

FINAL PROGRAM

Wildlife Viewing & Nature Tourism Academy:

Practical Training for Practitioners

February 20 – 22, 2018
McAllen, Texas



Welcome to McAllen!

INFORMATION

1. McAllen International Airport	(956) 682-9101
2. Quinta Mazatlan (Birding Center)	(956) 688-3370
3. La Plaza Mall	(956) 687-5251
4. McAllen Convention Center	(956) 688-3400
5. Palms Crossing Shopping Center - Barnes & Noble, BJ's Brewery, Romano's Macaroni Grill Mimi's Cafe, Chocolate Factory, PF Chang's	
6. Las Tiendas Shopping Center	
7. McAllen Nature Center	(956) 681-3333
8. Town Lake at Fireman's Park	(956) 661-3333
9. McAllen Chamber of Commerce	(956) 682-2871
10. International Museum of Art & Science	(956) 682-1564
11. Entertainment District	
12. Drury Suites	(956) 682-3222

Getting around:
City Metro, Uber, Lyft, taxis and hotel shuttles make it easy!
www.visitmcallen.com

2018 Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy Planning Team

Deniz Aygen, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Randy Babb, Arizona Game and Fish Department

Anne Glick, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Sarah Kendrick, Missouri Department of Conservation

Jerrie Lindsey, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Nancy Millar, Visit McAllen

Shelly Plante, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Joe Yarchin, Retired Arizona Game and Fish Department

Program Schedule

Monday, February 19, 2018

7:30 a.m. – 4:30 a.m.	Optional Pre-Academy Field Trip to South Padre Island
5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Welcome to McAllen Margarita Social: Join Academy partner, McAllen Convention and Visitors Bureau for a festive margarita social complete with a Mariachi Band!
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Kickback at Drury Inn: Join our host hotel for heavy snacks/light dinner at the Kickback at Drury Inn or venture outt on your own to a local restaurant.

Tuesday, February 20, 2018

6:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Foundations for Fish and Wildlife Management in the 21st Century
8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Plenary: Nature of Americans
10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Break
10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Developing the Outdoor Citizen: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Response to the Nature of Americans Study
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Lunch
12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Building a Diverse Staff and Volunteer Team. From National Wildlife Refuge to Cities, Reflections on Success, Struggles and Ongoing Efforts
2:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Creating a Hispanic Outreach Program in State Government
2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Break
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife
4:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Break
5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Dinner and Keynote: Know they Neighbor: A Story of Collaboration to Engage Diverse Audiences in the Rio Grande Valley

Program Schedule

Wednesday, February 21, 2018

6:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast	
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	The Delaware Bayshore Approach: Engaging Partners to Support Wildlife Viewing and Natural Tourism	Turn Your Cell Phone into a Sell Phone
9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	Great Missouri Birding Trail: Experience and Progress of the Newest Birding Trail)	A Swan Success Story
9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Flowing a New Path: The Journey in Rebranding Ourselves from Oldest Theme Park in Texas to Successful Nature Center	Digital Storytelling and Mobile Engagement
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 a.m.	Developing Safe Canoe-Kayak Trail	Tourism GO! Using Augmented Reality Apps Effectively
12:00 a.m. – 1:00 a.m.	Lunch	
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Engaging the Public: Fish and Wildlife Conservation Techniques for the 21st Century	BioBlitz, iNaturalist and Citizen Science - Oh My!
2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Break	
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Communicating with Birders, Bird Hunters and other Bird Enthusiasts	Strengthening Communities of Nature Sites Through Nature Contest Experiences
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Florida's 75th Anniversary of the Wildlife Management System	Trail Cameras - Getting Kids Into the Outdoors using Technology
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Kickback at Drury Inn: Join our host hotel for heavy snacks/ light dinner at the Kickback at Drury Inn or venture out on your own to a local restaurant.	
5:45 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.	Optional Evening Field Trip to Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park: Enjoy nighttime wildlife viewing at the Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park and World Birding Center.	

Program Schedule

Thursday, February 22, 2018

6:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast	
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Wildlife Photography Ranches: How and Why	Baby Steps to Nature: Connecting Children to Nature Birth to Kindergarten
9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	Break	
9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Improving the View By Design	How to Think Like a Marketing Wizard and Work Some Marketing Magic!
10:30 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.	Trailblazing Paths to Informal/ Formal Education in Nature: Texas Tech Llano River Field Station	Sharing Our Conservation Story on a Shoestring Budget
11:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch: Looking Forward to the 2020 Academy	
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Rural Tourism Collaboration & Training	
2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Break	
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Overview of the 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation	
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Break	
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	<p>Closing Banquet and Presentation: Join your Academy colleagues at Quinta Mazatlan World Birding Center for one last night of camaraderie, conversation, beautiful scenery, and authentic Tex-Mex food while we learn about the balance between nature tourism and the conservation of an endangered species at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge.</p>	



Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy Session Descriptions

Monday, February 19, 2018

7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Optional Pre-Academy Field Trip to South Padre Island

(\$75 per person and spouses/partners are welcome; sign up at the Academy registration table)

5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Welcome to McAllen Margarita Social

Join Academy partner, McAllen Convention and Visitors Bureau for a festive margarita social complete with a Mariachi Band!

5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Kickback at Drury Inn

Join our host hotel for heavy snacks/light dinner at the Kickback at Drury Inn or venture out on your own to a local restaurant.

Tuesday, February 20, 2018

6:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.

Breakfast

Hot breakfast included in hotel reservation.

8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

Foundations for Fish and Wildlife Management in the 21st Century

David W. Arnold, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Ancient Roman law, recorded in A.D. 529, recognized that certain aspects of nature were common to all mankind and therefore all people should have access. The rights of people to the bounties of nature have been recognized in the Magna Carta, established by the U.S. Supreme Court, and reflected in numerous local, state and federal laws. Recognizing a huge decrease in certain wildlife species and fearing a future loss of hunting opportunities, sportsmen, including such notable figures as Theodore Roosevelt, embraced a series of tenets which have become known as the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. Since neither the public trust doctrine nor the North American Model are firmly enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, relying on them solely as a legal basis for ensuring access to fish and wildlife may not be fruitful. While some states have attempted to protect public trust resources and access to them, courts are not always persuaded that such efforts have jurisdiction over federal navigable waterways. Private landowners can have significant impacts on public resources. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2011 Report, wildlife-watching in the U.S. has significant economic impacts at the local, state and national levels, as expenditures generated \$142 billion in economic output, 1.4 million jobs and \$21.1 billion in state, local and federal tax revenues. In spite of these positive economic impacts, plus those from hunting and fishing, conservation of wildlife is losing ground on many fronts. What can be done to reverse the negative trends and set the stage for successful fish and wildlife management in the 21st century?

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy Session Descriptions

8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Plenary: Nature of Americans

Dave Case, DJ Case & Associates

10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Break

10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Developing the Outdoor Citizen: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Response to the Nature of Americans Study

Johnnie Smith and Darcy Bontempo, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Learn about Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's response to the Nature of Americans report. In many ways, TPWD has struggled in the past with establishing relevancy to audiences for whom a comfort level with and affinity for the outdoors is not a part of their heritage or experience. This report shows that the "connection to nature is not a dispensable amenity but, rather, is essential to the quality of life, health, social well-being, prosperity, and productivity of all Americans." Put a different way, the conservation of species, the protection and restoration of habitats, and the provision of healthy streams and clean air are closely linked to human flourishing. A thriving natural environment helps Americans live happier, healthier lives. It helps children develop socially, psychologically and physically. It creates places where Americans want to live, work, and flourish. You'll go on an organizational journey with the presenters as they describe TPWD's efforts to connect children and families with nature and create a willingness and desire to connect with nature in a new, meaningful and long-lasting way that restructures how we as a society live our lives.

