



ASSOCIATION of
FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION WORKING GROUP

Chair: Jen Newmark (NV)

Vice Chair: David Buggs (TX)

Tuesday, March 21, 2023

10:00am – 12:00pm

88th North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference

Agenda

- Call to order, introductions, and review of agenda – David Buggs (TX)
- Revisit the DEI Working Group Charge (Suggested language and actions) - David Buggs (TX), Patty Allen (AFWA)
 - We will be getting a steering committee together to revisit the charge and have a proposed updated charge at the AFWA Annual Meeting.
 - Looking for more people to volunteer to help update the charge
 - There was interest and they will give P.Allen their name and email and will work to have this charge updated by the AFWA Annual Meeting for approval.
- Coffee Talks: Proposal for Every other Month Conversations - Taniya Bethke (CAHSS)
 - Started about 2 years ago
 - Engaging in conversation about D&I to learn from each other. Look at some meaning practices; a safe space for discussions
 - Evolution in coffee talks will be towards DEI in Practice; spotlighting efforts happening on the ground
 - Don't want the conversations to get stale and not move the needle
 - Started the first ones this month
 - ASK: if you are seeing DEI in practice or see an example that you would like to amplify, then please let us know
 - If need to get on the Coffee Talk email list, please email pallen@fishwildlife.org or look on the AFWA website under the Schedule of Events
 - Look at what we need to do!
- Working Groups Think Sheets (Follow up, promotion and engagement)
 - Goal: to see how DEI is being incorporated into the AFW committee system; and start conversations with how they can be included if they currently are not and the value of including.

- We are hoping that every committee have this conversation
 - Most of our work is actually dealing with people in order to get the work of the committee done
 - Was originally done at the AFWA Annual meeting last September
 - Didn't provide a way to report out
 - Asking this time for official feedback so we can move the needle
 - The committees has the discussion and wanted education, but not much discussion for implement DEI internally and in the committee meetings themselves; how can we make this happen?
 - There is interest in incorporating this on both the Regional and the R3 area/level
 - Are we able to create a list of recommendations as to how committees can increase DEI in the committees; how can committees move forward after discussion
 - Need to acknowledge and provide a safe space for the diversity in the room [action]
 - Pick one thing to start working on and provide a timeline
- Inclusive Language to respond to Bias and Incivility – Elsa Haubold (USFWS)
 - PDF will be distributed via email [action]
 - This will be distributed at NCTC later this year
 - Institutional change community of practice—wanting to identify change in the USFWS; community focused approach to conservation
 - The power of language: a lot of individuals have experienced offensive language, biased, disrespectful and non-inclusive.
 - What do we do about this language; often not meant to be harmful
 - Goal of Guide: tool to transform USFWS into a more welcoming and inclusive workplace; help employees speak up for themselves; provide general times on inclusive language and effective bystander intervention
 - This will be a living document.
 - Section 1: learn about inclusive language; Section 2 Use your Voice and language to speak up; Background Resources
 - Highlights: gendered language; name pronunciations, inclusive and appropriate terms for groups of people; cultural/disability appropriation; 'person first' language; ableism; bystander intervention; resources
 - USGS had bystander facilitator training available to people- reach out to Jenifer Malpass with USGS
 - Comments: proper name pronunciation is incredibly important and really needs to be included in more DEI training and outreach efforts
 - Need to normalize being comfortable in being uncomfortable
- Making it work; Creating diverse student pipelines – Matt Kennedy (TX)
 - Valuing Diversity- organization wide D&I strategic plan; recruitment strategic plan with a focus on diverse talent

- Plan needs to hone in on very specific DEI efforts (community job boards are important);
 - Recruitment Focuses: recruiting platforms; recruiting events; recruitment reps; recruiting relationships (with different entities throughout the state); internships & fellowships
 - to more an agency can look like the people of the state- the more relevant that agency becomes
 - Internships: minorities in Agriculture and natural resource related curriculum; Al Henry Program; Hutton junior fisheries biology program scholars; Gulf of Mexico Alliance; Coastal Conversation Association; Skillbridge Program; Natural Diversity Fellowship
 - Important to create a diverse student poplins organizational assessment- where are you putting your recruitment focuses, value diversity, fellowships/internships?
 - Discussion: how can we create an infrastructure that can provide a safe environment for those interns/fellowship recipients who go out in the field in an area that may not be ready for them?
 - Do an orientation as to what to expect; monitor the situation and respond to any situation that isn't safe/comfortable [show support]; give tools as to how to address it and learn how to handle some possible uncomfortable situation [provide tools]
 - Try to meet the intern with where they are so they aren't too far away from home
- DEI Stakeholders Summit – Taniya Bethke (CAHSS)
 - Aka DEI Academy; part of a MSCG
 - Create a learning environment for professionals in this our field
 - Nov 27-30 at NCTC
 - 50 professionals (one from each state); person with authority to make change
 - Equipped with a playbook for systems thinking change management approach.
 - Equip people with sustainable change (not immediate change)
- Update: IHEA with DEI Instructor Training – Taniya Bethke (CAHSS)
 - Worked with the D&I WG to launch this training
 - Looking to provide hunter edu instructors with DEI training and create an inclusive environment in the classroom
 - LearnHunting.org ; launched in Dec 2022; is an R3 MSCG funded initiative focused on engaging professionals, volunteers, and new hunters through education an mentor connections
 - Worked with a consultant (Culturally Intelligent Training & Consulting) to help create content and provide guidance
 - Help identify bias in ourself and how to handle people who are acting bias during class
- Staying above the Fray: As a facilitator, how not to shame and blame when someone is in a different place on the DEI adoption spectrum than you. – David Buggs (TX)

- Naming, shaming and blaming is not sustainable
 - If learn to tie what's important to you (with DEI) to what's important to them (those in leadership) and their business (state agency) → then you can make change happen; without that connection change doesn't happen
 - Have to get ideas away from the emotion; act from your wisdom and not from your wounds
 - It's a journey and a destination
 - If focus is around compliance, then change will not take place
 - Can't go forward if you're always looking in the 'rear view mirror'
 - Plan for resistance- don't expect other to lean into the discomfort if you aren't willing to do the same.
 - Need to learn how to respond (wisdom) and not react (emotion)
 - Need to look at the entire system; make change for growth without killing what is already there
 - The GRID model (Grow, Retain, Include, Develop); levels: 1) inform, 2) educate, 3) perform, 4) model, 5) lead
 - Measure what matters (not everything needs to be measured)
 - Special Delivery- how you deliver a message makes a big difference
 - Garbage can lid vs fine china; how you like me know *ask for feedback constantly); give it away (give others credit even if their role was small); not an that hill (again, pick your battles carefully, but make sure you have allies, top, middle and front line).
- Respond vs. react
 - Silver platter vs. a garbage can lid
 - Needs and deeds (When It comes to D & I, what is going well for your agency or your region and what do you need help with) – David Buggs (TX)
 - Adjourn