

WVNT WG- Notes

Chair: Shelly Plante (TX)

Participants: 63

Call to order, introductions, review of agenda- Shelly

Review of new draft charge: To advance WVNT programs within state and fed agencies and private sector org as strategies to build support for fish and wildlife conservation by connecting ethnically and geographically diverse people to the outdoors

- Looking to include more D&I for relevancy – less focus on geographic diversity
- One comments of support

Birability- Freya McGregor

- There's more to diversity than skin color
- Diversity of abilities
- Birdability is only about 2 months old (although working in volunteer capacity under Audubon prior to gaining non-profit status)
 - Because birding is for everybody and every body.
- Not all disabilities are visible
- Time spent in nature is good for us
 - Birds can be the gateway for that
- Birding has the potential of being inclusive and accessible
- No one can predict what an individual with an accessibility challenge can or cannot do- Virginia Rose (founder of Birdability)
- Looking to address the physical accessibility of birding locations; educate the birding community on ways to be welcoming and inclusive; intro birding to people who have disabilities who aren't birders (yet!)
- Inclusivity is intentional, it doesn't just happen
- What can your organization do?
 - **Add your birding locations to the birability map**; hosted by National Audubon; visit www.birdability.org
 - Submit site reviews of all locations you visit
 - **Use the Birdability resources** to make your site more accessible
- Access considerations
 - Parking
 - Trail information
 - Surface, width, slope and cross slope
 - Steps or other obstacles
 - Bathroom accessibility
 - Bird blinds (windows at different heights)
 - Pull outs (can get out of the way of those moving faster)

- Interpretive signs
- Maintenance (including vegetation, snow, leaves)
- Railings and barriers
- Birability would like to collaborate with organizations to see how best to help/training your staff
- Don't do 'one-offs'- that is not truly inclusive

WNVN Academy

- Next academy will be Feb 21-25, 2022 in Tucson, Arizona
- www.WVNTAcademy.com – website is live with updated info for the upcoming academy
- Open to any professional in nature tourism (not just state agency people)
- **CALL FOR PROPOSALS is live now!**
- Focal Areas: interpretation and engagement; human dimensions; diversity & inclusion; environmental ethics; marketing, advertising and tourism; performs other duties as assigned
- Key Dates: Proposal submission deadline – 5/28/21; notification of acceptance- 6/25/21; deadline for conference registration- 10/29/21; presenters submit electronic version of their presentation- 2/7/22

WNVN Viewer Survey

- Enhancing relevancy and engaging support from a broader constituency
- Partnership with VTech
- National trends in wildlife viewing is increasing significantly
- Goals- 1) use social science approaches to improve agency knowledge of wildlife viewers; 2) Recommend evidence-based communications and engagement strategies that agencies can use to increase their relevance to wildlife viewers and further engage them in supporting conservation;
- Why are states interested in a survey of wildlife viewers?
 - Viewers are difficult for agencies to reach
 - Better serve and communication with viewers and other underserved groups, and more
- What agency decisions
 - Justify allocation of staff or resources
 - Inform funding model or strategies
 - Improve viewer relationships, and more
- Expected survey topics: wildlife viewers-- recreation behaviors; expenditures; conservation behaviors; awareness, perceptions and trust; engagement and satisfaction; support of agencies; viewing support and communications; demographic characteristics
- Survey 1000 people in each AFWA region; some states opted for oversampling for a more targeted dataset for those states
 - Will have the survey properly represent the gender, age and education of the country

Upcoming webinars

- We've outgrown our current virtual platform → now using AFWA's zoom for webinar

- Each webinar has a unique link and passcode
- Schedule with link available in the files section in Pathables. Any questions →Contact Anne Glick at anne.glick@myfwc.com