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Lunch

12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Building a Diverse Staff and Volunteer Team. From National Wildlife Refuge to Cities, Reflections on Success, Struggles and On-going Efforts

Jennifer Owen-White, Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge; Marisa Oliva-Rodriguez, Edinburg Scenic Wetlands & World Birding Center; and Tiffany Kersten, McAllen Nature Center

The directors of three nature sites in the Southwest will share stories and perspective on building their facilities from the ground up, engaging the local community in new and different ways, and building a staff that reflects the local community while mentoring them through the career ladder. Tiffany will highlight the grassroots movement that saw her site move from an abandoned park into a nature center, including engaging volunteers and ultimately hiring diverse staff filling creative and nontraditional wildlife viewing and nature tourism roles. Jennifer will discuss her journey as a manager of the first urban refuge in the Southwest where she has partnered with the local community to create innovative civic engagement programs and employment opportunities within her agency. Marisa will focus on her work within the World Birding Center family, from mentoring and training local naturalists, biologists and outdoor recreationalists to creating a more welcoming and friendly site for the residents of the Rio Grande Valley.

The Nature of Americans

www.natureofamericans.org

www.djcase.com

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy Session Descriptions

2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Creating a Hispanic Outreach Program in State Government

Alix Pedraza, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

As the population demographics continue to change in South Carolina, state government agencies are going to have to be prepared to meet the needs of new diverse populations. This begins with introducing new populations to who we are and what we do, and updating programs to meet the needs of the Hispanic audience. The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) has successfully created a Hispanic Outreach Program, expanding opportunities for and participation in SCDNR programs. From license requirement education to bilingual events, SCDNR has begun to break down barriers of mistrust and introduce itself to the changing populations of South Carolina. Creating a Hispanic Outreach Program in State Government will highlight the initial steps taken to create the program, setting realistic expectations within your organization, current elements of the program, lessons learned and future growth.

2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Break

3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife

Sean Saville, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

This presentation, led by AFWA's campaign manager for the Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife (formerly known as the Blue Ribbon Panel), will teach participants the advocacy, communications, outreach, marketing and legislative strategies being employed in this exciting campaign to secure sustainable funding for state wildlife conservation, education and recreation. Participants will learn about the campaign, how their organizations can play an important role, and how to speak clearly about the need for increased wildlife conservation and the innovative 21st century solution that this campaign is advocating for.

4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Break

5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Dinner and Keynote Address: Know Thy Neighbor: A Story of Collaboration to Engage Diverse Audiences in the Rio Grande Valley

Marisa Oliva-Rodriguez, Edinburg Scenic Wetlands & World Birding Center; Gisela Chapa, South Texas Refuge Complex – USFWS; and Javier de Leon, Estero Llano Grande State Park and World Birding Center

Through collaboration, partnerships and multi-site efforts, nature centers, parks and sites in the Rio Grande Valley have been working together to increase opportunities in outdoor recreation and nature tourism for the largely Hispanic population. Learn about their efforts, successes and failures as they share insights about their community and the progress they have made over the last 15 years.

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy Session Descriptions

Wednesday, February 21, 2018

6:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.

Breakfast

Hot breakfast included in hotel reservation.

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions

Track 1: The Delaware Bayshore Approach: Engaging Partners to Support Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism

Anthony Gonzon, Delaware Division of Fish & Wildlife

The Delaware Bayshore Initiative, a program managed by the Delaware Division of Fish & Wildlife, has three objectives: habitat conservation, protection and restoration; providing and enhancing outdoor wildlife-dependent recreation; and building stronger communities through improved access to natural resources and ecotourism. Accomplishing these objectives requires effective outreach and partnership development accompanied with the capacity to provide improved access and wildlife viewing opportunities that serve to foster public appreciation and support for wildlife and habitat conservation. Further, effective partnerships can generate support for funding opportunities to accomplish the initiative's objectives leading to increased ecotourism and stronger economies in local communities. One example of finding a creative opportunity for public engagement, outreach and communication is the success of the Delaware Bayshore Byway. As part of our strategy to achieve the objectives of the Delaware Bayshore Initiative, we are working collaboratively with the Delaware Department of Transportation to provide improved access, wildlife viewing enhancements, interpretive signs and other wayfinding materials along the Delaware Bayshore Byway to attract and promote wildlife viewing and nature tourism. The Byway example and other examples of collaborative partnerships will provide insight into developing and fostering important partnerships to promote conservation, wildlife viewing and nature tourism; novel approaches to successfully obtaining funding; and building strong conservation and community support to provide access and facilities that support ecotourism and local economies.

Track 2: Turn Your Cell Phone into a Sell Phone

Luciano Guerra

Has your social media become increasingly anti-social over time? Are you losing face on Facebook? Want to put the "you" back in YouTube? Learn how to use your cell phone to shoot the kind of engaging videos that will increase traffic to your website and raise your social media pages' reaches, views, shares and likes. Self-taught photographer and videographer, Luciano Guerra of the National Butterfly Center, will share lessons he has learned, as well as tools and tricks everyone can use to create quality productions that bring the beauty and wonder of nature to life online.

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9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions

Track 1: Great Missouri Birding Trail: Experience and Progress of the Newest Birding Trail

Sarah Kendrick, Missouri Department of Conservation

The Great Missouri Birding Trail is the newest statewide birding trail. Learn more about how Missouri partnered with a nonprofit organization to build an online resource that introduces Missouri residents and visitors to the “best of the best” places to birdwatch across the state. State Ornithologist Sarah Kendrick will share Missouri’s approach to the trail’s development and launch, including successes, lessons learned and ideas to start your own trail. The Great Missouri Birding Trail also has future plans after its official launch in May 2017 to promote local hotel, food and fuel businesses to birders; progress will be shared and discussion is welcome.

Track 2: A Swan Success Story

Carrie McClelland, Environment Yukon

“A Celebration of Swans” has been running in Yukon, Canada since 1994. Though viewing thousands of swans as they rest and feed is a wonderful reason to celebrate, the real purpose of the festival is to educate Yukoners about the importance of early spring open water and the importance of reducing disturbance to migrating water birds. Every year this birding festival attracts approximately 4000 people — more than 10 percent of the territory’s total population. The festival is centered around Swan Haven Interpretive Centre, a 1,000-square-foot government building that sits on private property on the shores of Marsh Lake, approximately 40 kilometers from Whitehorse. With a population of 26,000, Whitehorse is the capital of Yukon and the largest city within 1,000 kilometers. The interpretive center and other public walks and talks focus on teaching the public why open water is so rare in Yukon in April and how it is critical for the health and survival of migrating water birds. This presentation will provide background information on the festival origins and how it has evolved to continuously attract participants from a small population base. It will address our constant effort to expand and engage new audiences, balancing public expectations with wildlife conservation efforts, and it will outline facility operations and partnerships. The presentation will emphasize the use of “A Celebration of Swans” as a wildlife management tool and how that has affected the community. If time permits, a discussion will follow regarding other examples and challenges of using education and not enforcement to effectively manage wildlife.

