

Diversity & Inclusion Working Group

March 7, 2019

Chair: Jen Newmark

Vice Chair: David Buggs

Attendees: 25

Agenda:

Call to order and introductions- Jen

Review of agenda/Additions to agenda?

- Can we add how to have bilingual versions of materials in the state
 - Texas has some resources to help those states first starting

Diversity Joint Venture (DJV) update

- Conservation career paths → Looking at some areas to increase diversity of people in the pipeline in natural resource fields
- Planning on having a summit on this subject; looking at locations and dates- every comprehensive
- Trying to get people and groups to partner in the joint ventures → no cost, just participation
- Putting together best practices for organizations and state agencies to use to increase diversity and inclusion in their work force.
- Website: www.diversityconservationjobs.org
 - Employer resources
 - Potential employee resources
 - List of events, jobs, etc
 - We can post jobs and internships on the website for partners
 - Several videos, tips and best practice information available for free
 - Check out the website!
- Currently have 35 partners. They are looking at more applications for potential acceptance very soon; they review applications to make sure their values/mission, etc lines up with the Diversity Joint Venture
 - State agencies are encouraged to join the DJV

Resiliency through Diversity: Conservation Conversations- Brian Wakeling

- Regular communications about things in our profession that aren't typical topics may not be comfortable to talk about
- Not all my ideas- shared thoughts and may not be shared by all involved
- First conservation → Diversity
- What is Diversity?
 - We recognize its value in nature

- Diverse ecosystems are often stable, resilient
- Is diversity important in the work place?? → relevant thinking!
- Education- barriers
 - Educators job is to teach people 'how' to think, not 'what' to think
 - Critical thinkers needed
 - Do we reach students early enough?
 - Cost to education can be a barrier
- Salaries
 - Job openings – hard to support yourself when starting out in a profession
- Finding it hard to expand the tent
 - Agencies putting most resources toward R3 and other initiatives
 - Diversity & Inclusion on the back burner
- Needing to understand mutualists, traditionalists and others
 - Proportion of values are changing within our society
 - Agencies aren't mirroring current society values
- Biases- people tend to have blind spots so you may not see the biases in society or a job environment that is there and perhaps others can see or experience
- We are improving→ not as quickly as we would like
 - The cost of inherent bias of our education system exists
 - Internal unrecognized biases
- Active Thinking!!!!
 - Am I open to other thoughts and ways to get there?
 - Have I taken a position?
 - Negotiate and compromise- not the same thing
- Discussion:
 - Always good to get a pulse on your agency before bringing on changes
 - Can be strategic with more information and direction

Relevancy Road Map- Jen

- Need for having active conversations
- Looking to the future of our state agencies
- Mutualists are growing, and traditionalists are shrinking in most states
- Have work to do to improve the diversity and culture in the state agencies to better represent our constituents
- 26 barriers identified that state agencies face to becoming more relevant
 - Agency culture
 - Agency capacity
 - Constituent culture
 - Constituent capacity
 - Political constraints

- Human dimensions and data show that we are all moving in the same direction, just at slightly different rates
- Next steps: looking at some high-level strategies to overcome some of these barriers; presenting strategies to the directors; looking at tactics and the how's to specifically tackle the barriers; this is not prescriptive but is completely voluntary
- Some barriers are just perceived barriers→ working on identifying those as well
- Discussion: need courageous leadership to pave the way; risk-takers
 - Not just the responsibility of the agency leadership; need to be accountable on an individual level
 - Change needs to be strategic
 - Setting expectations and having accountability to those expectations

Next Steps/actions

- Provide support to those courageous leaders
- Share success stories of Diversity & Inclusion in state agencies
- Should be create a Diversity & Inclusion newsletter??
 - A way to share success stories
 - Need to decide frequency and how to/who to send or build this distribution list
 - Possibly mid-summer for first newsletter; strategize in the meantime