

Project WILD Subcommittee Meeting

AFWA Meeting

Monday, September 10, 2018

Tampa Bay, FL

Rusty Garrison, Director, GA Wildlife Resources Division, chair of the Project WILD Subcommittee called the meeting to order and invited everyone at the meeting to introduce themselves.

Twenty attendees total who each introduced themselves.

Rusty shared that the minutes from the last Project WILD Subcommittee meeting, which took place at the 2018 North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference, are available online. He pointed out that though he has been the chair of this committee since it formed, this is the first Project WILD Subcommittee meeting he has been able to attend due to a hurricane and to a family emergency that came up during the previous Subcommittee meetings. He thanked Jenifer (Wisnieski) and Elena for helping lead those meetings.

Next the group assembled approved the minutes of the last meeting of the Subcommittee.

Rusty shared that a motion was presented to the directors at the North American - a copy of the motion was presented on the screen [also available in the minutes from the 2018 Subcommittee meeting at the North American]. The directors are in full support of Project WILD - the motion unanimously passed.

Rusty commented that it nice that Project WILD has come home, so to speak. Rather than the program being under the guidance of another nonprofit (the Council for Environmental Education), it is now under the guidance of the agencies through AFWA. The answer to the question "Who do I work for?" (as a Project WILD coordinator working for a fish and wildlife agency) is clearer.

Rusty reviewed agenda and asked if anyone had any additions? None. Rusty shared a couple of edits to the agenda:

- The seventh item should read "Project WILD Online + Updates."
- The state roundtable should indicate that representatives in each state should highlight initiatives or issues related to Project WILD or conservation education.

Rusty handed the floor to Elena, who shared that we will work with Rusty to review and update the work plan for our next subcommittee meeting.

Elena commented that the Subcommittee meets at both the AFWA and the North American conferences, and we recognize that not everyone can attend all of those meetings. The minutes and agenda are posted on our website.

Elena acknowledged that John Lord would need to leave part of the way through the meeting and asked if he would like to say anything.

John said not in particular, but he shared that Elena always has his ear. If there is anything you need, you can reach out to her and know that you are in good hands.

Elena shared the guide-sales charts, starting with the Project WILD terrestrial numbers. We are almost sold out of the prior edition guides, which is good news! She pointed out that the missing 2016 Q3 and Q4 data (guides sold) in the slides relates to the transition of Project WILD over to AFWA. Kelly added that CEE had a July-June fiscal year, whereas AFWA has a January-December fiscal year. Elena shared the Aquatic WILD numbers next. The lower AW numbers may be due to release of the updated terrestrial guide: it could be that coordinators were putting their dollars more toward Aquatic WILD (vs. terrestrial) as they waited for the new terrestrial guide to come out, and now they are buying more terrestrial than aquatic. We keep an eye on these numbers. Some states receive PR funds and some states receive DJ, which dictates in some cases which guides they can buy. Growing Up WILD can be caught in the middle.

Elena shared the numbers for Growing Up WILD, noting that it is a very popular guide. We do not require training for educators/the public to receive the guide, but most people take it through training. We do not heavily promote sale of the guide. On our website you have to scroll down to the very bottom to find the link to the online store.

Kelly pointed out that the year is not over yet, and though some of the 2018 numbers look a bit concerning next to the 2017 numbers, the numbers will go up between now and the end of the fiscal year. We will take a look at the sales trends again at the end of the year when we have a more complete picture.

Elena shared that Growing Up WILD is a long guide (about 17"). We are looking at reformatting it to be a more standard size.

Elena shared the Flying WILD sales numbers. We are considering what to do with Flying WILD and looking at new ways to deliver this product.

Tabbi Kinion pointed out that the charts show the numbers of guides sold. State budgets do not necessarily increase, but the guide prices increase. The decreased number of guides sold may not correspond to a decrease in revenue. It can take state's a little while to catch up with their budgets reflecting the price increase.

