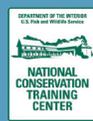


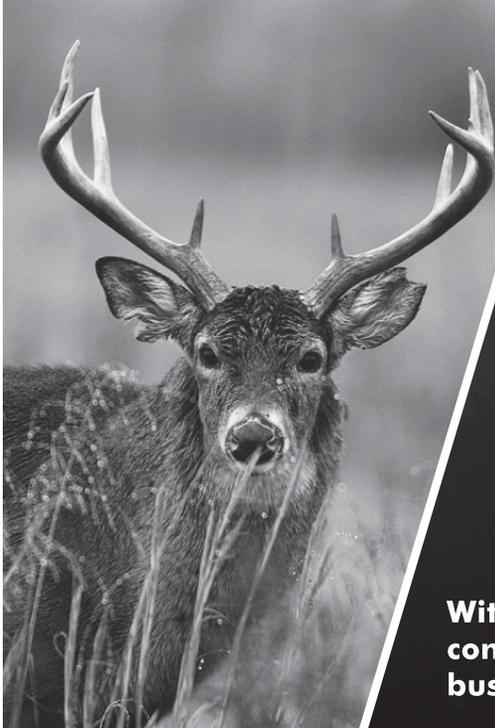
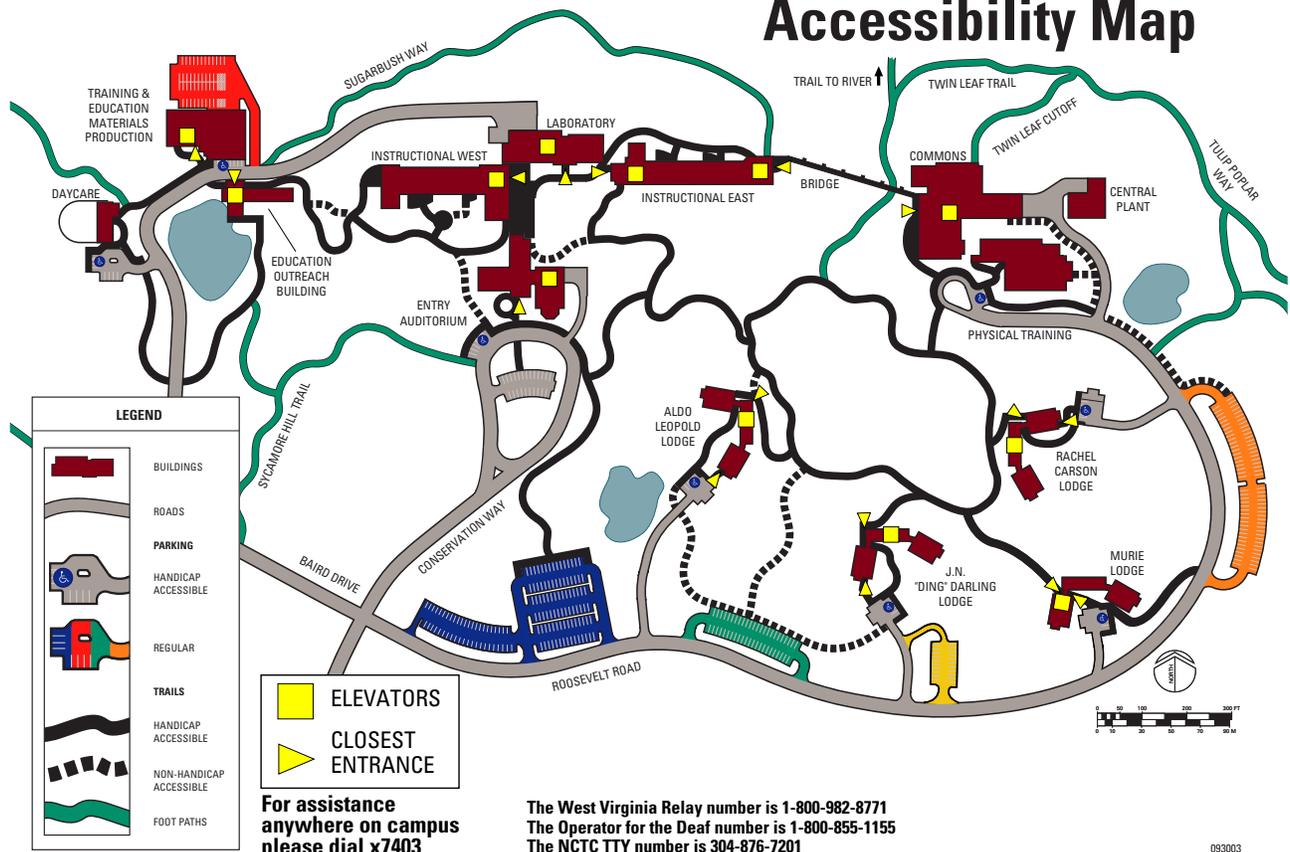
Wildlife Viewing & Nature Tourism Academy: Practical Training for Practitioners

