



ASSOCIATION of
FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES

HUMAN DIMENSIONS / SOCIAL SCIENCE WORKING GROUP
Chair: Ann Forstchen (FL)

Wednesday, March 10, 2021

TIME: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm NOTE: meeting is in Central Time
North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference

Note: to attend this meeting, you must be registered for the conference

Committee Charge: 1) provide a forum for discussion of human dimensions and social science research and applications in state, federal and provincial wildlife and natural resources agencies and partners. 2) advise the membership and leadership of the Association regarding human dimensions and social science research and applications

Agenda

- 10:00 – 10:15** Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions, Review Agenda – Ann Forstchen, FL
- 10:15 – 10:20** Inquiry of state and federal agency social scientists: purpose and overview – Mike Quartuch (CO P&W) , Ashley Gramza (ARGFC), Natalie Sexton (USFWS), Ann Forstchen (FWC)
- 10:20 – 10:50** Discussion: What are two (top-tier) priorities facing your agency that you think social science expertise could help address? How can social science be applied to address these priorities (for example: specific tasks or jobs to be done)?
- 10:50 – 11:00** Finding Human Dimensions Experts – network update – Ashley Gramza, AR GFC
- 11:00 – 11:10** WAFWA HD Committee Update – Mike Quartuch, CO P&W
- 11:10 – 11:20** SEAFWA HD Committee Update – Rene Valdez, VA DWR
- 11:20 – 11:30** MAFWA HD Committee Update– Faren Wolter, SD GFP
- 11:30 – 11:40** TWS HD Committee Update – Ashley Gramza, AR GFC
- 11:40 – 11:50** NABCI HD Update – Jessica Barnes, VA Tech
- 11:50 – 12:00** Summary of Action Items and Wrap-Up – Ann Forstchen, FWC
- 12:00** Adjourn

Notes from meeting

Eric opening remarks, social science critical to conservation

Needs to be more front and centers in front in more agency people

Thanks to Natalie Sexton, Ashley Gramza and Mike Quartuch for their help in developing agendas and discussions.

Questionnaire to state and federal agency social scientists in next few weeks. Purpose is to better understand the nature of the types that socials, science, what are the social science gaps in agency – are social scientists expertise, how are they collaborating and communicating. And how social science is serving AFWAs strategic priorities. What are some of the challenges the agencies face, and how the application of social science is happening. Help us figure out how this working group can help social scientists. And provide a community of social scientists. And how agency leadership can better support their social scientists.

Breakout questions

What are two (top-tier) priorities facing your agency that you think social science expertise could help address? How can social science be applied to address these priorities (for example: specific tasks or jobs to be done)?

Results

Key topics that were surfaced included:

- Social science contributes to every conservation issue we face
- Better understanding non-traditional audience's needs, interests and concerns
- How to increase social science literacy in agencies
- Social science is more than user satisfaction surveys
- Expand social science capacity to include other disciplines (e.g., economics, marketing)
- Social science research needs to be just as scientifically rigorous as ecological research
- How can agencies better apply economic data to garner conservation support
- How to better engage the non-vocal constituents
- Many agencies have just 1 social scientist, but expected to serve entire agency
- Increase use of social science expertise in problem framing and decision processes
- How is social science being used to address DEI work?

HD Committee Updates

Social Scientist Community Network - started by Nia Morales (FWC, now at University of Florida and Wylie Carr, formerly with USFWS, Kenny Wallen formerly at University of Arkansas and Ashley Gramza), many agencies have just one, maybe 2 social scientists and they often feel isolated. USFWS has expert directory for social scientists but for internal use only. Wanted to create a similar application that covered all conservation social scientists from municipal, state and federal agencies, NGOs and universities- know who's out there. Also to be used by biologists to understand what social scientists are in their area and to connect with them. Also for social science allies and champions. The big ask is please sign up and promote the tool to others. Have 129 signed up now - but heavy university presence, it's a GIS based story map with name, title, where

they work, and self-identified area of expertise. Want at least 1 practitioner and champion from every state and federal region. Please sign up! <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/571854079e2f42c58f8d65a4aee83190>

