

WILDLIFE VIEWING AND NATURE TOURISM WORKING GROUP

Chair: Shelly Plante

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

3:15pm-5:15pm Eastern

**** Attendees = 37**

Agenda

Call to Order/Review Agenda

Work Plan Review

- Not sure the charge is exactly what we want it to be anymore; may need to be tweaked
- Recommendation → create a small group to work on this and create a suggestion for the NA conference (Anne Glick, Rick Lavender, Jerrie Lindsey provided input via email post-meeting, Tammy Rundle volunteered to help as well)
 - Might need some wordsmithing
 - CURRENT CHARGE: To advance wildlife viewing and nature tourism programs within state and federal agencies and private sector organizations as strategies to build support for fish and wildlife conservation by connecting ethnically and geographically diverse people to the outdoors.

Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) discussion regarding potential for outdoor recreation

- House bill and Senate bill have been introduced on the Hill
- Not more than 15% over a 5-year period can be used for wildlife recreation and conservation education (together/total)
- Match is required as part of RAWA bill
 - Looking to see if volunteer hours can be used as match
- Looking to have shovel ready projects included on fact sheets for each state for AFWA reps to use on the Hill showing that states are ready to go if funding becomes available
- Not all states are focused on RAWA but on traditional sources of revenue (ex. South Dakota)
- Nebraska- we are very much looking forward to RAWA being passed
 - Fear is that we will get funding but not allowed to hire new staff → cannot do the work we need to do with the funding
- Working with partners can help overcome some of these hurdles (pass through grants to those who have staff or can more easily hire staff to do the important work allowed under RAWA, for example).
- Be thinking of ways you could have matching funds for your wildlife recreation programs and if you aren't already on your agency's RAWA team, introduce yourself to the colleagues working on this and join the conversation.
- Join the EOD-WDCF Working Group meeting to help guide this discussion more; grab a seat at the table

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy 2022 Update

- Set for Feb 21-25, 2020 in Tucson, AZ
- WVNTAcademy.com
- Currently planned to be all in person (not hybrid or virtual)
- Registration is OPEN! Only 150 people can attend so sign up now!
- Early Bird Registration until Oct 31- \$475

WVNT Webinars: bring your potential speaker ideas and topics for Fall/Winter webinars

- The webinars have been moved to a zoom platform (AFWA) and are now being hosted as a [playlist on the AFWA YouTube Channel](#) (find this year's spring/summer webinar series presentations as well as Corina Newsome's presentation from AFWA last year on our channel now).
- A bi-monthly webinar series; looking for new topics for the upcoming year – contact Shelly and Anne if you have suggested topics (shelly.plante@tpwd.texas.gov; Annette.glick@MyFWC.com)

Wildlife Viewer Research Multi-state Conservation Grant Update – *Ashley Dayer/Jessica Barnes/Emily Sinkular (Virginia Tech)*

- Grant awarded for this year's grant-cycle; able to start work last March
- Focused on wildlife viewing
- Wildlife viewers are growing in numbers and potential influence
 - Difficult for agencies to reach
- Information can help state agencies achieve their outreach goals
- Goal- use social science approaches to improve agency knowledge of wildlife viewers
- Created a survey that covers the broad topics; <15 minutes to complete; possible to ask in all regions and states
- Literature review is now complete and will be a written section of the final report when the project wraps up. Shared data and findings from the literature review.
- Wildlife viewers tend to view on public lands
- Barriers to wildlife viewing: this includes lack of connection, limited time & money; lack on knowledge; safety and comfort
- Research shows there is a lot of overlap between hunters, anglers and wildlife viewers
- 4 domains of pro-environmental behaviors
 - Conservation lifestyle behaviors
 - Social environmentalism
 - Environmental citizenship
 - Land stewardship
- Looking at viewers knowledge, familiarity and feelings towards state fish & wildlife agencies
- Viewers are looking for more access and information as to where they should go
- Looking how COVID-19 has impacted wildlife viewing
- Survey status: the survey is being implemented nationally in all 4 AFWA regions right now.
- Currently have over 3000 people who have taken the survey; hoping to reach 4000 soon
- Final results will be presented at the WVNT Academy in Feb 2022; and then presented in a WVNT webinar for all to view

State Agency Updates, *Working Group*

- No report outs from state agencies at this time

Other Items:

- Join the WVNT Working Group Facebook page (private group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/wildlifeviewing>) and/or Join our monthly phone calls and/or join the WVNT email list
 - Email shelly.plante@tpwd.texas.gov