



ASSOCIATION of
FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES

WILDLIFE VIEWING AND NATURE TOURISM WORKING GROUP

Chair: Shelly Plante (TX)

Monday, September 11, 2017

10:00am – 12:00 pm

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: 37

Agenda:

- Welcome and Introductions

- Work Plan
 - Key in increasing agency relevancy thru WVNT
 - WVNT Academy in Feb 2018
 - Shared learning
 - Case studies
 - Beg, borrow and steal the best ideas and bring them to our states
 - Shelly Plante (TX) is the new chair; Anne Glick (FL, previous chair), is still very involved
 - We are planning on continuing to do webinars throughout the upcoming year
 - Always looking for new topics
 - May look for a more quarterly webinar
 - If you want to be part of the monthly conference calls → contact Shelly
 - Want to aid with the AAFW campaign and see how we intersect
 - Helping with the National Conservation Outreach strategy → to help with that strategy and make sure WVNT is represented
 - Want to increase state participation in WVNT WG
 - If there is anything needed to be added, thoughts, etc with the work plan, please contact Shelly
 - To be finalized by the end of the month
 - Feel free to email with any thoughts

- AAFW- update
 - Tourism of F+ W depends on healthy fish and wildlife and habitat
 - Want to know what conversation are being had on the state level so (Sean) can help
 - New website: www.ournatureusa.com
 - Website is live

- Not driving traffic yet – waiting until bill is dropped
 - Website will be expanded with resource materials for states to use moving forward (possibly on password protected page; still to come)
 - Looking for feedback on website
- AAFW Briefing for partners on the legislation tomorrow from 5-6pm in Superior Room B
- Resources :
 - Banners (see near registration desk); available for use by states
 - Sponsors the Wildlife Habitat Council white paper that speaks to the role of the Private sector in species recovery and protection
 - They see businesses and private sector as a partner in this initiative
 - Video in development (thank you DU production team) to promote AAFW
- Working on passing supportive resolutions with the states
 - AFWA/Sean can help with that and provide templates
- Want to highlight the state success stories
- Next Steps:
 - Reintroduce legislation in House
 - Launch website; social media channels and partner comms channels
 - Announce campaign formally
 - Establish state coalitions
 - Engage public advocacy
 - Secure funding to launch campaign and sustain for duration
 - Work toward introduction of bill in the Senate and fly-in this fall/winter
- Will make state fact sheets available to state agencies
 - We can share templates
- Question: is there a need to have included in the state fact sheets, not only what this effort is, but what this effort isn't; don't want to look like we're buddy buddy with energy business
 - Answer: point noted; when asked that question point out the BRP recommendations and that a number of other money resources were looked at and weren't sustainable; this is not support of energy business (fracking, offshore drilling, etc); it's not incentivizing increased production – it's about utilizing funding that's already there.
 - Renewables are not currently paying into these funds but they want to.
 - Looking to prevent an incorrect perception
- Question (Shelly): what is it that we can be doing to help you
 - Answer: we will definitely let you know; video, images, state success stories, resolutions, etc → if you have any of these please send to AFWA so we can highlight and use resources material (not redevelop materials already there).
 - Helping us reinforce our messaging as it comes out
 - Use the planning tool; we can send out to group if you do not have this material
- AAFW FAQ's on the AFWA website, main page
- Contact Sean with any questions
- Let me know how we can battle misperception

- NA Waterfowl Management Plan's National Birdwatch Survey Results
 - Final results of the study are not ready yet
 - Initial results will be presented later this month
 - We will try to have someone from WVNT group at the table during that meeting (Anne, FL)
 - No presentation today
 - Can learn more about this survey at 3pm today from a workshop happening at AFWA
 - Also speaking at the waterfowl WG tomorrow morning

- The Nature of Americans Study Findings
 - DJ Case will be presenting about these findings at the Academy
 - Natureofamericans.org has full study results, graphics/slides you can use in programs, and more.
 - Gives us a foundation to talk to others and create an action plan with messaging, access, etc
 - ~12K people surveyed
 - Key finding: there is a gap between American's interest in nature and participation/engagement in nature
 - What are the barriers causing this gap → looks to be 8 major ones
 - Places where people live and work discourage contact with the natural world
 - Competing priorities
 - Declining dependence on the natural world for livelihoods
 - New technologies distract and captivate
 - Shifting expectations about what 'good' contact with nature out to mean
 - There were differences in barriers depending on ethnicity
 - Poses some specific audience barriers that we need to address
 - Insights:
 - Most experiences in nature are now social and not solitary
 - Need to make experience with nature habitual and not the rare occasion
 - Nature doesn't need to be a passive experience
 - Most Americans support nature related investments
 - Will be using research to find strategic planning and implementation of outreach initiatives
 - Great information on the natureofamericans.org website → please check out
 - Different groups have different ways they enjoy the outdoors; very diverse

- Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy
 - February 19-23 in McAllen Texas
 - <http://www.wvntacademy.com/> is the website for the academy
 - This is not just about birding, but herping, paddling, diversity issues, and many other activities and topics
 - \$225 registration, lodging at federal rate, most meals included with lodging and/or registration

- Work to really keep this very affordable
 - All materials are on the website; schedule, speakers, field trips, etc.
- State Agency Updates
 - Virginia – has hired an R3 position with a focus that is inclusive of hunting, fishing, AND nonconsumptive recreation.
 - NPS – Looking at economic impacts of bear cams and other economic impact studies; complete report later this afternoon in this room at 3pm.
 - Arizona – hiring a Wildlife Viewing position soon (job has now posted: <https://azstatejobs.azdoa.gov/> and go to position number is 32803). Webcams, including a new pupfish cam this year, have remained a successful way of engaging constituents.
 - Texas – launching new Bird City Texas program in the next year which will include better land management, habitat enhancement, and science-based bird-friendly criteria for participating/certified communities.