



ASSOCIATION of  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
AGENCIES

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WILDLIFE VIEWING AND NATURE TOURISM WORKING  
GROUP

Chair: Shelly Plante

Tuesday, March 5,  
2019 2:00pm –  
3:30pm

84<sup>th</sup> North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference  
Sheraton Denver Downtown  
Denver, Colorado

Agenda

**2:00pm** Call to order, introductions, and review of agenda, *Shelly Plante (TX)*  
Monthly calls – WVNT Working Group has calls; if your state/org is not on these calls but would like to be, please contact Shelly to be added. We discuss upcoming webinars, questions in the nature tourism industry that we want to discuss further with colleagues, national initiatives, state success stories, etc.  
Webinars – Host these semi-monthly throughout the year on key topics of interest to WVNT professionals

**2:15pm** 3<sup>rd</sup> Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy announcements, (February 2020, Fort Walton Beach, FL)  
First Academy was three years ago at NCTC. Last year was in Texas. Call for presentations is out at <https://www.wvntacademy.com/cfp.html>. Call for presentations deadline: April 26, 2019. Looking for interesting topics, case studies, success stories, research, process strategy, etc. on the following topics:

- **Human Dimensions and Diversity:** For example: age, ethnicity, mentally and physically challenged groups, public interest/expectations, agency relevancy or regional variations in attitudes and interests
- **Outreach and Communications:** For example: wildlife cams, expanding/engaging audiences, marketing, communication techniques, outreach methods i.e. social media, general uses of technologies or connecting wildlife viewers to citizen science
- **Best Practices and Ethics:** For example: research, coordination, networks of partnerships and support, environmental/conservation education, wildlife viewer roles, WVNT impacts/challenges in conservation or quality of life
- **Birding and Wildlife Trails:** For example: development and maintenance of trails, innovations in trail design, marketing and promotion or funding

- **Finances and Cost Effectiveness:** For example: funding opportunities and campaigns, budgeting practices or programmatic and on-the-ground project costs
- **Operations:** For example: facilities, blinds or ADA /inclusive opportunities

**2:30pm** WVNT and State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP)/Wildlife Diversity collaboration update and discussion, *Jennifer Newmark (NV) and Elena Takaki (AFWA)*

Jen Newmark – WVNT Working Group and Wildlife Diversity and Conservation Funding Committee hosted a workshop last September before the AFWA Annual Meeting. Talked about how wildlife diversity managers and wildlife tourism/nature viewing can work together to better achieve common goals. There are a lot of people out there that could help us reach our conservation goals through data, etc. At Wildlife Diversity Program Manager Annual Meeting (this past February), good conversation on citizen science and implementing SWAPs. Idaho gave a great presentation on using citizen science that was scientifically rigorous and used volunteers.

There are BMPs for creating citsci data. How can we be better about communicating information to users of our natural resources? There are many different types of citsci programs that have different levels of involvement.

Shelly Plant – Two examples: 1) Great Texas Birding Classic. 800 people bird during spring migration – fundraiser. Judging checklists became more complicated, so she looked into using eBird. Families and school kids are participating. So they had to learn eBird to contribute to the database. Hope is that they continue to use eBird post-event. 2) Pollinator Bio-Blitz. Two weeks of data collection. Instagram, FB, emails with daily challenges or iNaturalist. Didn't put any parameters so they had humans, cats, dogs, reported in their iNat project the first two years. Now, only pollinator species and plants are reported because we worked with Wildlife Diversity staff to develop last year's iNat project, and they helped us limit the taxa in the project. Now they have better quality data. Conclusion: There is an opportunity to involve existing programs. How can SWAP help engage more people?

Q: How does funding piece of Birding Classic Work? A: come to website to fill out a registration form and there is a fee associated with it. Whatever funding they bring in, they give out in grants. Winning teams get to select recipients of grants.

Jen: How can wildlife diversity folks work with wildlife tourism? Ex: Bat conservation – bridge in downtown Reno that has Mexican Bats. Wildlife viewing has a unique opportunity of connecting people that normally wouldn't engage with state agency. Consider joining us for Joint Diversity Working Group meeting on Wednesday at this meeting to help make some suggestions.

Sue – Environment for the Americas. World Migratory Bird Day. Getting people out to do plastic cleanups. Data goes into Ocean Conservancy Database. Goal is get people to think about how plastics impact birds. Run internship programs for youth of color. Diversity Joint Venture – job board and videos.

Jen Wisniewski – increased the number of polls through emails and social media. Hoping to replace costly in-person interviews.

Trying to reach out to traditional hunter license buyers. Potential grizzly bear hunts down the

road. There is the conundrum of encouraging people to view wildlife that can be hunted (ex: Yellowstone wolf that was popular with wildlife viewers, but was legally hunted in Montana).

Shelly – important to get out in front of that story since this is a real problem to get people to understand resource management when they care about the resource on an emotional level. Example: Bat Climbers for Conservation. Jen Newmark: better to work with them and bring them in the decision-making process.

**2:50pm** Innovative uses of eBird data for birding programs, *Sara Schweitzer (NC)*  
Sara Schweitzer (North Carolina) – North Carolina Birding Trail. How to get more information from the birders. Incentivize conservation. Sustainable bird watching, economic opportunities, and educate the people using the trail → conservation. Good to work with private land owners. Can use data to figure out where the birds are but can also figure out where the birders are. Map where the birders are recording and submitting their checklists. Can see which months people are submitting data most frequently. Can see if they are submitting data from state managed lands. Can also see what time of day birders are on your public lands. High quality habitat → more visitation to the area. This data was shared in a WVNT webinar last fall and we'll be following up with a 2.0 version of using eBird data this summer via webinar.

**3:00pm** Nature of Americans Study Update (<https://natureofamericans.org>), *Dave Case, DJ Case & Associates*

Dave Case – how have states been using the results of the study? There is a national report and a few reports for states. Worked with Disney to help distribute the report. Used by NAWMP, Relevancy Roadmap, Richard Louv, NWRS Branding Campaign, State Agency Strategic Planning (IN, OK, MO), FL Fish & Wildlife, TX Parks and Wildlife – developing new programming or tweaking existing programming based on results of this study.

**3:15pm** National Conservation Outreach Plan update, *Jenifer Wisniewski (TN)*  
Part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> recommendation from the Blue Ribbon Panel. How to make state agencies more relevant to people that don't hunt and fish, but still emphasize importance of hunters/anglers. "Making It Last" – Available here: [https://www.fishwildlife.org/application/files/4215/5240/8086/Making\\_It\\_Last\\_To\\_olkit\\_lowres.pdf](https://www.fishwildlife.org/application/files/4215/5240/8086/Making_It_Last_To_olkit_lowres.pdf). Includes easy to follow guidelines on making ads, using the tagline, how to purchase the font for this branded look, and how to advertise or use the Making It Last messaging with zero budget or thousands of dollars. It should work for any agency.

**Adjourn**