

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Working Group
September 19, 2022
AFWA Annual Meeting

Notes:

Welcome and Introductions

Review Workgroup Charge

“To advance wildlife viewing and nature tourism across North America by helping develop, support, and promote programs that welcome and engage new and diverse audiences, build on traditional constituencies, and increase support for wildlife conservation.”

- When we have results of research, come up with a document/toolkit that will help states
- Did apply and was approved, Phase II of MSCG. Just under \$200k and Virginia Tech is the lead. Working with 20+ states on developing case study projects. Develop a website/landing page for all these resources. People wanted to know more about the urban/suburban/rural needs for wildlife viewers.

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy

- Excellent tours about the ecosystems in the Southwest.
- 3 days of sessions.
- Full day plenary on Wildlife Viewer Survey
- Concurrent sessions on broad range of WVNT topics
- D&I plenary led by 4 Diversity and Inclusion Directors and panel session from WVNT colleagues
- Next gathering in 2024 will be in the Outer Banks – RFP will be launched at the North American
- Reviews have always been very good

Webinar Series

- Upcoming:
 - Using Smartphone GPS Locations to Track Increased Visitation and Minimize Impact on Wildlife
 - Florida Wildquest: A statewide app-based scavenger hunt
 - Sheltered English: Tips and Tricks
- All webinars are recorded and posted on AFWA’s YouTube Channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGgiMnErkUG6WSgwnXx21-F0F7dChN9hu>
- If you have ideas, please contact Shelly Plante

National and Regional Results of the Wildlife Viewer Survey

- Got more than 1000 respondents from each of AFWA’s regions.
- View webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4a4zDfLUshE>
- Viewers are growing in numbers, but we don’t have databases. Want to connect viewers to mechanisms that might connect them financially. Did a lit review:
https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/105661/11.21_Wildlife%20Viewing%20Literature%20Review%20.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y

- Popular activities: feeding wild birds, visiting parks and natural areas, photography, closely observing, taking trips or outings feeding other wildlife, maintain plantings/habitats
- 90% people in the survey consider themselves beginner, novice, or intermediate.
- People like to view birds and mammals
- 29% people surveyed fish and view wildlife. 3% hunt and view wildlife. 14% fish, hunt, and view wildlife. 54% only view wildlife.
- 5 recommendations:
 - Develop programs for and engage wildlife viewers
 - Broaden the constituency to wildlife viewers
 - Develop opportunities for viewers to financially support the agency and make sure it goes back to wildlife viewing
 - Support agencies in implementing the results
 - Conduct future research
- What do people want?
 - More info on wildlife
 - More info about where to see wildlife
 - Access to more places with wildlife
- 49% of people surveyed wanted printed materials
- What do they want to do to support agencies?
 - Trash clean up (54%) – how to engage people in this activity with a broader conservation message. NE does trash pick up in kayaks, which was wildly popular.
 - Purchase environmentally friendly products
 - Civic engagement (34%)
 - How do we track behaviors → information to action
- Next steps
 - Look at oversamples
 - Create a community of practice and share expertise with other states (full day workshops)
 - Develop a website with resources and examples
 - Big discussion on freshwater snorkeling increasing in popularity
- Pathways conference May 31-June 3, 2023 RFPs are open
- RAWA – passed house this summer. Will go to Senate floor any day?

Meeting adjourned