FINAL PROGRAM

June 27 – July 1, 2016
National Conservation Training Center
Shepherdstown, West Virginia



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
National Conservation Training Center
Accessibility Map



Discover

the Value and Benefits of Wildlife Viewing
with Southwick Associates

Including:

- Economic impacts, statewide or for specific programs or areas
- How to attract more visitors and tourists
- Growing local economies through improved wildlife-based recreation
- And more!

With over 25 years serving state fish and wildlife agencies and the conservation community, Southwick Associates is the expert in the business and economic-side of fish and wildlife.



Better Information. Better Decisions.

Contact:
Rob Southwick
904 277 9765
rob@southwickassociates.com
www.southwickassociates.com

Schedule at a Glance

6:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
8:30 a.m. – 9:20 a.m.	Session 1
9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Break and Networking
10:00 a.m. – 10:50 a.m.	Session 2
11:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.	Session 3
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:10 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Session 4
2:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Break and Networking
2:30 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.	Session 5
3:30 p.m. – 4:20 p.m.	Session 6
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Evening Program

* All sessions take place in Room 151 Instructional West

Program Schedule

Monday, June 27, 2016

Welcome and Keynote: The Importance of Wildlife Viewing to Fish and Wildlife Conservation

Jerrie Lindsey
Jay Slack
Cynthia Martinez

Tuesday, June 28, 2016

Session 1 – How to Build a Statewide Birding and Wildlife Trail

Anne Glick
Jeff Trollinger

Session 2 – Birding and Wildlife Trails 2.0: How Do We Update, Maintain and Improve Our Trails for the 21st Century?

Whitney Gray
Shelly Plante
Jessica Ruthenberg

Session 3 – Water Trails and Wildlife Viewing

Jerrie Lindsey
Shelly Plante

Program Schedule

Session 4 – Engaging New Audiences in Fishing and Boating – Applying lessons learned to Wildlife Viewing

Frank Peterson

Session 5 – Websites, Apps and More: Making Technology Work for You

Scot Jackson

Session 6 – Best Practices and Tips for Social Media and Email Marketing

Shelly Plante

Evening Panel Discussion – Creative Funding: Florida, Georgia and Arizona

Anne Glick

Rick Lavender

Randy Rabb

Wednesday, June 29, 2016

Session 1 – ABC's of Close Encounters with Nature

Werner Barz

Session 2 – Steep Creek Fish Cam

Pete Schneider

Session 3 – Freshwater Snorkeling: Aquatic Wildlife Viewing at its Best

Jim Herrig

Session 4 – Citizen Science as an Outreach Tool

Christine Peterson

Michelle Dolan

Chelsea McKinney

Session 5 – Butterflies: The Gateway Bugs for Nature Engagement and Environmental Stewardship

Jaret Daniels

Session 6 – Tour: NCTC Outdoor Learning Area

Nickie Weller

Evening Camp Fire

Program Schedule

Thursday, 30, 2016

Session 1 – Engaging the Wildlife Viewing Community

Jessica Ruthenberg
Brian Moyer

Session 2 – Birding and Wildlife Festivals from the Ground Up

Nancy Millar

Session 3 – International Migratory Bird Day

Susan Bonfield

Session 4 – Engaging Latino Audiences: Improving Your Outreach

Susan Bonfield

Session 5 – Welcoming Recreationists to Wildlife Management Areas: A Florida Experience

Jerrie Lindsey

Session 6 – Facilitated Discussion: 2016 Academy Evaluation and Looking Forward to McAllen 2018

Free Evening / Optional Potomac Paddle

Friday, July 1, 2016

Travel Day



Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy Session Descriptions

Tuesday

How to Build a Statewide Birding and Wildlife Trail

This course will provide practical examples and resources for anyone developing a wildlife viewing trail. While the course will focus on large efforts, like a statewide trail, materials and ideas provided will be practical for a trail of any size, drawing heavily from resources developed by Florida and Virginia. Included will be a copy of “Building a Birding and Wildlife Trail” by Jeff Trollinger. Subjects covered will include developing partners and funding, logistics and community input, publications, marketing, signage, and lessons learned. Actual examples of operational plans, site nomination processes, press releases, site evaluation forms, contracts for publications, media tours, and required permits will be provided. Florida and Virginia will compare and contrast examples from two very different trail models, and more recent examples of trail development will be highlighted to demonstrate how changing technology has impacted the way wildlife viewing trails should be constructed today. Discussion will include the value of publications in today’s social media environment, and ways to get the public out on the trail once it is constructed. Finally, the class will look at evaluating the impacts of a trail and the best ways to collect data from a variety of sources to demonstrate financial impacts to states and local communities.

