 233-188. Trying to move it within the big Infrastructure bill. Focusing on economic recovery and jobs creation. Signing of America Outdoors Act on August 4th; dedicates permanent funding for parks maintenance and other infrastructure needs. Good victory for conservation, but wildlife still needs funding, so they will highlight those needs. State of the Birds Report builds on partnerships. T-shirts and masks for sale. #ResponsibleRecreation as a way to engage and drive traffic back to other issues we are working on such as RAWA. State agencies will receive signs, available in Spanish.

3:35 Grant and Research Proposals – Wildlife Viewer Research Multi-state Conservation Grant proposal and Enhancing Diversity in Wildlife Viewing Messaging proposal – Anne Glick (FL)

MSCG grant submitted this summer and approved to move forward: Wildlife Viewer Survey: Enhancing Relevancy and Engaging Support from a Broader Constituency. National survey spread out over 4 regions, with opportunities for some states to oversample. If interested in getting involved, join the monthly conference calls.

Illinois State University Innovation Consulting Community. Students partner with an organization to increase diversity of those who view wildlife. Final product is a report on how organizations can make improvements complete with concrete ideas they can implement. Members of this working group may have the opportunity to work with these students.

3:40 Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy 2022 Update – Jeff Meyers and Cheyenne Dubiach (Arizona)

2022 Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy - February 21-25 in Tucson, AZ. RFP will be going out March 2021. Registration in early summer 2021. RFP preferences: Starting a new project, best practices, successes within agency, case studies, partnership models. Website will be updated in March. <https://www.wvntacademy.com/>. Contact Jeff Meyers: jmeyers@azgfd.gov

3:50 Diversity and Inclusion in Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism: Initiatives and Ideas – presentation by Corina Newsome (Georgia Audubon) and facilitated discussion

Corina provided some background information on how she entered the field and her experience as a zoo educator. Importance of having a window (exposure) and mirror (reflection) and sustained mentorship. Creation of programs that exposed young people to wildlife care. Disrupting homogeneity: Cultivating a culture of long-term perspective - when you reduce some

of the barriers (cost, accessibility, etc.), why is it that a homogenous population still shows up?
Ans: It requires developing a long-term relationship with the community. Ask: What do they care about/what are their concerns?

Explicitly identify who you want to reach; Map your resources; Build relationships; Hold your work accountable to the communities you are serving – this is the foundation for building efforts with long-term success at breaking down homogeneity.

Need to take a long-game perspective to the work.

Corina.newsone@georgiaudubon.org

Link to Corina's presentation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7xppoO7ka4&feature=youtu.be>

Discussion: As biologists, we understand the importance of diversity within an ecosystem, but it's also important to have that in our work setting, too. Importance of paying people for work in conservation. Importance of internships/apprenticeships/mentorships. Importance of speaking up - everyone speaking up.

4:35 Relevancy Roadmap – Jen Newmark (Nevada)

Roadmap has barriers and strategies to overcome those barriers. Last year at the AFWA Annual meeting, the directors adopted the Roadmap. Six states received MSCG. Jen showed the website. <https://conservation-relevancy-community.mn.co/> and <https://relevancyroadmap.squarespace.com/>

Roadmap was designed to help states figure out what their biggest barriers are and then dig right into strategies for implementation. Examples – IN: Conservation stewardship program. IA: Looking for additional social science data to server birders (social science and human dimension). PA: using social science communities in urban Philadelphia to increase angler participation. FL: increasing connections with different and new groups.

People are realizing the importance of connecting with the outdoors - we can capitalize on that need. Keeping relevant to a diversity of audiences is an example of success.

4:50 Upcoming Webinars: bring your potential speaker ideas and topics for Fall/Winter webinars

Past topics: Using eBird data, freshwater snorkeling

Looking for more ideas on webinars for fall/winter/spring

4:55 Work Plan Review – Shelly Plante (Texas)

Academy, webinars part of the workplan

130,000 grant with VA Tech (if funding goes through)

5:00 State Agency Updates, Working Group

5:15 Adjourn