9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Break

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions

Track 1: Flowing a New Path: The Journey in Rebranding Ourselves from Oldest Theme Park in Texas to Successful Nature Center

Miranda Wait and Meagan Lobban, Meadows Center for Water and the Environment,
Texas State University

From swimming pigs and mermaids to environmental interpretation, the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment has undergone a variety of changes over the past couple of decades. In 1994 Texas State University purchased the theme park Aquarena Springs and has successfully made the transition

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into a nature and research center. Our mission today is to inspire research and leadership that ensures clean, abundant water for the environment and all humanity. We fulfill our mission by integrating across four pillars: research, education, stewardship and leadership. Our educational programs encourage lifelong learning about the environment and people's relationship to the environment. Our center is located at Spring Lake in San Marcos, one of the largest artesian spring systems in the world. Our location is unique in that it is a living laboratory, home to eight threatened and endangered species that are found here and nowhere else in the world and one of the world's largest turtle populations. It is also considered to be one of the oldest, most continuously inhabited places in North America, having found artifacts dating back to over 13,000 years ago. The Spring Lake educational programs offer a multitude of activities which help connect children and their families to nature, engage new stakeholders in water and environmental stewardship, and provide wildlife viewing and environmental interpretation opportunities for the general public. Through trial and error we have created a successful education program and are constantly striving to come up with new ideas for community programming. Our presentation will go over the different programming that we offer and talk about the unique opportunities that the Meadows Center has to offer for nature tourism, from glass-bottom boat tours, guided wetlands walks, hands-on learning activities and guided kayaking tours to unique scuba diving opportunities. We will do a hands-on activity that helps get kids and adults engaged in environmental education.

Track 2: Digital Storytelling and Mobile Engagement

Thomas Dunne, OnCell; and Ruben Reyna, National Park Service, Palo Alto

Mobile technology is pervasive and resides in nearly everyone's pockets. A smartphone is the most indispensable tool for people as they navigate their world. It is vital that all outdoor destinations and tourism organizations seize that opportunity to meet visitors in "their" world and give them access to information through their devices. In this session, you'll learn how to merge storytelling and technology to meet organizational, educational and accessibility goals. Mobile app experiences for visitors can include audio, video, location-specific triggering through GPS or Bluetooth beacons, push notifications, and so much more. A mobile experience can be poignant or fun, homemade or highly produced. The same technologies are available to all, from the small and struggling to the large and well-funded, so it is essential that organizations of all sizes understand how a mobile strategy can be tailored to fit their needs. This session will help organizations learn how to leverage mobile technology to tell their stories, share their histories, and connect with visitors in new and exciting ways. Learn how to define a mobile strategy based on goals and visitor needs and how to grow that strategy over time. We'll also demo some of the latest technologies, such as push notifications, location-aware beacons and hands-free audio touring.

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions

Track 1: Developing Safe Public Canoe-Kayak Trail

Edward Lagace, Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

Water trails are recreational corridors and routes on rivers and lakes that provide a unique experience for paddlers of all ages and abilities. Designated trails should provide safe access points, be designed with a variety of lengths, offer a range of paddling difficulty, and be adequately signed so users feel confident that they will not become lost. Water trails can reconnect us to the history, heritage, geology and wildlife of an area and offer an escape to a solitude seldom found in today's hectic world. They can also boost the local economy through tourism and rental dollars. Learn planning, developing and

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maintaining a nonmotorized water trail. Review literature and walk through the steps necessary to create a safety-first, family-friendly trip on your new trail. Explore lessons learned through the development of six water trails on the backwaters of the Mississippi River within the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge – Winona District (Refuge) over the past seven years. As a participant in this 90-minute session, bring materials (maps, photos, aerial photos, and so on) for your dream water trail, and by the end of the session, you will have the ability to get your water trail started.

Track 2: Tourism GO! Using Augmented Reality Apps Effectively

April Conkey and Marybeth Green, Texas A&M University–Kingsville

Nearly 72 percent of all adults in the United States (and 86 percent of adults under the age of 30) own a smartphone and increasingly use smartphones as their primary means of communication and source of information, and they want to engage with their phones at events (Poushter, 2016). Finding ways to capitalize on technology is a challenge for wildlife viewing and nature tourism, but augmented reality apps offer a variety of opportunities. The Pokémon GO craze was utilized effectively by nature tourism professionals to entice Pokémon players to visit parks, museums and other sites while playing the game; however, once there, the players may not have interacted with or learned anything about the actual nature or wildlife at the site. Similarly, parks and museums have had augmented reality apps designed for them, often at great expense, but these often focus on eye-catching visuals with little learning occurring. This interactive presentation will introduce you to forms of augmented reality (AR) that can be used with camera-enabled smart-devices at your site, provide best practices for using AR with exhibits and tours, and help you brainstorm ideas for designing AR apps that will enhance learning at your site. In this presentation, we will describe AR and its use in tourism, present our research findings and best practices for using AR, allow participants to explore AR with iPads and books, and facilitate a brainstorming session for participants to plan an AR experience for their wildlife watching or nature tourism site.

12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Lunch

1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions

Track 1: Engaging the Public: Fish and Wildlife Conservation Techniques for the 21st Century

David W. Arnold, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

State and federal agencies routinely engage the public on issues ranging from fishing and hunting regulations to protection of endangered species. Nonprofit conservation organizations frequently seek to galvanize public support for their causes. Polarization of the public has increased and recent experiences at meetings, marches and governmental decision-making meetings have alarmed many. Challenges to ensuring public involvement in planning and decision-making include getting people to participate, keeping the peace at gatherings of any type, identifying all stakeholders, and finding common ground for science and solutions. An adequate appreciation of the human dimension aspects of the topic being discussed is crucial. Government agencies want to have involvement but often struggle when the public chooses not to participate in the building of the proposed solutions to complex fish and wildlife conservation issues. Citizen advocacy groups are often frustrated when they attend government meetings and feel that the decisions have already been made and their participation does not count. Many citizens are unwilling to participate in public meetings even though they have strong emotions about conservation. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has developed a

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number of approaches to ensure that stakeholders and the public have the opportunity to be involved. This session will provide tips for how to identify stakeholders, engage the public, prepare for and manage meetings, and it will include a demonstration of an “open house” meeting suitable for high conflict topics.

Track 2: Panel: BioBlitz, iNaturalist and Citizen Science - Oh My!

Marsha May, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; and Peter Kleinhenz, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

This panel presentation will introduce participants to Citizen Science programs in Texas, Florida and Nebraska. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) developed a strategy for monitoring Species of Concern (then Candidate Species) using citizen volunteers. That strategy evolved into Texas Nature Trackers (TNT), a citizen science monitoring effort designed to involve volunteers of all ages and interest levels in gathering scientific data on species of concern in Texas through experiential learning. All of TNT projects live in a fascinating online data platform, iNaturalist. iNaturalist is a place where you can easily record what you see either on your smartphone in the iNaturalist app or by taking photographs and uploading your observations into the iNaturalist webpage at www.inaturalist.org. Following a webinar about the Texas Nature Trackers program, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission took the baton and established the Florida Nature Trackers Program (FLNT). Currently FLNT is working to fill data gaps on our wildlife management areas as well as introduce Floridians to our management areas through BioBlitzes. BioBlitzes are under-utilized tools used to engage the public in citizen science projects which connect them to their environment while generating useful data for science and conservation. A BioBlitz is an intense period of biological surveying in an attempt to record all the living species within a designated area. Learn how Nebraska Game and Parks Commission has effectively set up BioBlitzes uses the data collected by the public.

2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Break

3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions

Track 1: Communicating with Birders, Bird Hunters and other Bird Enthusiasts

Holly Vaughn-Joswick, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

In an age of constant information, how can we be sure our messages reach our intended audiences? How can we make these messages palatable to consumptive and nonconsumptive users of natural resources? The presentation will walk through several of the Michigan DNR’s bird-related communication strategies including Michigan’s Wetland Wonders, GEMS (Grouse Enhanced Management Sites), the MI Birds Facebook page, Pure Michigan Hunt and more! We’ll talk about what worked, what didn’t, and ideas for communication strategy planning. Participants will come away with ideas for creating vibrant and successful communication strategies for birders, bird hunters and other bird enthusiasts!