Birding and Wildlife Trails 2.0: How Do We Update, Maintain and Improve Our Trails for the 21st Century?

A panel of representatives from three state wildlife agencies, Virginia, Texas and Florida, will present and discuss a brief overview of their statewide birding and wildlife trails, the challenges their trails face after a decade or more of existence, and their strategies for addressing these issues. The goal of the session is to provide a forum for agencies and organizations with statewide or other large-scale trail systems to learn from each other’s experiences and consider new solutions and ideas going forward. Agencies and organizations embarking on statewide/large-scale trail systems may also find the session valuable as they will be able to gain a sense of the challenges they may face down the road and consider options for how they might prevent and/or address these as they arise. The title of this session is the audience take-away: participants will leave with new ideas for updating, maintaining and improving their statewide/large-scale birding and wildlife trail systems for the 21st century, and in addition learn about tried-and-true strategies for keeping trails in top operating condition.

Water Trails and Wildlife Viewing

Representatives from Texas and Florida will present an overview of their states’ paddling/water trail programs. Attendees will learn about establishing partnerships to develop a statewide paddling trail program, and techniques and tools for route-finding and signing a trail. The intended audience ranges from wildlife viewing professionals who have an established water trail program and are looking for new ideas, to paddling trail novices that would like to establish a trail system in their state. Audience members will leave knowing how to develop a water trail program in conjunction with community partners, and will learn the nuts and bolts of ‘building’ a water trail.

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy Session Descriptions

Engaging New Audiences in Fishing and Boating – Applying lessons learned to Wildlife Viewing

The face of America is changing and emerging minority groups, such as Hispanics, who are projected to comprise 20 percent of the U.S. population by 2020, will have a significant impact on spending and revenue. Join Recreational Fishing & Boating Foundation President and CEO Frank Peterson to hear about the steps RBFF has taken to engage new audiences in fishing and boating. Get the latest research and consumer trends that are driving RBFF's efforts to engage with Hispanics through its Vamos A Pescar™ campaign. Learn how RBFF defined its Hispanic target audience, how cultural insights drove content development and outreach, and the effectiveness of the campaign thus far.

Websites, Apps and More: Making Technology Work for You

Learn from a website and design company owner with more than 30 years of experience. This presentation will focus on how people are using the internet, new and innovative website design, and making the choice to go mobile versus developing an app. We'll also cover using your website to influence your customers and evaluating its success. Finally, new and upcoming technology will be discussed.

Best Practices and Tips for Social Media and Email Marketing

Would you like to learn more about Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or Meetup? Who is using which platform and which one would work best for your programs? Are you wondering what is and isn't appropriate for agency social media accounts to post? This session will dig into the who, what and how of different social media platforms and email marketing to show how to best use these (mostly free) tools to promote your nature tourism programs, sites and events. Using real-world examples of social media posts and email communication, participants will learn how to make the most of these marketing platforms. Participants will leave this session well equipped to utilize social and email marketing for their own projects and organizations, and will know how to best increase their reach and relevance with these tools.

Evening Panel Discussion: Creative Funding Programs

Wednesday

ABC's of Close Encounters with Nature

This presentation will discuss the process of creating regular participants in activities such as wildlife viewing: the different stages and the changing needs of a participant. We look at the program "ABC's of Close Encounters with Nature"*, based on research from the Wildlife Management Institute's Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation Model (R3). We'll discuss how developing a program to provide youth a variety of activities with a common outcome will introduce youth to new skills and create opportunities for participants to transition through some of the beginning stages of becoming a regular participant. We will also discuss how to develop new partnerships between federal, state and non-government organizations. The presentation will include a timeline and process for development of a program and determining roles and responsibilities, as well as, barriers encountered and how they were overcome. We will conclude with lessons learned.

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy Session Descriptions

Steep Creek Fish Cam

The Steep Creek Fish Cam is a live underwater camera in Juneau, Alaska which captures the seasonal return of sockeye salmon. Originally popular with locals, it is now shared annually on the internet and consistently sparks interest and enthusiasm, along with feedback and many requests from viewers. Discussion will focus on the logistics involved with capturing and sharing live underwater video in a wild setting, including some of the internal and external challenges.