Elena shared that this year the guide increase was more significant with the release of the new guide. Kelly shared that the Project WILD guide price went from \$15 to \$22 with the release of the updated edition. Though that is a pretty significant increase, we looked at the prices of the Project WET and Project Learning Tree products, which are in a similar range. We think the new price reflects the value of the product. Elena noted that we increased the other guide prices increased by \$1 in 2018.

Rusty shared that Zach Lowe with Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow (CLfT) approached Project WILD about ways to partner. We have worked with them to see where there is overlap. Elena and Kelly went to CLfT. They have looked at some of our materials and given us feedback that we plan to incorporate. We are encouraging folks, including the Project WILD Coordinators, to attend CLfT workshops. CLfT actually incorporates Project WILD activities (though they not be aware that they are WILD activities). There are ways we can partner together and help each other out.

Kelly gave an example of an edit we plan to make per feedback from CLfT, including mention of hunter education when talking about hunters as predators in the Project WILD activity "Oh Deer!"

Elena added that the content and pedagogy of the activity has not changed. CLfT's feedback concerns more mention of consumptive use in the guide.

Johnnie attended a CLfT short course at TPWD, and there was a lot of lecture-format instruction. There is an opportunity there to use Project WILD activities in place of or to supplement some of the lectures to get across the same concepts.

Kiki wanted to clarify the benefits of the partnership. The benefit that WILD gets from CLfT is that they will help us edit our activities to make them stronger. CLfT could use some of our activities, and hopefully some coordinators will be attending their workshops.

Kelly mentioned that CLfT also sees it as an asset of the partnership to give us feedback, given the reach of Project WILD (to educators and students). Sharing messages and information that are in line with their goal of educating people about hunting and the North American Model.

Elena clarified that CLfT is not actually editing our materials. They are giving us feedback that we will consider as we make updates to our materials. We recognize the importance of ensuring an activity maintains the integrity of its objectives, etc.

Rusty added that CLfT training may eventually benefit from Project WILD methods and use of Project WILD activities, such as concepts on Carrying Capacity and limiting factors content.

Elena shared a bit about attending CLfT. She enjoyed participating and appreciated the one-one instruction during the hunt. Participants got to hunt with a dog, which was a neat experience.

Kelly echoed that the CLfT workshop was very informative, and she appreciated the exposure to hunting.

Virginia asked if there was a structure in place for former students to give feedback to CLfT (such as recommending that they use Project WILD activities). Rusty confirmed that CLfT keeps a list of former students. Follow-up after training may be beneficial to CLfT but currently not part

of process. Follow-up feedback may be opportunity for people to weigh in on incorporating Project WILD content. CLfT students often stay in touch.

Kelly shared updates on the Project WILD webpages. Now Project WILD web pages are part of the AFWA website that launched earlier in 2018. Kelly showed examples of WILD content that is now part of www.fishwildlife.org. Resources will be available online for each Project WILD, Aquatic WILD, and Growing Up WILD activity. With GUW, each activity now has the Copy-Me pages and Home Connection Cards. AFWA will continue to build these pages, including editing the look and feel of the WILD pages in addition to the content that is there.

The old WILD site is no longer online, except for Flying WILD.

AFWA will also be incorporating feedback from WILD coordinators on website edits.

There's a special page for WILD Coordinators, including resources.

Elena shared that AFWA staff are now in process of developing a pilot online course for Growing Up WILD with partners in California. Training will use a blended model that will help connect them with the regional CA coordinators. Some educators will only do online training as part of this pilot effort.

Some coordinators have expressed concern about online model--such as will online reduce incentive to take in-person training. Online training would be an option for the state coordinator. Completion of online course development is planned for early 2019.

Kelly added that the online training for Growing Up WILD is an effort to start small with online training. It will currently help fulfill a demand for training in CA where there is insufficient supply.

Rae asked who will be purchasing the guides for the online training. Elena said that we are still figuring that piece out.

Kelly added that we can be flexible on that front based on what works for the coordinator. In California, the agency receives DJ funds to cover part of the cost for GUW guides, but not the whole cost. In this case, we may have the participants register for the course, with the guide included, directly through us on our online store, since that may be easier logistically for California coordinators and participants.