WAFWA – update: Mike Quartuch (CPW) – Mike is vice-chair of the WAFWA HD Committee, had mid-winter meeting on January 5th 2021. Hosted 2 presentations – Brad Milley and Nicholas Cole about a USGS and USFWS collaboration, gathered about 25 scientists for a 3-day virtual workshop and mapped the social-ecological system of chronic wasting disease. Worked with the Foundations of Success (<https://fosonline.org>) captured the core conservation targets or goals that scientists agreed upon that we need to address, threats and challenges. States can apply this model to context specific situations and to identify solutions. Really well vetted model. Also heard from Kate Bachtell and Matt English – both from NORC, the research institution at the University of Chicago working on the 2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation– highlighted to approach they are using for the survey. Also had a brief discussion on diversity, equity and inclusion using 3 questions 1) what if, anything are you doing in agency around D/I in your human dimensions work 2) are you incorporating new research methods or partnering with others to be more inclusive to under-represented groups 3) are you being called upon in your role as an HD specialist to address equity, diversity and inclusion. Discussion was more of a scoping discussion and are now thinking about ways that the HD Committee can work with WAFWA’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee at the summer meeting. Perhaps bring in scholars that are working in this area – still working on this. Homework for the committee was to consider the relationship between the HD Committee and WAFWA’s Strategic Plan and let’s get to work on some real challenges. Also considering how to work with the WAFWA R3 Committee at the summer meeting.

SEAFWA – Rene Valdez – VA WRC– SEAFWA annual meeting is in October. There was no organized HD session last fall, and there were just a few HD-related presentations at the conference. Virginia is hosting the 2021 SEAFWA (virtual) conference. Has made an inquiry of the HD Committee about doing a symposium, but probably not likely. Some people from the HD Committee met after the 2020 conference with people from the Minorities in Natural Resources Conservation (MINRC <https://minrc.org/>) to discuss the role of social scientists in their work. Another area of discussion was can social scientists look at the intern programs of state fish and wildlife agencies and seek information from minority interns about challenges and barriers they face. Will discuss at next HD Committee meeting April/May. Also considering developing some best practices for field-based internships. TN is advertising a new HD position, also for another state in the SE, social science capacity in the SE is growing.

Midwest – Faren Wolter – SD GFP– don’t have a formal HD Committee in MAFWA, a few HD folks in agencies and in academia, presented a proposal to MAWFA board to set up a HD technical working committee. Board suggested that the group work within the Midwest Landscape Initiative (MLI, https://www.mafwa.org/?page_id=3391) formed in 2018 that works on collaborative landscape scale issues (at risks species, wildlife health issues, habitat, energy). Board didn’t want to stand up a siloed technical group but wanted HD to be more broadly integrated into big topics. Have an HD steering committee under the MLI framework. Next steps are to have first meeting and determine what this group is going to look like, it’s grown beyond just state agencies, and what framework it will work under.

TWS HD Working Group – Ashley Gramza – AR GFC – Ashley is chair of the TWS HD Working Group. (<https://wildlife.org/HDWG/>) Have had limited engagement for past few years among TWS social scientists and just met at annual conferences. New goal is to increase communication and engagement among TWS social scientists outside the national conference. Increased the meetings of the Executive Board to monthly meetings and appointed an funded communications chair. Started a ¼ newsletter. Free membership on Slack to increase communications. Very active on social media. Account on Twitter @HdwgTws, now with 108 followers and a Facebook page. Promoting virtual social hours every other month. Having member meetings every other month focused on different topic areas – on national survey, Relevancy Roadmap, bear-human interactions. Proposing

a ½ day workshop for the virtual introduction to social science targeting wildlife managers. Working on getting some scholarships for members of the HD Working Group to attend the annual conference.

NABCI HD Update – Jessica Barnes, VA Tech – Jessica is national bird conservation social science coordinator. Lots of current grants are winding up, new ones starting. One new grant is to study wildlife viewers across the country. Our work plan is being rewritten now. Focus of subcommittee is to support and connect HD efforts, develop and share resources, and trainings that integrate social science into bird conservation. Also conducting and translating social science research into practice. Have collected success stories about how social science has benefited bird conservation and would like to add more. Have and will continue to host webinars on social science. NABCI has a real interest in relevancy right now. Thinking about how in make bird conservation more relevant. NABCI has released its 2nd version of the relevancy tool kit. Provides cited information on how bird conservation contributes to people's objectives.

<https://nabci-us.org/how-we-work/human-dimensions/>

Potential topics for next meeting – how do HD specialists amplify their voice and expertise in various other conservation topics – CWD, DEI, etc.? How can we get our agency leadership engaged in HD and help them learn how social science is contributing to conservation? How do we increase social science literacy – understand breadth of social science and the how (methods) it gets done. How do we create a robust social science community of practice?

Contact info from chat:

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