Track 2: Strengthening Communities of Nature Sites Through Nature Contest Experiences

Sara Jose, Oso Bay Wetlands Preserve, and Tracy Stratman, City of Omaha Parks and Recreation

Getting kids and families outdoors and interacting with their local natural resources is a goal of many organizations. A new study by The Nature of Americans collaborative offers recommendations to alleviate disconnection from nature. Two recommendations are “deepening local experiences in nature

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy Session Descriptions

near home” and “assuring adults and children that time in nature can be (and even ought to be) social.” In this vein, a variety of challenges or contests help families experience and connect with their local nature areas and each other, whether outside their back door, across town or around the state. In this session, we will summarize four state programs that offer a package of experiences to help people get outside and spend time together as a family; explain how a Park Pursuit, Texas Nature Challenge or similar program can strengthen your community of nature sites; discuss how to get started with a program, including identifying potential partners to join or create a place-based or region-oriented program in your area; and focus on the Rio Grande Valley’s Family Summer Adventure Challenge to learn how this program has impacted their group of nature sites and area families.

4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions

Track 1: Florida’s 75th Anniversary of the Wildlife Management System

Jerrie Lindsey, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) celebrated the 75th year of its wildlife management area system in 2017. Though one of the largest state systems of wildlife lands in the U.S., most Floridians are not aware of their role or importance in conserving the biodiversity of the state. This lack of awareness is a potential threat in a rapidly urbanizing state like Florida. We used the occasion of the anniversary to conduct a yearlong campaign that introduced Floridians to the WMAs, their value for fish and wildlife and recreation, and how FWC biologists are restoring and managing these expansive and beautiful lands. This was accomplished through special events, statewide contests, a range of programs and presentations, as well as supporting in/outreach communications efforts conducted by a broad-based team across the agency. Participants will learn about surmounting the challenges of sustaining and tracking the reach of an in-house communications effort over an entire year, how to use recreational activity challenges and contests to encourage exploration, and how to use citizen BioBlitzes and the iNaturalist program as a means of deepening discovery and developing citizen scientist volunteers.

Track 2: Trail Cameras - Getting Kids Into the Outdoors using Technology

Luke Coccoli, Boone and Crockett Club, Montana

The Boone and Crockett Club (B&C) purchased the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch (TRMR) in 1987 to commemorate the club’s centennial celebration. Founded by Teddy Roosevelt, B&C’s TRMR is located west of Dupuyer, Montana, along the Rocky Mountain Front and is home to the Rasmuson Wildlife Conservation Center (RWCC). For over 25 years the RWCC and TRMR have served in educating thousands of individuals from across the globe in place-based conservation education. On the 6,000-acre working cattle ranch, wolves, grizzly and black bears, whitetail and mule deer, elk, moose, coyotes and mountain lions all roam free. Not all of this wildlife could be viewed on a regular basis, of course, until the ranch staff began deploying about a dozen trail cameras year-round. Not only are the pictures phenomenal but it opened a whole new world of possibilities to connect youth and adults alike with the outdoors! This presentation will allow the audience to see actual trail camera photos from the ranch and learn how to use technology to get kids into the outdoors! Topics covered will include selecting a camera, learning how to use a camera, how and where to deploy a camera, how to organize and store data (pictures), how to develop curriculum and social media content using this data and many other useful tips and tricks regarding the use of “camera traps.” Participants will be able to get hands on at least two different styles of trail cameras to learn the variety of functionality and ease of use as well as

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy Session Descriptions

see a variety of photos from Montana and current projects the Boone and Crockett Club is developing using such technology. If someone you know cannot or will not get excited about wildlife and wild places, try these tactics using technology to get them into the outdoors!

5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Kickback at Drury Inn

Join our host hotel for heavy snacks/light dinner at the Kickback at Drury Inn or venture out on your own to a local restaurant.

5:45 p.m. - 8:45 p.m.

Optional Evening Field Trip to Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park

Enjoy nighttime wildlife viewing at the Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park and World Birding Center. (Included with Academy registration, but you must sign up to reserve your spot and transportation)

Thursday, February 22, 2018

6:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.

Breakfast

Hot breakfast included in hotel reservation.

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions

Track 1: Wildlife Photography Ranches...How and Why

Sandy Hurwitz and Pliny Mier, La Lomita and Transition Wildlife Photography Ranches; and William Colson, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute

The development of very high quality digital cameras, lenses, photo processing hardware, internet publishing sites and photo printing options has created a rapidly expanding wildlife photography industry. Entire communities and regions have begun to promote and take advantage of this new phenomenon. Wildlife photography ranches, when properly developed and marketed, can provide wildlife photographers of all skill levels the ability to obtain significant numbers of quality images on a predictable basis. By the same token, private development of quality wildlife photography venues provides the opportunity to create high-paying non-exportable jobs for a new generation of young people in rural as well as urban areas. Engaging the general public in wildlife photography provides significant opportunity to enable our increasingly urban society to interact with, enjoy, understand and protect our valuable natural environments. In order to take advantage of and expand this new and exciting industry, it is critical to provide the public with quality venues that predictably provide a high quality experience. This overview presentation will teach the basics of developing and marketing quality wildlife photography ranches.

Track 2: Baby Steps to Nature: Connecting Children to Nature from Birth to Kindergarten

Kyle O'Haver, Texas Parks and Wildlife

In wildlife viewing and nature tourism, we as professionals often focus on the 8 to 12-year-old demographic, but we are missing out on an extremely important untapped and overlooked segment of a

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy Session Descriptions

child's life: the preschool and toddler years. Preschool and toddler years are one of the most important times in developing speech, social interaction and other areas of development. This period is actually the time when positive or negative interactions with nature can lead to phobias and fears of nature-based activities and sometimes even to nature in general if we ignore opportunities for engagement or miss out on the chance to engage this younger crowd to our natural spaces. Instead of setting preschoolers up to a potential lifelong disconnect with nature, this session will give you tools on how to shape positive experiences from the start of someone's life and how that can often have the greatest impact in how they develop into wildlife watchers, naturalists, and ultimately protectors of our natural environment. Programs aimed at engaging and guiding these young wildlife viewers will also often have the end result of creating entire families of nature tourists since the parents and teachers attending events with the preschoolers will also be engaged in the study of nature and wildlife viewing, thereby becoming nature tourists themselves. This program is based on the good and bad experiences of a nature-loving family where the father has a professional job tied to wildlife viewing, natural resource conservation and nature education. The information will be broken down into developmental periods, described by age (but based on development periods with motor skills and learning taken into account), to show that there are steps with engaging children to create positive and safe experiences. Activities and experiences for urban and rural settings that will help in developing a nature loving, inquisitive, adventurous child and future nature tourist will be explored. With me as the presenter you can be sure it will heavy on birding too.

9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Break

9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions

Track 1: Improving the View By Design

Denise Husband, Delaware Division of Fish & Wildlife

This presentation will provide insight to user-friendly design techniques that can be utilized to increase public engagement in wildlife viewing and nature tourism. It will also highlight approaches that agencies and nongovernmental organizations can use to construct high-quality conservation-compatible wildlife viewing facilities with the least impact to habitat and other users. This is particularly critical in fish and wildlife areas where hunting and fishing can be in direct conflict with wildlife viewing activities and related uses. Additionally the Americans with Disabilities Act will be reviewed and discussed as it relates to these low-impact recreational pursuits. Through real-life examples, attendees will gain an understanding of the essential steps of the design process that are crucial for the enhancement of the user experience. From simple user conflicts to more complex issues requiring the resources of a design professional, the attendees will take away potential solutions and tools to create more effective and utilized wildlife viewing areas.