Freshwater Snorkeling: Aquatic Wildlife Viewing at its Best

Freshwater snorkeling is an educational and fun activity that connects people to aquatic animals and environments. And snorkelers are willing to pay. Organizing a program properly leads to a safe adventure that is better than swimming in an aquarium. The freshwater snorkeling presentation is intended to be a users' guide for setting up aquatic viewing programs in small rivers and streams. This presentation describes the public values such a program may provide, how to start and administer a program, and how to conduct the program at a stream.

Citizen Science as an Outreach Tool

Citizen science is a tool to connect a variety of audiences with nature while offering an opportunity to increase scientific literacy and foster environmental stewardship among participants. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is developing a framework to support the design of citizen science programs at refuges and other USFWS sites, but is also applicable to a broader community hoping to implement citizen science. The purpose of the framework is to assist conservation professionals and educators in designing and maintaining citizen science programs to meet their objectives. Public participation in scientific research through citizen science programs offers an untapped potential. It is an opportunity to educate and engage diverse constituents in conservation and tap a labor force not otherwise available or affordable. This session will move through the citizen science framework approach and apply it to a case study of a new citizen science project being developed for a specific site (NCTC campus).

Butterflies: The Gateway Bugs for Nature Engagement and Environmental Stewardship

Butterflies are the most popular insects worldwide. Their mass appeal stretches from small backyards to vast wild lands and encompasses a multitude of public engagement entry points including landscaping, wildlife viewing, citizen science, and conservation practice. The pollinator crisis and recent monarch butterfly population declines have generated a broad sector call to arms and further strengthened the opportunity to meaningfully connect with individuals and communities. Never more powerful, these charismatic gateway bugs provide the ideal vehicle to stimulate interest in nature, increase science literacy and promote environmental stewardship. Numerous successful programmatic examples of various scales will be presented. So remember, butterflies are addictive – be a user.

Tour: NCTC Outdoor Learning Area

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy Session Descriptions

Thursday

Engaging the Wildlife Viewing Community

“Engaging the Wildlife Viewing Community” is an overview of the successful, and not-so-successful initiatives Virginia’s Watchable Wildlife Program has implemented to identify and communicate with the wildlife-viewing public. The presentation will cover a variety of communication and outreach techniques, including social media, festivals, outreach and displays, volunteerism, and newsletters. An emphasis will be on how to develop and plan a successful social media campaign using the examples of “Frog Friday” and the “Virginia is For Frogs” campaigns. Participants will learn what to expect when using different communication techniques, and some of the tricks for success and mistakes to avoid. The importance of planning and developing partners both internal and external to the agency will be discussed. Participants will begin to see the value to their agency and to conservation in general of engaging the wildlife-viewing public.

Birding and Wildlife Festivals from the Ground Up

Birding and wildlife festivals are a great way to introduce local residents and visitors to local viewing opportunities. This presentation will focus on starting and maintaining festivals small and large. Participants will learn from festival planners from across the country. Each participant will walk away with resources to get you started on your own festival planning.

International Migratory Bird Day

International Migratory Bird Day was created in 1993 to help unify our voice for bird conservation. Today, IMBD is coordinated by Environment for the Americas and implemented at more than 700 sites across the western hemisphere. Host sites are diverse and include outdoor venues, such as natural areas, parks, zoos and wildlife refuges, and indoor locations, such as libraries, museums and schools. An annual conservation theme provides organizations a way to highlight birds, their amazing journeys, and how everyone may be involved in protecting them. Offering an IMBD event is easy with the many ready-made materials that are provided each year, from promotional flyers and press releases to educational activities that may be used with children, adults and families at bird-focused events or programs. The success of IMBD is evident. Some of today’s largest bird festivals were inspired by IMBD, created as single-day programs and growing to multi-day events. During this session, learn more about the materials that are available to you, data on event attendance and take home some IMBD swag!

Engaging Latinos Audiences: Improving Your Outreach

Environment for the Americas completed a four-year study on the barriers to participation in informal science education by Latino audiences. The results of 1,000 face-to-face surveys with Latino community members and our work with partner organizations to adapt outreach and programming to better meet the needs of this audience illustrate key mechanisms for improving participation by this audience.

EFTA has worked with diverse natural areas across the U.S. to better reach Latino audiences. Through our work, we have collaborated with Latino biologists, educators and interns who have provided insight into how to better reach this audience. During this panel, meet some of these partners, explore the challenges to engaging Latino audiences, and have the opportunity to ask your own questions about Latino culture and the role it plays in engagement in ISE. Panel participants will provide recommendations for diversifying your education programs.

