

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism

Chair: Shelly Plante (TX)

Monday, September 10, 2018

10:45am- 12pm

Attendees: 36

Agenda:

Call to Order & Introductions

Work Plan Review

- Charge review: To advance wildlife viewing and nature tourism programs within state agencies as strategies to build support for fish wildlife conservation by connecting ethnically and geographically diverse people to the outdoors. [current charge]
- Accomplishments last year
 - Execution of the Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy in February 2018
 - Continue with monthly conference calls and periodic wildlife viewing/nature tourism webinars. Continue to collaborate within AFWA including with the Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife campaign, Waterfowl Working Group, Wildlife Diversity Conservation and Funding Committee, and National Conservation Outreach Planning Committee; provide regular updates to working group.
 - Continue to partner with other conservation organizations – that we exist, share our work plan and develop collaborative opportunities.
 - Increase state participation by colleagues working within wildlife viewing and nature tourism positions in partner states. There are several states not represented in our monthly calls and/or AFWA meetings and we will proactively address those gaps this year.
- Starting to work on the next WVNT Academy for 2020

Partnerships for Increased Relevancy

- North American Waterfowl Management Plan
 - Broadened survey to include birders
 - Looking for additional money to do an even deeper dive
 - Initial results coming out from the new revised plan
 - Idea is to develop these management plans that reach multiple audiences → make more relevant to a broader audience
 - The WVNT WG has been actively participating in the plan and has a seat the table for ongoing discussions to include birding and Wildlife viewing with the waterfowl community/management
- Partners in Flight
 - Birders are a huge group in each state; are states reaching out them (low-hanging fruit)

- PIF's Proposal: it is in the interest of bird conservation, the American people, and the state wildlife agencies to take steps to increase the content, and the prominence of the content, on birding and bird conservation on state wildlife agency websites
 - Looking to partner more with state agencies to this end
 - Might be an upcoming and ongoing topic for the WVNT monthly conference calls and/or upcoming webinars
- Workshop hosted by WVNT WG and Wildlife Diversity and Conservation Funding Committee: Making the connection between state wildlife action plans and the wildlife recreation community
 - Took place yesterday (Sunday, September 9)
 - Connecting the dots of conservation science and state fish and wildlife relevancy
 - Can help with the connection by engaging wildlife viewers in our country in citizen science
 - Incorporate conservation goals into WVNT messaging
 - Brainstorming on things we can actively be doing to help each other
 - Sharing of current 'bright spots' and success stories
 - The use of citizen scientists to engage our target audiences and gather information; contribute to our SWAP to make significant changes
 - Presentation/update on the use of eBird → start looking at the people side of eBird instead of just the bird side of eBird (upcoming webinar on this topic)
 - Important to make connections with people and making those connections last
 - some big takeaways: it's all about relationships → don't be stuck on assumptions; states are willing to share data to help other states improve WVNT connections; increase relevancy by having more people at the table (Diversity and inclusion); step outside of your comfort zone to move the needle forward

Upcoming Webinar: Bird by Bird Idaho: Bringing birds to the classrooms and classrooms to birds

- reaching across the aisle to connect teachings/students to birds
- this was originally presented at the 2018 WVNT Academy
 - very well received
 - shared with our partners (beyond state agencies)
- used as a pathway to connect children with nature
- webinar will be on September 20 from 2-3pm EDT

Another upcoming webinar on eBird and looking at that data in innovative ways to support WVNT programs

- date and time = TBD in October or November

SAVE THE DATE: 2020 Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy

- Fort Walton Beach in Florida at the Hilton Garden Inn
- February 17-21, 2020

- WVNTAcademy.com
- Will be doing a call for proposals in the next 6-8 months
- Will be having meaningful field trips related to wildlife viewing and nature tourism

National Conservation Outreach Plan- Renny MacKay

- Marketing campaign/toolkit
- A toolkit that each of the states can tailor for their individual state
- Based on a MSCG to fund this work
- 20 states have been involved in the planning and evaluating process or work
- Goal: increase awareness of agency role in protecting and conserving wildlife
- Used state input to see what they need and shape the campaign/toolkit
- Defined audiences: outdoor enthusiast, family outdoors, affable adventurers, dabblers, outdoor excitement [hunters and anglers sprinkled throughout these groups]
- “Making It Last” is the main tagline for this campaign
 - There are many ways to use this
 - Have examples of social media, billboards, magazines, etc
 - We have back to back workshops to go through this in detail tomorrow during the Outreach WG workshop; September 11 at 10am and 1pm
 - Have levels in the toolkit so you can do this with no money, 10K, 50K, etc.
 - Nationwide relevancy campaign
 - Will also talk about how this can be evaluated in tomorrow’s workshop

State Agency Updates

- Georgia- bird count programs
 - Youth Birding Competition in its 14th year to help address combating nature deficit disorder
 - Birding Bootcamp- designed to give people skills to help GA DNR help with Breeding Bird Surveys and bird counts
 - Camp Talon- outgrowth of the youth birding competition
 - Teach about ornithology and careers in field; management of birds
 - 6 day program; 16 teens per year (going on 10 years for this program and seeing previous attendees pursue careers in biology, wildlife biology, and ornithology)
 - New project: A Kids Christmas Bird Count- variation of the tradition Christmas bird count and tailored for kids
- Arizona
 - Live Bat cam → 20K views/month
(<https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/viewing/webcamlist/bats/bat-cam/>)
- Florida
 - Wings Over Florida- recognition program (certificate programs)
 - Wildlife spotter (kids), bird certificate, wildlife certificate
 - Looking at doing introductory birding programs

- Help people increase their proficiency in wildlife/bird ID
- Backyards and Beyond- pilot program
 - Getting people to work outside around their homes to connect with nature
 - Restoring habitat close to home
 - Earning certificates
- City Nature Challenge
 - Encourages to participate in programs around their home in the city
 - Will share stories of how this has helped/change their neighborhood
 - Will take part this spring in one community and hopefully expand from there

Adjourn