Track 2: How to Think Like a Marketing Wizard, and Work Some Marketing Magic!

Janis Johnson, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Want to gain insight on how to run a marketing campaign with concrete examples that relate to wildlife viewing and nature tourism? Have you ever wondered what to include in a marketing plan and how to best execute one? Learn best practices to build awareness, participation, sales, contributions, repeat visits and more — for your projects, programs and organization. Gather tips on how to identify the

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy Session Descriptions

benefits of your programs and communicate them clearly to a target audience, how to define and locate your highest-quality prospects, how to choose the right media for delivering your message, and how to use social media and paid online advertising on any size budget. We will also discuss the pros and cons of working with an ad agency, how to know if your marketing efforts are working, how to use your data to improve marketing results, and how to inspire internal collaboration and buy-in to get a marketing campaign launched. You will leave this session understanding key components of a marketing plan, successful strategies and key deliverables using real-world examples.

10:30 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions

Track 1: "Trail" Blazing Paths to Ecotourism and Environmental Education in Nature: Texas Tech Llano River Field Station

Tom Arsuffi, Texas Tech University Llano River Field Station

The Texas Tech University Llano River Field Station (LRFS), a multifaceted facility in Junction, Texas, was designated as a field station in 2003 and lies at the heart of the Texas Hill Country at the edge of the Edwards Plateau. Its 411 acres cradle the pristine, spring-fed South Llano River and sit adjacent to the South Llano River State Park. The goal of the TTU Llano River Field Station is to serve as a destination for scientific research, nature and ecotourism; ecosystem and water resource management; and education and training programs for K-12, undergraduate and graduate students, landowners and the public. In 2011, the TTU Llano River Field Station formed a partnership with the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) and multiple public and private stakeholder groups to develop the vision for a land and water trail system on the TTU-LRFS property that would highlight different habitats and ecosystems representing the Texas Hill Country. The new Llano River Discovery Point Trail integrates K-12 watershed education with research programs at LRFS, whereby students, teachers, parents and land managers are introduced to ecology, nature, watersheds and land stewardship. The trail is interpretative, highlighting different habitats and ecosystems representing the Texas Hill Country including plants, bird, wildlife, invasive and trust species in the context of best management practices and demonstration projects associated with our native plant garden, rainwater harvesting system, mesquite brush control demonstration area, wildlife guzzler with associated game camera, invasive species management projects and some future projects soon to come online (prescribed burn and plant restoration and succession, riparian improvement projects, instream fish habitat improvement structures).

Track 2: Sharing Our Conservation Story on a Shoestring Budget

Heather Feeler, Missouri Department of Conservation

We are bombarded with thousands of messages every single day. How do we make the conservation message resonate, or even be remembered, in a world of 24-hour news cycles and drama-filled celebrity banter? How do we successfully expand our reach with a constantly shrinking shoestring budget? While impactful storytelling is vital to reaching new conservationists, we must also think creatively on cost-effective communications channels we can use to reach new audiences. Technology provides a unique and useful tool for spreading our message. Participants will also have a chance to ask questions, as well as share any best practices from their organization on impactful storytelling on a shoestring budget, if time allows at the end.

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy Session Descriptions

11:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Lunch Session - Looking Forward to the 2020 Academy

Alex Fogg, Emerald Coast CVB

1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Rural Tourism Collaboration and Training - this will be a full session

Miles Phillips and Frank Burris, Oregon State University Extension and Sea Grant

Delve into a case study of the Travel Oregon Rural Tourism Studio process with specific examples from coastal communities. Learn how to engage and leverage the extension faculty in every U.S. county to help with nature tourism including a nature tour market price research project.

2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Break

3:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Overview of the 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation

Tom Allen, Southwick Associates

3:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

2018 Academy Overview and Evaluation—Looking Forward to 2020

4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Break

5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Closing Banquet and Presentation

Join your Academy colleagues at Quinta Mazatlan World Birding Center for one last night of camaraderie, conversation, beautiful scenery, and authentic Tex-Mex food while we learn about the balance between nature tourism and the conservation of an endangered species at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge.

We'll have a pre-meal presentation on the lawn of the film "Phantom Cat of the Chaparral Endangered Ocelot" followed by a presentation by Laguna Atascosa NWR staff on endangered species management practices, balancing needs of birders and other nature tourists, and communication with wildlife viewers using the ocelot as a case study. We'll share real lessons learned when closing portions of a refuge following the death of a radio-collared ocelot, the key species at this refuge.

Following the presentation, we'll retire to the courtyard to enjoy a locally made festive Tex-Mex meal including aguas frescas, homemade tortillas, and other regional specialties, accompanied by music from local musicians.

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Academy Session Descriptions

Friday, February 23, 2018

All Day

Optional Post-Academy Field Trip to the 22nd Annual Whooping Crane Festival (on your own)



World famous * 20 years serving birders
alamoinnbnb.com * alamoinn@gmail.com *
956.782.9912

Speakers



Tom Allen

Tom is Southwick Associates' Vice President of Research and oversees the firm's data analysis and economic modeling. Tom holds a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Management and a Master of Science in Community Development, both from the University of Maine. Prior to joining Southwick Associates in 2002, Tom worked as a research scientist at the University of Maine School of Economics for over 20 years. Tom has worked with data from National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation since the 2001 survey to estimate the economic impacts of fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing. Since joining Southwick Associates, Tom has personally conducted over 100 projects under contract to state or federal resource agencies, outdoor-related businesses and sportsmen's

organizations to estimate the economic impacts of a variety of outdoor recreational activities. Tom has also spoken before many state and NGO organizations about the economics associated with fishing, hunting and outdoor recreation.



David Arnold

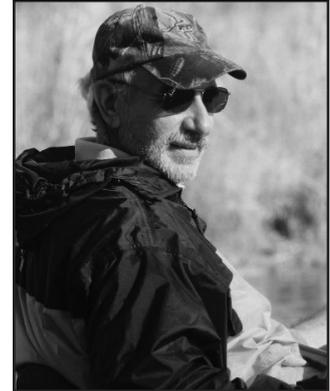
David earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Abilene Christian University and a Master of Science degree in biological oceanography at Florida State University. David has over 32 years of experience working in various state agency positions. Since 2003, he has been in the executive director's office of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). His responsibilities include assisting staff with rulemaking, stakeholder engagement and facilitating resolutions of complex issues. He also trains staff in facilitation and stakeholder engagement and helps plan FWC commission meetings. He has helped craft the agency's Gopher Tortoise Management Plan, improve the process for creating hunting and fishing rules, develop a stakeholder report on non-motorized boating issues and

obtain public input on burrowing owl conservation guidelines. David has participated in data collection for the Florida breeding bird atlas and several Christmas bird counts, and he has served as a president for the local chapter of the National Audubon Society and is currently on the board of directors. He is also a docent at the Tall Timbers Research Station.

Speakers

Tom Arsuffi

Tom is director of the Llano River Field Station at Texas Tech University, located in Junction, Texas. He received his doctorate from New Mexico State University and completed postdoctoral research at the University of Georgia and Mount Allison University. His research interests are in aquatic, watershed ecology and environmental education. He served as president of the Texas Academy of Science, chaired the Executive Committee of the Society for Freshwater Science, and received research/education grants totaling more than \$10 million from state, federal and foundation funding sources. He advises the LRFS Outdoor School, a national award-winning science education program. LRFS received the 2015 Universities Council on Water Resources Public Service/Education Award.