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy Session Descriptions

Though many organizations are working to improve Latino involvement at their sites, few have studied the many factors that may contribute to low participation rates, such as language, longevity in the country and country of origin. EFTA's study strives to better understand the complexities of this issue by: identifying and reducing the barriers to Latino participation; providing effective tools to assist educators in connecting with Latino families; and broadly disseminating these tools to agencies and organizations challenged to engage this audience in informal science education.

Welcoming Recreationists to Wildlife Management Areas: A Florida Experience

The system of wildlife management areas in Florida is one of the largest in the nation and offers exceptional scenic landscapes and wildlife recreation opportunities. The long-term success of our wildlife conservation mission depends on this public land system. Its continued existence in turn is dependent upon how the public values and supports it, which is strengthened through direct experience. Growing this support among an increasingly urban and demographically diverse population while maintaining the traditional user base is a challenge not unique to Florida. Discussion will focus on strategies and challenges for planning and delivering recreational opportunities, supportive infrastructure, and promoting these opportunities to the public and involving them in their care.

2016 Academy Evaluation and Looking Forward to McAllen 2018



Speakers



Randall Babb

Randall Babb is the Wildlife Viewing Program Manager for the Arizona Game and Fish Department. He oversees an innovative cost recovery program designed to engage and garner financial and political support from the non-hunting audiences. Babb started his professional career employed by the U.S. Forest Service working as a field technician on grazing impact studies in the southwest. In 1986 Randy moved to the Arizona Game and Fish Department doing contract work and soon became the Aquatic Education Program Manager working for the Education Branch. In 1993 he took a position in Mesa's Region VI Office overseeing information and education activities in central Arizona. In 2014 he moved to his current position where he was able to put his passion for wildlife education and viewing to work.

He has worked on numerous studies and projects in Arizona, New Mexico, southeastern U.S., Mexico, Central America, Vietnam, and southern Africa on small mammals, fish, and reptiles and amphibians and published widely on these and other subjects.



Werner Barz

Werner is a course leader for the Youth Outdoor Skills Curriculum strand with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the National Conservation Training Center in the Division of Education Outreach, Branch of Professional Development. He enjoys opportunities to coordinate and collaborate with USFWS employees from a variety of different programs, as well as state agencies and nongovernmental organizations, on the design, development and delivery of youth outdoor-skill-related courses and programs with a focus on train-the-trainer curricula. Additionally, as the National Youth Program Coordinator for the USFWS, Werner supports the regional youth coordinators in developing partnerships and programs with youth organizations.

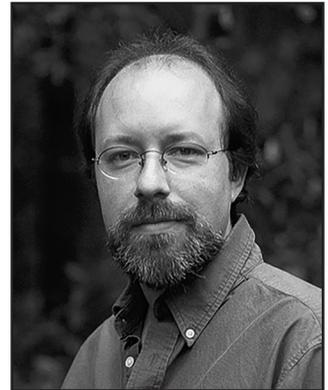


Susan Bonfield

Before founding Environment for the Americas, Susan worked for a variety of conservation organizations, including National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, and as a consultant for the Continental Divide Land Trust and other groups. She believes that community-based conservation, education and partnerships are critical to the future of birds, and has worked throughout the western hemisphere to connect people to bird conservation. Susan received her Master of Science from the University of Michigan after studying Black-legged Kittiwakes in Alaska and holds a doctorate from Colorado State University's Warner College of Natural Resources.

Jaret Daniels

Jaret is Associate Professor of Entomology at the University of Florida and the Program Director of the McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity at the Florida Museum of Natural History. He received his Bachelor of Science in biology from Saint John's University in Minnesota and holds a doctorate from the Department of Entomology and Nematology at the University of Florida. An insect ecologist and conservation biologist by training, his research currently focuses on at-risk butterfly recovery and native insect pollinator conservation. He also is intently involved in a number of national professional training, citizen science and educational initiatives focused on butterflies. He has authored more than 50 scientific papers, popular articles and books dealing with butterflies, conservation, integrated pest management and wildlife landscaping.



Michelle Donlan

Michelle is a training specialist in the Division of Education Outreach for USFWS at the National Conservation Training Center. As a course leader, Michelle designs and delivers several environmental education courses face-to-face and through distance-learning. Michelle's main professional interests include environmental education and connecting people of all backgrounds and abilities to nature. Prior to NCTC, Michelle worked at several wildlife refuges including Patuxent Research Refuge, Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge. Michelle has a Bachelor's in biology from Pennsylvania State University and a Master's in park and resource management/environmental education from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania. She also enjoys spending time with her Labrador/whippet mix pup, playing piano and, most recently, taking improv classes.



