

EDUCATION WORKING GROUP MEETING NOTES

Chair: Kelly Tharp (AZ); Vice-Chair: Tabbi Kinion (AR)
Wednesday, March 10, 2021, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM Central Time
86th North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference Virtual Meeting

Agenda

- Welcome/Introductions- Kellie Tharp (AZ) & Tabbi Kinion (AR) 10 min
- Updates from the MSCG CE Strategy Updates Work Group - 10 min
- Updates on online Education- Kalkomey 15 min
- Lessons learned from the first virtual Conservation Education Conference - Conf Planning Team (Tanya, Tabbi, Marc, Kelly, Elena, Kellie) 10 min
- Break- 10 min
- Education in a Pandemic: Group discussion- What has worked well in your state? - 50 min
Tabbi Kinion (AR)
- Lightning round- Come prepared to share innovative ideas, success stories and other exciting ways that your state or organization is delivering education programs- 10 min
- Wrap-up/closing- 5 mi

Updates from the MSCG CE Strategy Updates Work Group

Current grant is to work on Conservation Education Toolkit: <https://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-informs/ce-strategy> . This resource was developed over the last 15 years. Now, with the Multi State Conservation Grant (MSCG) funding, it is time to revise to ensure it is kept relevant and useful. Work will soon begin with DJ Case. Updates will include better alignment with Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and assembling multiple resources in the toolkit into one resource for easier use and sharing. Several committee members have helped with identifying resources that need updating.

Updates on online Education- Kalkomey (Rebecca Medeiros, Rmedeiros@kalkomey.com)

Changes in last year involve transition to virtual education. COVID impacts: Increase in participation across all classes—boater ed, hunter ed, etc. Many parents using hunter and boater ed for supplementing children’s learning while at home. Increase for other motives too (locavores for example). Follow up efforts are important for online courses. Reviews from students have been very positive.

Virtual Field Day became a platform for addressing key concepts through 22 video-based scenarios. This is integrated into the online hunter ed course, or as a stand-alone course to supplement other programming.

Interactive boater education course: ‘level 4” and “level 5” interactivity. Students can’t move forward until they prove their knowledge, comprehension and understand or materials. Must pass assessment before moving on. Design of course puts students in control (example, student gets to choose avatar, where they will hunt, method of take, and other pieces to their own hunter profile—real time feedback with use of a meter shows level of achievement). Mini-game interactive features throughout.

What’s next: 57% of students expressed need for continued education options. Those options will be provided.

Kalkomey offers software licensing to agencies.

Lessons learned from the first virtual Conservation Education Conference

Thus far, much helpful feedback on survey (currently 85 respondents out of 315 registered). Participation was much higher than anticipated.

Impressions from planning team: The conference allowed for much peer-to-peer teaching. Conference helped build a community of practice among Conservation Education professionals. Conference was a grassroots effort, on a low budget, with favorable results. The conference was a good way to learn about many creative approaches to how Conservation Educators are rising to the challenge of virtual education.

Going forward, we want to be careful not to plan future CE conferences simultaneous or in close proximity to other events/ conferences associated with EOD Committee (such as Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy held every other year).

Considerations for future: Multi state grant funding is a possibility, topics may or may not focus on virtual learning, conference is a big undertaking!

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy: 2022 Academy will be in Tuscon, AZ. Dates: Feb. 21-25, 2022. This will be 4th academy. www.wvntacademy.com

Round Table “Lightning Round” and Discussion on “Education in a Pandemic” Group discussion

What has worked well in your state? What can we share about our successes?

**Participants are encouraged to add links and a short description of their resources into this shared document: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GaSLm9wcaFz4T5aYQ6cXGVefpPvf6hdWJABImeee1w/edit?usp=sharing> **

Natalie Elkins, Michigan, elkinsn@michigan.gov : When pandemic hit, launched a teacher survey (like Eric Proctor’s in AZ). We asked what can agency provide, what format, etc. 150 responses). Agency created a website, *Nature at Home* website https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79135_101864---,00.html with many linked resources, apps, ideas, AFWA toolkit items. Also launched *Nature at School* website https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79135_101864---,00.html . Agency educators each created content using similar content template—meeting criteria for agency messaging and NGSS. Rebranded Facebook page, “Our Nature.” Revamped Nature Center Summit to go online with 8 different sessions. 350 participants (previously only 100 participants). The virtual platform allowed for much greater participation.