Darcy Bontempo

Darcy Bontempo is the marketing director of Texas Parks and Wildlife, overseeing the Marketing Group, which develops and implements various revenue-generating and other communication efforts to promote visitation to state parks and increase participation in hunting, fishing, outdoor recreation and nature tourism. Prior to joining the department in 1998, she was account supervisor at McCann-Erickson in New York and later at GSD&M in Austin, Texas. She also was manager of cooperative marketing for Dell's consumer small business units. She holds a master's degree in business administration from Tulane University and a bachelor's degree from University of Texas-Austin.



Frank Burris

Based at the Curry County Extension Office (where he also serves as county extension chair), Frank Burris is Oregon Sea Grant Extension's south coast watershed educator, providing property owners, interested citizens and organizations with the knowledge they need to assist in improving ecosystem health, salmonid fish populations and water quality. His recent projects and areas of expertise include water-quality monitoring, wetland restoration, control of invasive gorse, beach bacteria monitoring and outdoor recreation/tourism.



Speakers



Dave Case

Dave launched DJ Case & Associates in 1986 based on the premise that there is a need to apply the art and science of communication disciplines to the critically important science of natural resource conservation and environmental protection. Since that time, he has worked with nearly every state and federal natural resources agency in the United States and Canada and many major state and national conservation organizations. Dave's early-career work as a biologist and then media spokesperson opened his eyes to the importance of communication disciplines to achieving conservation goals. He worked for the U.S. National Park Service on a remote, forested island in Lake Michigan as part of his master's degree to study impacts of deer overabundance. Controversy surrounding the management of the island's deer herd gave Dave a crash course on the "people" side of wildlife management. He took a position with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and soon was appearing on weekly radio and TV programs, speaking to civic organizations and schools, and learning both the art and science of communications. Dave and his company have been actively engaged in wildlife viewing and nature tourism through many projects:

- Co-authored with Phil Seng, vice president at DJ Case, both the Indiana and Michigan wildlife viewing guides;
- Facilitated development of the first set of Watchable Wildlife Guidelines for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- Facilitated development of the Eyes on Wildlife strategic plan for the U.S. Forest Service;
- Served on the Board of Directors for Watchable Wildlife, Inc.;
- Facilitated development of the first Alaska Watchable Wildlife and Ecotourism Interagency Strategic Plan;
- Developed the Jack Pine Wildlife Viewing Tour to support Kirtland's warbler conservation in northern Michigan; and
- Most recently, leads the Nature of Americans (NatureofAmericans.org).

Dave holds a bachelor's degree in forestry from Purdue University and a master's degree in wildlife ecology from the University of Michigan.



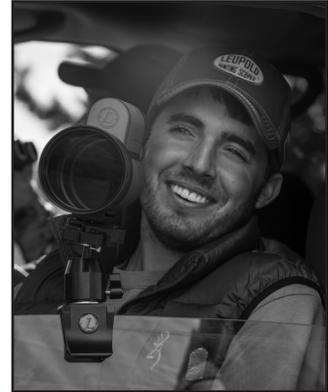
Gisela Chapa

Gisela Chapa is the urban wildlife refuge coordinator for the South Texas Refuge Complex. She has worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for 10 years, specifically in the management of national wildlife refuges and visitor services, and most recently establishing an urban wildlife refuge program in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. She has a master's degree in wildlife science from Texas A&M University and a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Texas–Pan American. Her passion is to connect nontraditional audiences to nature and refuges through unique collaborations and making nature accessible to the community.

Speakers

Luke Coccoli

Luke Coccoli is a native Montanan and has been with the Boone and Crockett Club for five years. After completing his undergraduate work at Montana State University in fish and wildlife management, he started with B&C as the facilities manager and now holds the title of conservation programs manager. He is an avid hunter and fisherman and is currently working to earn his master's degree in education from the University of Montana.



William Colson

William C. Colson is a Texas native. He has been a photographer since he was about 15 years old. His summer vacations were spent traveling with his family throughout the western U.S. where he learned the basics of photography using his uncle's 35 mm Minolta camera. Over the years, he's cultivated his desire to capture wildlife and nature through the use of photography. He has a Bachelor of Science in range and wildlife management (2008) as well as a Master of Science in range and wildlife management (2012); he received both degrees from Texas A&M University–Kingsville. During his master's program, he documented growth characteristics of wild white-winged dove nestlings through the use of digital photography. Currently, he's a doctoral student at Texas A&M University–Kingsville researching "Human Dimensions of Conservation Photography in Wildlife Management." He will graduate in December 2017 after which he plans on developing curriculum to teach people about conservation photography.



April Ann Torres Conkey

Dr. April Ann Torres Conkey is an assistant professor in the department of animal, rangeland, and wildlife sciences and is a research scientist in the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas A&M University–Kingsville. She is a wildlife ecologist with research emphasis on education, outreach and human interactions with wildlife.



Speakers



Javier DeLeon

Since 2005, Javier de Leon has worked at nature centers in the lower Rio Grande Valley including the National Butterfly Center, the Edinburg Scenic Wetlands and World Birding Center (WBC), and Bentsen–Rio Grande Valley State Park of the WBC network. De Leon is currently the park superintendent at Estero Llano Grande State Park of the WBC network. He is one of two advisers for the two Texas Master Naturalists Chapters in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV). De Leon also serves on the core advisory committee for the local chapter of the Association of Nature Center Administrators (ANCA – RGV) and is active in Texas Children in Nature-RGV and the RGV Nature Coalition.



Heather Feeler

Heather Feeler, communications manager with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), spends her professional time chasing interesting conservation stories and spreading the conservation message to new audiences, including through technology. Her team is responsible for statewide news, social media, video, marketing, internal communications, media training and crisis communications for MDC. She has been in the field of communications for 17 years, working with both nonprofit and for-profit organizations. In her spare time, Heather can be found hiking, hammocking, kayaking or fishing with her family. She's also on a quest to visit all the national parks with her two sons before they grow up and refuse to hang out with her anymore.

Speakers

Alex Fogg

Alex is the marine resource coordinator for Okaloosa County, Florida. His background in marine resource management stems from the implementation of an invasive lionfish life history study which required broad collaboration with federal, state and local governments as well as local businesses and stakeholders throughout the Gulf of Mexico coastal states. Alex began his career with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in Pascagoula, Mississippi, working on numerous Gulf of Mexico fisheries surveys following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Alex then transitioned to the University of Southern Mississippi where he earned his Master of Science in coastal sciences in 2016. During Alex's time with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, he was the project manager for the largest artificial reef project in the history of Florida's artificial reef program and upon completion will have deployed more than 3,000 new artificial reefs across northwest Florida. Alex recently transitioned to his new position with Okaloosa County and is involved in numerous projects from artificial reef construction and monitoring to sea turtle lighting initiatives as well as beach restoration and the development of an estuary program for Choctawhatchee Bay. These projects will provide numerous recreational opportunities for visitors as well as residents of the Emerald Coast.



Anthony Gonzon

Anthony is the coordinator of the Delaware Bayshore Initiative, a landscape-level program operating through the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Division of Fish and Wildlife. The program is focused on land conservation and restoration, supporting outdoor low-impact recreation opportunities and promoting ecotourism in Bayshore communities to support local economies. Anthony has worked for the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife as a wildlife biologist and planner for over a decade, undertaking tasks such as implementation of Delaware's second breeding bird atlas and the development of Bayshore Forever, a land conservation strategy for the Delaware Bayshore region that engaged the area's integral conservation partners. Anthony is an avid birder and enjoys many outdoor recreation activities including hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing.