Elena shared that regional coordinators in CA will be recruiting participants from their own area.

Bettina asked if the move online was due to coordinators not having capacity to train in person.

Elena said yes, this was part of it.

Kelly added that the blended online model will also allow for a more in-depth training experience, allowing for more time with participants, which allows, for example, the opportunity to incorporate WILD activities into their classroom after an initial introduction, and then come back together online to reflect.

Consideration will be given to when in the online training process that educators receive the guide.

Elena shared that we have been doing lots of things! Things can sometimes be messy.

Marc shared that in 2018 we released the updated fourth edition of the Project WILD guide. We have offered two webinars - one for coordinators and one for facilitators - titled "Meet the New Guide." We added an "Effective Climate Change Education" appendix, and content on the North American Model in the front of the guide.

We also recently had a webinar on climate change and climate change education, including Project WILD's role in that. "Phenology at Play" is one of the new activities that was highlighted.

We are also going to have an inclusion webinar about meeting needs of people with diverse learning needs and abilities.

All of the activities were updated in some fashion. All have new WILD Work and In Step with STEM connections. Every activity has an outdoor component. There is now a greater diversity of species. For example, "Monarch Marathon" is an activity about the monarch butterfly. There is now expanded content in the back of the guide, including reference information.

Elena commented that our climate and wildlife webinar was open to the public. About 120 people registered and 60 attended. It was a successful first webinar! We have monthly-ish webinars to connect with our coordinators. Elena asked for feedback from Kiki (TX PW Coordinator) and Tabbi Kinion (former CO Project WILD Coordinator).

Kiki shared that they are very helpful! Without the webinars, the coordinators would only hear updates from us about what we're working on once a year at the conference. It is hard to quantify the hard benefit, but the soft benefit is humongous.

Tabbi said that the handouts (that we created and shared with coordinators that relate to the release of the new guide) were very useful, and she shared them with her regional education coordinators.

Elena shared that it was a fun year of social media for Project WILD! We have a person (Katie Keske) whose sole job is to post on our social media pages. We consolidated from multiple Facebook pages for each program to one page.

We had a great intern, Sophie, who did our first Instagram post! We have been continuing to post on Instagram. This summer we had a campaign called #WildlifelsEverywhere. We encouraged people to post photos of wildlife and compiled them into videos that we shared over the weeks. Elena played one of the videos. We had a lot of fun with that campaign. It did not trend on twitter, but it brought us some new followers. We wanted people to become aware of wildlife in their own backyard.

We also have Twitter and Pinterest. Lots of teachers use Pinterest. Follow us on social media!

We just finished our Project WILD planning. We have our notes and will compile that and share them with our coordinators, probably by our next monthly-ish webinar.

Kelly gave updates about our annual Project WILD Conference. Our 2018 meeting was in Ohio in May, on the shores of Lake Erie. Content included inclusion of individuals with disabilities, and environmental justice. Conference also included field experiences (such as Magee Marsh), learning about Lake Erie Water Snakes, use of questions in Field Investigations, tracks and use of trail cams. At our auction we raised around \$2,200 to help support travel of WILD Coordinators to future conferences.

2019 conference will have more on inclusion and diversity, we will share about the Growing Up WILD online pilot, predator and management issues, learning more about local WILD programs. The 2019 conference will be in Montana in June 2019, at Chico Hot Springs Resort in Pray, Montana. Registration will probably begin in January. Boone and Crockett will be participating.

Other Updates from States:

Kiki Corry, Texas Parks & Wildlife. The children and nature movement is active in Texas. There's been a focus on getting kids outside to address obesity. Growing Up WILD has been used in Texas to help educators and caregivers have something to help them get outside. Facilitators have been very involved in use of the new edition of the terrestrial guide.

Tabbi shard that the new Project WILD coordinator in Arkansas started today.

Rae shared that they had had to back off with offering Project WILD workshops due to challenges in purchasing guides. Recently, new funding source was found to acquire Growing Up WILD guides. New, more in-depth trainings for educators now under way.

Meeting adjourned. Thanks for attending!