Lindsay Rogers, Nebraska, Lindsay.rogers@nebraska.gov : As a result of pandemic, education team homed in and organized group effort. (see <http://outdoornebraska.gov/wildlifeeducation/>). Pivoted Nebraska Bird Month to online—created content for online, developed a state Bird Blitz in which participants first register online, they receive publication in mail (kids booklet, Bird Journal, and other resources). Used iNaturalist for data collection/ submission. 750 people registered. Pollinator Month historically follows Bird Month in Nebraska. Implementing Project WILD programming. Book readings online. Also provided webinar series, including “The Science Of . . .” (ex. the science of animal tongues), Nature Tales (for early childhood), Careers in Conservation (monthly webinar series), special topic webinars, increase use of social media. Rebranded to “Nebraska Wildlife Education.” Biggest undertaking for Lindsay is Diversity & Inclusion efforts—used online survey, <http://www.outdoornebraska.org/communitysurvey>, launched March 1st, to start gathering info about barriers, desired topics, venues, locations for services, demographic questions. Survey is in four languages.

Alex Baer, International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) <https://www.ihea-usa.org/> : Pandemic timed with enough availability of Internet access to create historic opportunity to advance online efforts in education and collaboration. What now are the pieces and the path that helps learners move from one stage to another. IHEA will look at education milestones to reach hunters at various stages, and to help hunters move between stages. IHEA offers the online (YouTube) video series “Hunters Connect”

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDCcFMYiqO4LOruabbqVQJg?view_as=subscriber. Every Monday a new video is published, with themes for each months. IHEA is trying to find ways to help hunters stay involved and engaged. One strategy is through an upcoming online conference. IHEA also recently updated website and logo. New online course development is being planned aimed at firearm purchasers to promote safety and then helping bring those contacts to the states to help them get involved in more activities. Hoping for a launch of course in the fall.

Jen Dennison, Ohio : First reaction to pandemic: agency created “Chat with a Biologist” program. Over 50 chats from March to May 2020. Pre-K and up. Later, due to security breach, agency relied heavily on social media, including videos. Hyperdocs created during the summer for sharing resources with educators. Training was the biggest request, so agency started online workshops for Project WILD. Training is with TEAMS. Piloted with preschool educators. Between Sept. 2020 and April 2021 about 250 educators will have been trained. The reach has expanded with numbers and geographically. Online options will be offered from this point on. Looking at hybrid models. Online training has allowed more time spent with the Project WILD books among participants, and more thought/reflection in responses from participants.

Kim Winter, US Forest Service <https://www.fs.fed.us/naturewatch/> : Worked with coalition of partners for BatWeek this past year, an effort that reached audiences well outside the US (such as Nigeria & Mexico). With data stored in Nature Watch Site’s database, determined reach was higher than anticipated before pandemic. 14 million people. Social media resources and use increased significantly. Webinars from USFS’s “Engaged Community of Practice.” Overall, participation was much higher with virtual learning modes. More efforts now underway for diversity and inclusion, including translations.

Josh Gold, Archery Trade Association: Launched first series of a masters class (including pre-recorded and live content), spread out over five days, Trade Show online allowed for participants to be exposed to greater variety of content and resources from Archery Trade Association.

Luke Coccoli, Boone and Crockett Club: Connecting people with content on Grizzly Bears for online content has been one strategy. One of first videos of Grizzly Bear got over 13,000 views. Recently updated website. Trail Camera Virtual Curriculum is a new resource. A “Bundle Promo” allows for bulk purchase on website for curriculum. Use of Agents of Discovery program, in which participants use devices (computers, phones) to complete wildlife oriented missions. This significantly boosted visitation to Boone & Crockett’s ranch site. Use of HD Webcam to reach much larger audience.

Meeting Adjourned