Speakers



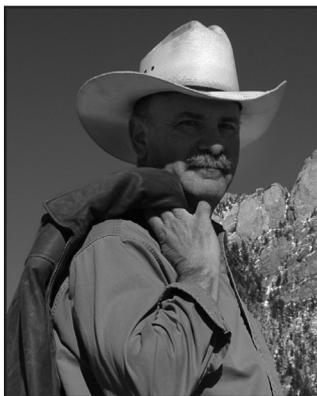
Marybeth Green

Dr. Marybeth Green is an associate professor in the department of educational leadership and counseling, and coordinator of the Instructional Technology Graduate Program at Texas A&M University–Kingsville. She specializes in instructional technology, instructional design, and the implementation of technology, such as augmented reality and social media, in teaching practice.



Luciano Guerra

A life-long resident of Mission, Texas, Luciano developed an interest in nature and wildlife photography soon after his parents gave him his first 35mm camera in high school. His interest grew over the years and he began looking for reasons to spend more time out in nature with his camera. Fortunately, the Valley Land Fund Wildlife Photo Contest emerged in the Rio Grande Valley in 1994. Seeing this contest as an opportunity to fund his “need” for newer and better photo equipment, and possibly as a stepping stone to launch his professional career in photography, Luciano jumped at the opportunity to enter. It’s been a long and winding road to get here, but today Luciano Guerra is the Outreach Coordinator and House Photographer at the National Butterfly Center, where he gets paid to indulge his passion and grow his skillset. His images have been published in Texas Monthly, the Austin-American Statesman, Birder’s World and many other publications.



Sandy Hurwitz

Dr. Sandy Hurwitz grew up hunting and fishing in Corpus Christi, Texas. He graduated from Trinity University in 1969 with a bachelor’s degree in biology and physiological psychology and went on to obtain a degree in veterinary medicine from Texas A&M University in 1973. Sandy is currently a practicing veterinarian in the fields of small animal, general large animal, equine, wildlife and zoo medicine. Sandy has ranching and land restoration in his blood, purchasing and restoring numerous properties over the last 35 years. In 2008 he purchased Las Vistas Ranch in Kinney County and the 240-acre La Lomita Ranch. Sandy acquired a \$1 million federal grant for utility development for a wildlife education center. In 2014, Las Vistas Ranch began the development of wildlife photography blinds as a profit center; La Lomita followed suit and developed a high-quality wildlife photography venue in 2016.

Speakers

Denise Husband

As an outdoor recreation planner for over 39 years, Denise Husband has been involved in the planning, design and construction of numerous parks, recreational facilities, trails, and more recently, wildlife viewing platforms. Through these experiences in both private and public practice, she has strived to maintain the balance needed between human interaction on the landscape and natural resource protection. Her knowledge of the environment's positive impact on public health and well-being has led to many speaking engagements across North America as well as a Canadian television interview on this topic during Saskatchewan Design Week. An avid outdoor enthusiast, Denise earned a bachelor's in landscape architecture from The Pennsylvania State University and is currently the Bayshore recreation planner for the Delaware Division of Fish & Wildlife.



Janis Johnson

Janis manages several marketing programs at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, including Neighborhood Fishin', Conservation License Plates and Big Time Texas Hunts. She has launched campaigns, including "Win Your Dream Year Outdoors" and "Brighter Future for Texas State Park," and manages several agency partnerships. Previously, Janis worked as a marketing consultant for The New York Times and the White House council on Y2K conversion, and she helped launch one of the first internet telephone companies, Pagoo.com. Previous employers include Mountain Travel Sobek, television station KFTY in San Francisco, MCI Telecommunications, and Ogilvy & Mather Direct, New York. Janis graduated from Texas State University with a degree in journalism. After living on both coasts, she is happy to be back in the Texas Hill Country, marketing outdoor recreation and conservation for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.



Speakers



Sara Jose

Sara is the preserve manager for the Oso Bay Wetlands Preserve & Learning Center in Corpus Christi, Texas. Sara has a bachelor's in marine biology and a master's in informal science education. She has been teaching in coastal environments in Georgia and Texas since 2009. Sara is passionate about helping people view nature as a part of the world they live in, not something that exists only on vacation. She participates in the Coastal Bend Children in Nature collaborative, the Texas Nature Challenge, and other community events to provide outreach about local resources for greenspaces.



Sarah Kendrick

Sarah is a Missouri native who earned a master's degree in fisheries and wildlife from the University of Missouri focused on eastern wood-pewee breeding demography and winter bird populations in the Missouri Ozarks. Sarah performed avian survey data analysis for publication after graduation and worked with the Missouri Department of Conservation as an outreach and regulations coordinator. While in this position, Sarah was given freedom to integrate her passion for birds into her work, so she worked to develop a statewide birding trail. After partnering with a nonprofit, the Great Missouri Birding Trail was officially launched two years later. Sarah accepted the state ornithologist position in March 2017 and is continuing to grow the Great Missouri Birding Trail and expand birder outreach efforts to recruit birders with an emphasis on youth.



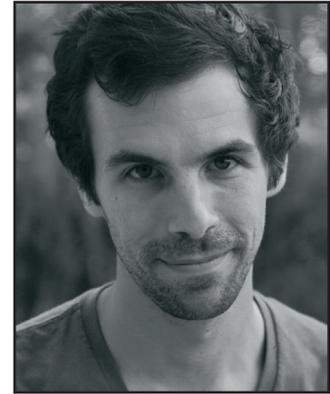
Tiffany Kersten

Tiffany has been revitalizing the McAllen Nature Center since 2014. She has been working in environmental education, visitor services and wildlife research since 2006. She has a Bachelor of Science in wildlife ecology from Northland College. Other organizations she has previously worked with include the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute, Cape May Bird Observatory, Massachusetts Audubon Society, U.S. Forest Service and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Speakers

Peter Kleinhenz

Peter works as an interpretive writer and planner for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Among his other job duties, Peter manages the Florida Nature Trackers program and associated events such as wildlife management area bioblitzes. Peter earned his bachelor's degree in zoology and mass communications (media production focus) from Miami University and his master's degree in environmental education from Southern Oregon University. His broad research interests include herpetology, environmental toxicology, educational technology and environmental sociology. He also serves as vice president and newsletter editor of the Apalachee Audubon Society. Peter loves traveling, caving, birding, herping and seeing live music in his free time.



Edward Lagace

Edward has developed six nationally recognized water trails on the Winona District of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. He has also assisted other refuges with trail planning and development. In 2012 he paddled the 261 miles of the refuge to promote the "Summer of Paddling." Ed is the lead instructor for the non-motorized boat operator training for the seven-state U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) Midwest Region. Ranger Ed was also a key player in the development and implementation of the FWS national non-motorized train-the-trainer water safety program. He was recently recognized for his efforts with the 2017 Midwest Regional Directors Employee Excellence Award for Safety Improvement. A passionate outdoorsman, Ed has 54 years of professional and personal experience on the water. Ed has 28 years with the FWS and has spent the last six years as the Winona District Refuge ranger. Ed is American Canoe Association certified in the essentials of river kayaking and canoe level.



Speakers



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 almost all outdoor recreation activities particularly hiking, paddling and wildlife viewing throughout the world.



