



Project WILD Subcommittee Agenda
Chair: Rusty Garrison (GA)

Wednesday September 13

2017 Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies 107th Annual Meeting
Sandy, UT

Project WILD Subcommittee Minutes

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Subcommittee Chair: Rusty Garrison (GA)

Attendees:

Elena Takaki, Project WILD Director, AFWA

Kelly Reynolds, Project WILD Program Manager, AFWA

Matt Burns, Arkansas Game and Fish

Lindsay Rogers, Nebraska Game and Parks

Mary Boyer, Executive Assistant to Virgil Moore at Idaho Game and Fish

John Lord, Director of Operations, AFWA

Maria Gladziszewski, Deputy Director, Alaska Game and Fish

Greg Gulliver, Fresh Air Educators

Jenifer Wisniewski, Georgia DNR

Glenn Normandeau, New Hampshire Game and Fish Director, Chair of the AFWA Executive Committee

Johnnie Smith, Director of Outreach and Education at Texas Parks and Wildlife

NOTES:

Elena called the meeting to order and introduced herself and shared a little about her background. We went around the table to introduce ourselves.

John Lord talked a bit about the transition of Project WILD to AFWA.

Maria said in Alaska that they do use Project WILD, but they have their own curriculum.

Greg said they have an interest in supporting us with online education. They offer education certification courses. Hopefully they have some synergy with Project WILD.

Glenn Normandeau was involved in making the decision for AFWA to take on Project WILD, so he thought he would come to see how things are going.

Elena shared slides regarding the background of Project WILD, connection to Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations, transition of Project WILD to AFWA, Project WILD annual coordinator meeting (Lindsay spoke about the value of the coordinator's meeting: networking, getting work done as a group, etc.), synergy of working with state agencies as Project WILD is now part of AFWA, different curricula we offer under the Project WILD umbrella, coordinator liaison (Kiki Corry), and monthly-ish webinars (communication, professional development).

Kelly – showed map of where Project WILD is in each of the states (i.e., where state wildlife agencies sponsor Project WILD and where other type of organizations sponsor WILD).

Elena spoke about changing the model to meet the professional development needs of educators, being financially sustainable, and conducting strategic planning.

Marc jumped in to talk about the guide revision, which began in 2014 with identifying activities to keep, update, or delete. Then began with work of editing the activities. Now content includes STEM connections, WILD Work, outdoor learning, and more. Showed template of new activity (“Keeping Cool”), highlighted WILD Work.

Lindsay said that if we can send her a list of occupations that we need videos for, she can talk with her folks about providing us with some of those. Jenifer in GA echoed that.

Marc continued and mentioned Chris Bunch's expert review, as well as hiring Nancy Herron as a contractor to help finalize activity content. Marc covered state contributions to the guide expansion project (about a third from Nebraska!), as well as other contributions (Cabela's Outdoor Fund, USFWS, NWF).

John Lord pointed out that when AFWA inherited PW, the revenue was largely from guide sales, so we will be focusing on fundraising.

Marc mentioned the timeline: print date in January 2018. He also noted that our expanded field investigations are modeled after the AFWA Field Investigation module.

Elena showed guide sale slides with Project WILD, Growing Up WILD, and Aquatic WILD.

Glenn asked if part of the reason for the decline might be that educators are handing the guides down after they use it. Lindsay pointed out that a large reason for the decline is that educators do not have as much control over which curriculum materials they incorporate into their lessons, so there is less of a demand for workshops. There is also a demand for digital. Lindsay pointed out the issue of how we keep coordinators in the loop if it becomes digital. Coordinators/their agencies want to get recognition for the resources they provide, and they also want a connection with the educators so the educators know the agency is there to provide support. A lot of coordinators were excited at our last annual meeting about a potential hybrid workshop model.

Glenn pointed out that the situation sounds remarkably like hunter ed.

Elena shared guiding principles (conservation literate populace, sound business principles, state-centricity, sustainability).

Elena noted that we met with Fresh Air in Ottawa – looking for possible connections with Project WILD and Fresh Air’s online services.

John said we have been approached by a number of organizations that want to license our materials. We are going to be spending a lot of time trying to get that right. Fresh Air and National Wildlife Federation are two examples of people who want to get it right. NWF gave money for sponsorship and we’ll figure out the licensing next time around. Focus on partnerships and modernization.

Elena pointed out that the former Project WILD Business Administrator leaving threw a bit of a wrench in the business operations, so we have been getting that sorted out. John Lord said we have sorted it out now but it did take some scrambling.

Glenn mentioned Audubon might be a good partner.

Maria pointed out the issues that books are less in demand, and it’s hard for people to travel to an in-person workshop. A hybrid option could help provide more information/options.

Glenn said the state coordinator contact could all be listed (on an online training) so people know where to go for additional resources.

Maria also pointed out that a state’s specific curriculum could be part of the hybrid professional development (PD) model.

Glenn: you have to go where your customers want to go and not where you want to stay.

Elena mentioned Bruce Culpepper’s comment during the plenary on the 20- 30-year horizon and planning for the long term. That is what we try to do. Elena pointed out the value of in-person – how do we hold on to that and also bring in the digital pieces that today’s society demands. Maria pointed out that you would get more people if it was online (i.e., the people who can’t make it in person).

Glenn: yes, nothing can take the place of meeting together and having a pop afterwards. But how do we adapt?

Elena asked to hear from people who we have not heard from. Matt pointed out it could be useful to evaluate/survey educators to learn more about what they need/want. Lots of video content could help (so it’s not just reading text on a screen). Also the PD hours have decreased in Arkansas, so there’s more competition.

Johnnie said their numbers have decreased. They used to offer workshops for free; when they started charging, numbers went down. They are also concerned about the increased price of the guide and having to raise workshop fees again. The more options we give people, the better.

Marc: Benefits of a hybrid model – lots of potential there

Kelly: Excited about the challenges and opportunities – Project WILD is well-positioned to help agencies remain relevant and to create a population that understands who wildlife agencies are and what they do

John: Excited that we are here at and this stage together.

Elena: We’ll send out the minutes and keep you updated!