Speakers



Anne Glick

Anne is a native of Pennsylvania. Growing up in a hunting and fishing family, connection with nature and the outdoors was instilled at an early age. Currently Anne leads the Wildlife Viewing Section for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission in Tallahassee. Prior to joining the FWC, she was executive director of a nonprofit angler-education foundation, an environmental education instructor for the University of Maryland and a public school educator teaching life and physical science, biology, environmental and earth science. In addition, Anne served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya, East Africa where she worked as a fisheries officer. Her responsibilities at the FWC include helping Florida's rural counties develop sustainable nature tourism programs. She has worked for the agency for 10 years. Anne has chaired the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Working group since its inception in 2009. She also currently represents the FWC on the Visit Florida's Natural, Cultural and Heritage Tourism Committee. She holds a Master of Science in environmental sciences and geology from Johns Hopkins University and a Bachelor of Arts in biology from Susquehanna University. She currently lives on a small farm outside of Tallahassee, Florida sharing adventures with her numerous horses, donkeys, fainting goats and her German shepherd.

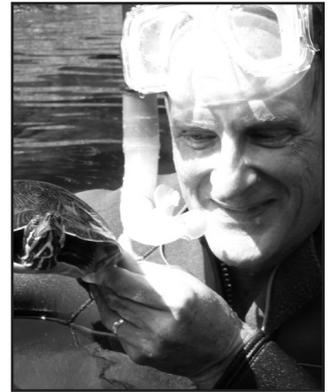


Whitney Gray

Whitney is the Coordinator for the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail, a program of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Whitney has a Bachelor's in zoology and a Master's in environmental engineering sciences with an emphasis on systems ecology, both from the University of Florida. She is a fifth-generation native Floridian who was introduced to wildlife viewing as a child and has worked in Florida's saltmarshes, wetlands and now in the hills and rivers of north Florida. As Coordinator of the GFBWT, Whitney oversees the physical and informational infrastructure of the Trail and works to promote it as a tool for conservation and economic development.

Jim Herrig

Jim was raised on the plains of South Dakota where he developed a fondness for fishing, hunting, camping and wildlife viewing. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife and fisheries science from South Dakota State University and a Master of Science degree in fisheries science from Colorado State University. Following college, Jim served three years in the U.S. Army. He successfully completed Army Ranger School and earned the rank of Captain. His military career was served in Germany. After the military, Jim worked for South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks. He ran a Youth Conservation Camp and helped young people find their way to productive careers. Jim's dream job finally came along when he was hired as a zone fisheries biologist for San Juan, Rio Grande and Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests in Colorado. Trout management became the major function of the job. After a few years he accepted a promotion in the Forest Service and moved to the Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee where he quickly learned there were other aquatic organisms besides trout. Jim embraced the change and learned not only how to identify freshwater mussels, salamanders, frogs, toads, snakes, turtles and a myriad of aquatic invertebrates, but also their life histories, needs and sensitivities. He enjoys sharing this knowledge with anyone willing to get into the stream with a mask and snorkel. Along with his wife, Nancy, Jim has three daughters and two grandsons.



Scot Jackson

In the course of a diverse 20-year career in graphic design and communications, Scot has proven to be a skilled business manager and publication, graphic and website designer. Starting his graphic design career in 1985, Scot realized the potential of computers and communications merging into a thriving industry in the early days of the internet. Beginning with publication design, Scot soon realized the World Wide Web was a much more expansive environment in which to work. Scot formed Dream Catcher Communications and Design in 1996 with a focus on web and graphic design. As the internet and its potential grew, so did the company. Programming and applications development became necessary skills to offer clients as the web turned into a much more business-oriented environment. By hiring some of the best developers and programmers, Dream Catcher Creative has become one of West Virginia's leading solution providers for online business applications. Company growth continued by offering clients solutions for their information technology needs. Network design and implementation, business computer troubleshooting and maintenance, and website hosting have been added to the list of services that Dream Catcher Creative provides. By offering complete IT solutions under one roof, Dream Catcher has become one of the most talented and diverse high-tech companies in West Virginia.



Speakers



Rick Lavender

Rick Lavender has been the lead communications specialist for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Nongame Conservation Section since 2007. His focus is on raising awareness of nongame wildlife and the section's conservation efforts. The role suits his deep interest in the outdoors and varies widely, from editing the e-newsletter Georgia Wild to organizing guest trips for the annual Weekend for Wildlife fundraiser and coordinating agency wildlife cams. He has an Masters of Arts in journalism from the University of Georgia and worked some 25 years in newspapers and magazines, most as an editor and reporter with The (Gainesville, Ga.) Times. While he has roots in south Georgia, Rick and his family live near Athens.



