

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION WORKING GROUP

Chair: Jen Newmark (NV)

Vice Chair: David Buggs (TX)

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

61 participants

Agenda/Notes

Call to order, introductions, and review of agenda – Jen Newmark (NV)

- Review of logistics and agenda
- Intro of presenters for today's meeting

DEIJ Efforts:

- AFWA DEI Planning- Elena Takaki and Kelly Reynolds
 - This is an internal AFWA Team working on internal DEI issues
 - In 2020 AFWA staff started to have these internal discussions with the AFWA Values Team → come up with a plan
 - Come up with DEI training for staff
 - Paid internship/fellowships opportunities
 - Update hiring processes
 - Other efforts- book club, AFWA plenary, committee discussions, Project WILD coordinator training, MAT offerings, NABCI DEI work, etc
 - In 2021 we executed this plan and evaluated the outcomes
 - Produced a summary of actions and used that to create a framework
 - Created Guiding Principles
 - Group purpose and actions in the Strategic Plan and the AFWA staff values
 - Focus on AFWA as an organization, not the broader community of conservation or our membership
 - Consider how we embrace being a learning organization as it relates to DEI
 - This work and these conversations are an opportunity to adapt and grow
 - Everyone should be involved
 - Wanted to create a roadmap concept to chart a long-term course that is flexible to changing needs and new information
 - In 2022 AFWA drafted a framework
 - A living document; happy to share
 - Look at progress over perfection

- **Colorado State University – Multi-State Conservation Grant – Dr. Manfredro**
 - A multistate grant about best practices for cultivating diverse fish and wildlife agency workforces
 - Characteristics that lead to effectiveness of public organizations:
 - Autonomy in implementing its mission
 - A mission that is attractive to the public
 - Strong mission-oriented culture
 - Support of external stakeholders
 - Had a workshop for agency leaders held at CSU; looked at the aspects of a thriving agency
 - Looked at the quality of life benefits from natural resources management
 - Health and wellness, culture and values, and lifestyle and economy
 - Focused on bringing diversity into the agency culture
 - What can we detect from existing data?
 - Employees compared to public (by ethnic group)
 - The agency employees are more utilitarian and pluralists compared to the public which is more mutualist and distanced
 - The agency culture puts a lot of normative pressure on minorities
 - Goal of MSCP- identify factors affecting recruitment and retention on diversity in state fish and wildlife agencies and use that in providing organizational change guidance.
 - Survey intention: to understand factors that currently and could potentially influence the recruitment and retention of individuals from diverse backgrounds
 - Workshop: participatory involvement in developing best practices based on study results
- **WAFWA Best Practices – Dr. Mason**
 - Looking at WAFWA member states and their DEI efforts
 - Will be doing some assessment work, particularly as it applies to culture responsive, etc
 - Make sure they are responsive and relevant to the population we serve
 - Looking at several domains; not looking to rate the agencies/organizations; assess to design an intervention for improvements
 - Making sure we created a safe environment to get candid responses
 - We want everyone to be heard
 - Looking at how we can slice this information; nationalities, generational, etc
 - Looking at do we know the language/culture, etc of the people we serve
 - Look at community engagement, business opportunities, and see where an organization is at that level
 - Need to broker things that are important to them
 - Important to have more than one person as a representative of a minority group; good to include a diversity of experience as well as the other more traditional diversity measures

- Important not to give a pass to people who don't fit in a diverse group (ie. A man doesn't get a pass in working with women, etc)
 - We will be doing an assessment, but not giving a label- developing an intervention
 - It's a developmental process. Where you are today is okay, be better tomorrow
 - The work of WAFWA should complement the work that AFWA is doing
- **Coffee Talks – Taniya Bethke**
 - This idea of DEI Coffee Talks was proposed a year ago at the North American Conference
 - One of the goals was taking the pulse on where we were and how things are changing, they change so quickly
 - Learning to be comfortable being uncomfortable in this space
 - June 15, 2021 was our first Coffee Talk
 - We've had 4 coffee talks so far over a diversity of topics; next one will be April 7, 2022 about the risks of doing DEI wrong
 - The Coffee Talks have exceeded our expectations; we've walked away from every presentation having learned so much more than we ever expected.
 - Listening and Learning is the intentional direction of the Coffee Talks; looking at practices that will always be relevant (not a box to check)
 - DEI isn't a one-size fits all
 - Ultimate goal is for all agencies to have a strategic plan in regards to DEI; address how to get to that point

