Meeting Minutes
Attendees: 37

Agenda:
- Welcome and Introductions

- Work Plan
  - Key in increasing agency relevancy thru WVNT
  - WVNT Academy in Feb 2018
    - Shared learning
    - Case studies
    - Beg, borrow and steal the best ideas and bring them to our states
  - Shelly Plante (TX) is the new chair; Anne Glick (FL, previous chair), is still very involved
  - We are planning on continuing to do webinars throughout the upcoming year
    - Always looking for new topics
    - May look for a more quarterly webinar
  - If you want to be part of the monthly conference calls → contact Shelly
  - Want to aid with the AAFW campaign and see how we intersect
  - Helping with the National Conservation Outreach strategy → to help with that strategy and make sure WVNT is represented
  - Want to increase state participation in WVNT WG
  - If there is anything needed to be added, thoughts, etc with the work plan, please contact Shelly
    - To be finalized by the end of the month
    - Feel free to email with any thoughts

- AAFW- update
  - Tourism of F+ W depends on healthy fish and wildlife and habitat
  - Want to know what conversation are being had on the state level so (Sean) can help
  - New website: [www.ournatureusa.com](http://www.ournatureusa.com)
    - Website is live
- Not driving traffic yet – waiting until bill is dropped
- Website will be expanded with resource materials for states to use moving forward (possibly on password protected page; still to come)
- Looking for feedback on website
- AAFW Briefing for partners on the legislation tomorrow from 5-6pm in Superior Room B
- Resources:
  - Banners (see near registration desk); available for use by states
  - Sponsors the Wildlife Habitat Council white paper that speaks to the role of the Private sector in species recovery and protection
    - They see businesses and private sector as a partner in this initiative
  - Video in development (thank you DU production team) to promote AAFW
- Working on passing supportive resolutions with the states
  - AFWA/Sean can help with that and provide templates
- Want to highlight the state success stories
- Next Steps:
  - Reintroduce legislation in House
  - Launch website; social media channels and partner comms channels
  - Announce campaign formally
  - Establish state coalitions
  - Engage public advocacy
  - Secure funding to launch campaign and sustain for duration
  - Work toward introduction of bill in the Senate and fly-in this fall/winter
- Will make state fact sheets available to state agencies
  - We can share templates
- Question: is there a need to have included in the state fact sheets, not only what this effort is, but what this effort isn’t; don’t want to look like we’re buddy buddy with energy business
  - Answer: point noted; when asked that question point out the BRP recommendations and that a number of other money resources were looked at and weren’t sustainable; this is not support of energy business (fracking, offshore drilling, etc); it’s not incentivizing increased production – it’s about utilizing funding that’s already there.
  - Renewables are not currently paying into these funds but they want to.
  - Looking to prevent an incorrect perception
- Question (Shelly): what is it that we can be doing to help you
  - Answer: we will definitely let you know; video, images, state success stories, resolutions, etc → if you have any of these please send to AFWA so we can highlight and use resources material (not redevelop materials already there).
  - Helping us reinforce our messaging as it comes out
  - Use the planning tool; we can send out to group if you do not have this material
- AAFW FAQ’s on the AFWA website, main page
- Contact Sean with any questions
- Let me know how we can battle misperception
• NA Waterfowl Management Plan’s National Birdwatch Survey Results
  o Final results of the study are not ready yet
  o Initial results will be presented later this month
  o We will try to have someone from WVNT group at the table during that meeting (Anne, FL)
  o No presentation today
  o Can learn more about this survey at 3pm today from a workshop happening at AFWA
  o Also speaking at the waterfowl WG tomorrow morning

• The Nature of Americans Study Findings
  o DJ Case will be presenting about these findings at the Academy
  o `Natureofamericans.org` has full study results, graphics/slides you can use in programs, and more.
  o Gives us a foundation to talk to others and create an action plan with messaging, access, etc
  o ~12K people surveyed
  o Key finding: there is a gap between American’s interest in nature and participation/engagement in nature
    ▪ What are the barriers causing this gap → looks to be 8 major ones
      • Places where people live and work discourage contact with the natural world
      • Competing priorities
      • Declining dependence on the natural world for livelihoods
      • New technologies distract and captivate
      • Shifting expectations about what ‘good’ contact with nature out to mean
    ▪ There were differences in barriers depending on ethnicity
      • Poses some specific audience barriers that we need to address
  o Insights:
    ▪ Most experiences in nature are now social and not solitary
    ▪ Need to make experience with nature habitual and not the rare occasion
    ▪ Nature doesn’t need to be a passive experience
    ▪ Most Americans support nature related investments
  o Will be using research to find strategic planning and implementation of outreach initiatives
  o Great information on the `natureofamericans.org` website → please check out
  o Different groups have different ways they enjoy the outdoors; very diverse

• Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy
  o February 19-23 in McAllen Texas
  o `http://www.wvntacademy.com/` is the website for the academy
  o This is not just about birding, but herping, paddling, diversity issues, and many other activities and topics
  o $225 registration, lodging at federal rate, most meals included with lodging and/or registration
• Work to really keep this very affordable
  o All materials are on the website; schedule, speakers, field trips, etc.

  • State Agency Updates
    o Virginia – has hired an R3 position with a focus that is inclusive of hunting, fishing, AND nonconsumptive recreation.
    o NPS – Looking at economic impacts of bear cams and other economic impact studies; complete report later this afternoon in this room at 3pm.
    o Arizona – hiring a Wildlife Viewing position soon (job has now posted: https://azstatejobs.azdoa.gov/ and go to position number is 32803). Webcams, including a new pupfish cam this year, have remained a successful way of engaging constituents.
    o Texas – launching new Bird City Texas program in the next year which will include better land management, habitat enhancement, and science-based bird-friendly criteria for participating/certified communities.