Jerrie Lindsey

Jerrie has worked in the fields of environmental education and outdoor recreation for more than two decades. In her career, she has sought to weave these elements together to create meaningful outdoor experiences for the public. She is a graduate of Florida State University and has worked with the Florida Recreation and Park Association, the Florida Park Service, the Florida Legislature's Advisory Council on Environmental Education and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Jerrie serves on the state's Greenways and Trails Advisory Council, Keep Florida Beautiful Board of Directors, and Scenic Highway Advisory Council. She grew up in a military family living throughout the United States and in Europe. She enjoys most all outdoor recreation activities particularly hiking, paddling and wildlife viewing throughout the world.



Chelsea McKinney

Chelsea has worked at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center for the past six years. Her focus, in the Division of Education Outreach, has been on the Youth in the Great Outdoors Initiative and Connecting People with Nature. Although originally from Florida, Chelsea received her Bachelor of Science at the University of Maine in wildlife ecology and her Master of Science at Minnesota State University in experiential education. She has been working with the USFWS, starting as an intern and seasonal employee while in college, for the past 12 years. Chelsea and her husband just bought their first house, so her many hobbies of running, hiking with their dog, and camping have dwindled to solely include the never-ending house projects which have made Shepherdstown, West Virginia feel just like home.

Nancy Millar

Nancy is director of the McAllen, Texas Convention and Visitors' Bureau and vice president of the McAllen Chamber of Commerce. She has written several articles on nature tourism product development, the value of community buy-in to nature tourism, and nature festivals and their economic impact. Her expertise is in marketing, an area in which she has worked for 19 years. Nancy has been a major force behind the development of the Rio Grande Valley as a model for nature tourism development for other communities in the country. She has created and overseen the implementation of highly successful nature festivals in Texas' Rio Grande Valley in the past nine years. Among other tourism related activities, she sits on the board of directors of Watchable Wildlife Inc. serving as its vice-chair, and of Texas Travel Industry Association and is chair-elect of Texas Nature Tourism Council. Nancy is also president and founder of Nature Festivals of America.



Brian Moyer

Brian serves as the program manager for wildlife-related recreational programs with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and has served in this position for more than four years. He is responsible for managing Virginia's statewide Birding and Wildlife Trail; public access opportunities for hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing; and outreach efforts to promote hunting, fishing and watching wildlife. He received his Master of Science in wildlife management from Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky and his Bachelor of Science in biology from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. He is a native of Virginia and is an avid outdoorsman and enjoys experiencing the outdoors with his family.



Speakers



Christine Peterson

Christine received a Bachelor's in biology from Gettysburg College in 2009. After graduation, she completed an internship at Cape Cod National Seashore in 2010 working on a long-term amphibian and reptile monitoring project, which drove her to pursue a career in wildlife biology and sparked her interest in birds. She began a Master's program at the University of Vermont Rubenstein School in 2012, studying songbirds. Her thesis research was a collaboration with the Audubon Vermont chapter of the National Audubon Society and the Vermont Electric Company to investigate habitat use by declining shrubland songbird species across private lands along powerline rights-of-way in Vermont. During the summer of 2014, before finishing her Master's, Christine completed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service Directorate Fellowship Program working on bog turtle habitat restoration at the Annapolis, Maryland field office. Her extremely positive experience with the USFWS during her fellowship project motivated her to pursue job opportunities with that organization. She completed her Master of Science in January 2015 and just started her career with the USFWS at the National Conservation Training Center in August 2015 in the Division of Education and Outreach. In her free time, Christine enjoys biking, hiking, camping, paddle boarding, snowboarding, cross-country skiing and archery.



Frank Peterson

By the time Frank joined the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation as President and CEO in 2007, his leadership had already produced unprecedented performance for a variety of organizations. He began his career developing and implementing successful corporate strategies for Mobil Oil Corporations' U.S. marketing and refining segments. At RBFF, Frank turned his organizational and marketing skills to increasing participation in recreational boating and fishing. He established close relations with RBFF stakeholders, including boating and fishing industries, and expanded programs that support state agency efforts to attract more people to boating and fishing. He also spearheaded research studies that guide RBFF and stakeholder initiatives, and mobilized broad-based

expertise to support RBFF objectives. Perhaps most widely visible is Frank's leadership in building RBFF into a solid, marketing-driven organization. In 2008, he led the re-branding of RBFF's Take Me Fishing™ consumer outreach campaign and website, TakeMeFishing.org, transforming it into a popular, interactive, content-rich site. Frank also led the development of RBFF's highly successful State Marketing Programs, moving them from pilot efforts to nationwide outreach campaigns. He spearheaded the development of the fishing and boating industry's first-ever Hispanic outreach campaign and website, Vamos A Pescar™ and VamosAPescar.org. He has also been instrumental in expanding all of RBFF's digital tools to keep up with consumer technology, developing mobile-friendly versions of the campaign websites, an interactive Places to Boat and Fish Map, and a Boat Ramp App. Together, the many RBFF initiatives developed and managed under Frank's leadership have contributed to marked increases in fishing license sales, attracted millions of new anglers to fishing, and helped grow the percentage of adults who participate in recreational boating to record numbers.