Allyship DEI Training – Adam Phelps

- Relevancy DEI Discussion Group link: <https://conservation-relevancy-community.mn.co/groups/3028844/feed>
 - Used this space as a meeting place and to share documents/ideas
- Allyship At Work created by Lean IN (leanin.org) - a moderator workshop presentation that other people can use for free once trained (for free).
 - There is a gap between intent and action
 - Each PowerPoint slide had a script to help with your presentation
 - There is a workbook/journal as part of this workshop. They're free online and private resources
 - A lot of work is done in breakout sessions; the entire program is designed to do virtually (not in person); though you could probably do it in person
 - Outline of training:
 - Define Allyship
 - Unpack your privileges
 - Uncover workplace inequities
 - Discover your power
 - Learn allyship actions
 - Review the Framework

- Introduce the follow-up sessions
- Would be good to continually evaluate how we are working as allies, and make adjustments as needed; important for leadership roles

DEI Working Group as a Connecting Hub – Group Discussion

how do we collectively work together to elevate DEI and build agency-specific DEI Strategic Plans?

- David Buggs- we want to make this a place to learn and start doing the work in your agency; want to see what folks are doing and where help is needed – are there practices that your agency is doing that is working?
 - Amanda Solla- ODFW has a small R3 work group and doing surveys to see what groups are underserved and see how we can best serve them
 - Lindsay Rogers (NE)- started DEI trainings for about 70 of our staff members; one all day training then monthly follow-up; using a local organization to do the trainings- they would understand NE issues better than a national organization; goal to have a better understanding of what we're doing and why
 - Taniya Bethke (CAHSS)- there are populations underrepresented in the MSCG process, especially with R3 works- looking at addressing this; making space at the R3 symposium to bridge the gaps in the underrepresented
 - Morgan Johnson (DJ Case)- looking at how we can diversity staff; starting training sessions soon
 - Linda Weir (USGS)- having monthly discussion on DEI; similar to the coffee talk series; about to stand up a goals team
 - Wisconsin DNR Division of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks has also recently adopted mandatory DEI training, updated our public participation handbook and created a limited English proficiency plan, transitioning restrooms to gender neutral, and more!
 - ODFW also has a Diversity and Inclusion Committee that is overseen by one of Deputy Directors and is comprised of staff from all aspects of the agency. Those staff members sit on the committee for a multi-year term. The purpose of the committee is to look at DEI efforts more globally for the agency and to help to steward the work needed to support DEI
 - David Buggs (TX)- you do need someone in your agency leading the DEI charge, otherwise it will never happen
 - Q: Is this discussion happening at the Director's level in AFWA?
 - A: yes
 - Jen Newmark: Underlying everything is intentionality.
 - Elsa Haubold (USFWS)- the new USFWS Director will be having executive orders regarding DEI as well as working more with tribes
 - Q: what work can we engage with at each level (when not in a senior level)?
 - A: everyone casts a shadow of leadership, and you need to work within your shadow; how this will add value to your agency; influence people you have a relationship; do the best work where you are. Everyone has a certain level of power and influence, use what you have where you are.

Annual Work Plan Review – Jennifer Newmark (NV)

- We added into to the D&I WG charge based on input at the AFWA Annual Meeting - experiences as an important component to DEI. New charge states: *To encourage each generation of fish and wildlife conservation leaders to value differences in cultures, persons, experiences, and perspectives, and show it through proactive actions that enhance diversity in the workplace, create welcoming cultures, and increase our relevance to the broader conservation community by being inclusive and intentional in our actions.*
- We added our list of activities and objectives for the upcoming year: Coffee Talks and working on building guiding principles for states to use.