Shelley Plante

Shelley is the statewide nature tourism manager in the Marketing Group of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. She has been with TPWD for 19 years and her work is all about making life better outside! She oversees the Great Texas Wildlife Trail program (a series of nine driving trails throughout the state guiding visitors to local wildlife viewing attractions) and has been a coordinator for the annual Great Texas Birding Classic for the past 18 years, including overseeing the latest evolution of this program to a statewide event. Shelly also coordinated and helped develop the Texas Paddling Trails Program that builds partnerships between local communities, other agencies, river authorities and Texas Parks and Wildlife sites while creating sustainable paddling tourism opportunities statewide. Shelly also works with private landowners on income diversification options through nature tourism and with communities on developing nature tourism programs within their region. In 2013 she added adjunct professor and lecturer at Texas State University to her schedule, teaching Planning and Development of Nature and Heritage Tourism every fall semester, a prerequisite for the university's Nature and Heritage Tourism cross-departmental minor. Shelly received her Master of Applied Geography with a focus on Nature and Heritage Tourism from Texas State University and has a Bachelor of Art in Plan II and Geography from the University of Texas at Austin. She currently resides in Austin, Texas with her husband and two children, and whenever she can find spare time, she enjoys traveling, hiking, camping, paddling and gardening.

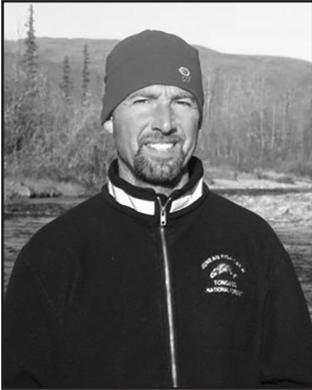


Jessica Ruthenberg

Jessica is the watchable wildlife biologist for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. She has been with the agency for two years and is responsible for coordinating the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail, participating in birding festival planning committees, writing the Richmond Falcon Cam blog, and developing outreach and communications for Virginia's non-traditional constituents. Jessica holds a Master of Science in natural resources and environment from the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment where she was a Doris Duke Conservation Fellow and specialized in conservation biology and environmental behavior, education and communication.



Speakers



Pete Schneider

Originally from Washington State with a life-long interest in all things wild, Pete graduated with a degree in zoology from the University of Idaho in 1994. Pete worked seasonally for the U.S. Forest Service throughout the west on fish and wildlife projects. He earned a teaching certificate in secondary science from Lewis-Clark State College before moving to Juneau, Alaska to work as a fisheries biologist with the USFS on the Tongass National Forest. Pete has lived in Juneau since 2000 with wife Leeann, 10-year-old son Beck and two old dogs.



Jeff Trollinger

Jeff was promoted to his current position as a Deputy Director in the Bureau of Wildlife Resources in February of 2011. Prior to this he was the program manager for the Virginia's Watchable Wildlife Program for 10 years. He has worked with or for the Department since 1987. Jeff graduated from Virginia Tech with a Bachelor of Science in wildlife management in 1987. He received his second Bachelor of Science in 1995 in human resource management from Bluefield College and a Graduate Certificate from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls in wildlife recreation and nature tourism in 2009. He began his career in 1987 working on fish and wildlife databases. In 2001 he became the manager of the Department's newly-formed Watchable Wildlife Program. The Wildlife Diversity Division recognized him in 2007 for outstanding efforts in developing the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail. In 2009, he was recognized with the Department's Wildlife Biologist of the Year Award, and in 2010 the Virginia Chapter of the Wildlife Society presented him with the Henry S. Mosby Professional Award. He has co-authored four publications for which he has received several regional and national awards, and he has been featured in the Department's award-winning video "A Look Outside." In addition, he co-edited a publication with the Colorado Division of Wildlife on Wildlife Viewing and Photography Blinds. He was a founding member of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Working Group, the national professional organization for wildlife viewing programs.

Sponsors



SAVE THE DATE

2018 Wildlife Viewing & Nature Tourism Academy

February 19th - 23rd, 2018, Drury Suites, McAllen Texas