Meagan Lobban

Meagan Lobban is a biologist with an interest in wildlife. Meagan has been working at the Meadows Center since 2007. She has had many roles since then including boat driver, educational tour guide, office assistant, park supervisor, assistant educational tour coordinator and educational outreach specialist with the stream team. Meagan graduated in 2009 with a bachelor's degree in biology and a minor in photography from Texas State University. She then went on to get her teaching certification in life sciences. She is passionate about educating future generations about the importance of our natural resources and how we can protect them. Meagan Lobban has an apartment in San Marcos that she shares with her two dogs, a 14-year-old pom-rat terrier and a 10-year-old Siberian husky, but she spends a lot of her time at her grandparents' small ranch in Stockdale, Texas.

Speakers

Marsha May

Marsha May works for Texas Parks and Wildlife in the Diversity Program as a Texas nature tracker biologist. She has been with the agency and Texas Nature Trackers for over 16 years. She received a Bachelor of Science in wildlife from Texas A&M in 1998 and a Master of Science in aquatic biology from Southwest Texas State University in 2001. Her background includes years of experience with various citizen science groups. Texas Nature Trackers has evolved through the years into a project where now volunteers contribute wildlife observations in iNaturalist (www.inat.org). Texas Nature Tracker projects in iNaturalist can be found at www.tpwd.texas.gov/trackers. She also teaches general biology at a local community college as an adjunct professor.



Carrie McClellandt

Carrie completed a Master of Environmental Studies in nature-based recreation and tourism at Lakehead University, with no plans except to move back to Toronto. Instead, she moved to the North and has worked for the Wildlife Viewing Program at Yukon government since 2009. The program is unique the country as it works outside of the parks and formal education systems. Staff work directly with biologists to engage and inspire people to learn more about Yukon's wildlife. Carrie's favorite part of the job is watching people's faces when they see a bat for the first time.



Speakers



Pliny Mier

Pliny is a native Californian who grew up in what was, at that time, rural Ventura County on a farm and ranch where he started hunting and fishing at a very early age. He was taught how to hunt by his father and great-grandfather, but he was also instilled with the concepts of wildlife conservation and land management. Pliny is a lifelong painter as well as a photographer. After raising his children, Pliny traveled extensively throughout the Western states photographing landscapes. He left Southern California in 2007, moved to Texas, and re-embraced his love of hunting, fishing and photography. The amazing Texas wildlife biodiversity along with the development of high-end digital photography equipment and software led Pliny to redirect his artistic talents to wildlife photography. Pliny is a top residential real estate broker in a very competitive environment, and he recognized that he could effectively incorporate his wildlife photography into his business. The rapidly expanding market of bio-tourism provided him an opportunity to incorporate his love of nature, his experience in the hospitality business and land management, and his skills as a businessman, marketer and photographer into the Texas photo-ranch industry. His La Lomita Wildlife Photography Ranch in Uvalde, Texas, has quickly joined the club of high-quality, consumer-based wildlife photography ranches.



Kyle O'Haver

Kyle grew up spending as much time in the outdoors as he could get playing in ponds and woods on his grandparent's farm, or catching birds, snakes and bugs in his neighborhood. That passion grew into a career in nature; he served as a seasonal interpreter at Thousand Hills State Park in Missouri, worked with fisheries at the Missouri Department of Conservation, completed an internship at Missouri State Parks headquarters, earned a Bachelor of Science in parks recreation and tourism at the University of Missouri, worked as park interpreter and resource specialist at Estero Llano Grande State Park and World Birding Center, served as superintendent at Lake Colorado City State Park, and most importantly, he is father of Kaleb and Sibley.

Speakers

Marisa Oliva-Rodriguez

Marisa has managed the Edinburg Scenic Wetlands and World Birding Center since 2004. She has worked in environmental education and outdoor recreation since 1994. She has a Master of Forest Resources with an emphasis in wildlife ecology from The Pennsylvania State University and a Bachelor of Science in wildlife and fisheries science from Texas A&M University. She has served as president of the local Texas Master Naturalist Chapter.



Jennifer Owen-White

Jennifer is the refuge manager of the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge in Albuquerque, the first urban refuge in the Southwest. Formerly, she was the refuge manager at the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge and the visitor service manager for the South Texas Refuge Complex. Born in Chicago, Owen-White grew up in Houston, has a Bachelor of Science in biology and a Master of Science in wildlife science from Texas Tech University. She is completing her doctorate in forestry and natural resource interpretation from Stephen F. Austin State University where she has focused on connecting urban communities to conservation and the outdoors.



Alix Pedraza

Alix serves as the diversity outreach coordinator for the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), having begun her career there as an intern. Originally from Colombia, South America, Pedraza facilitates SCDNR communication and education initiatives that connect Spanish-speaking communities to natural resources information, current events, opportunities and advisories. As a bilingual representative of the SCDNR, she strives to grow nature-related outdoor programs and services by breaking down language and cultural barriers. Pedraza has created SCDNR web and Facebook pages for the state's Spanish-speaking audience and also provides assistance in translating state regulations and related information into Spanish. She holds an associate degree in wildlife management and a Bachelor of Science in biology. The Wildlife Society named Pedraza as its recipient of the national 2016 Diversity Award. The award is designed to encourage and promote successful efforts in furthering diversity in natural resources professions with particular emphasis on wildlife conservation and education.



Speakers



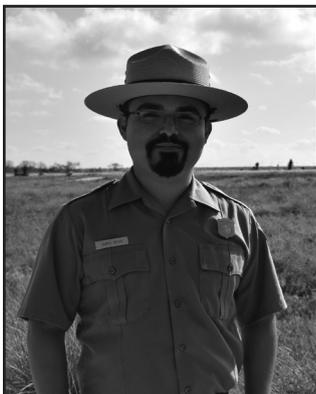
Miles Phillips

Miles is on the extension faculty of the Tourism and Business Development College with Oregon State University and Oregon Sea Grant. He is in the OSU College of Business and currently works in supporting tourism with the “triple bottom line” along the coast of Oregon. He combines the many facets of the tourism industry to bring visitors to the southern Oregon Coast to improve the economy and to promote conservation of its natural resources. He previously worked for the Texas A&M University Extension where he created a cohesive and sustainable tourism program.



Tom Rapp

Tom is the Texas territory manager at OnCell, a mobile technology company dedicated to helping outdoor and cultural destinations share their story using mobile apps and audio tours. Tom has helped over a hundred parks, refuges, heritage areas, historic sites and museums enhance their visitor engagement and mobile strategy. Prior to OnCell, Tom worked for 18-plus years at Hillside Children’s Center. As a recreation therapist, he enjoyed teaching sailing, camping, and outdoor/wilderness skills. In his spare time, he enjoys the extensive trail systems of Perinton, New York (“Trail Town USA”), with his dog named Colt McCoy.



Ruben Reyna

Ruben is a park ranger at National Park Service Palo Alto in Brownsville, Texas. He has a degree from University of Texas at Brownsville in computer information systems. As a ranger he works with supervisors and staff to develop ways to attract and educate visitors. He directly interacts with visitors and manages multimedia projects such as the website and mobile tour app.

Speakers

Sean Saville

Sean Saville joined the staff of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies as the Blue Ribbon Panel campaign manager in August of last year. Previously he was the national field director for Audubon in the Washington, D.C., office for over 10 years. He particularly enjoys managing advocacy campaigns where he is able to leverage networks of grassroots and VIP advocates to influence policy outcomes. Some of his accomplishments in that role include coordinating a campaign that led to the successful passage of the Restore Act, and more recently directing the Western Rivers Action Network to policy success for the Colorado River. He has been training and organizing citizens to get involved in conservation policy campaigns including on water, public lands and wildlife for the last 18 years. Sean is a native to the Washington, D.C., area but also spent the better part of 10 years advocating for our public lands in New Mexico and Colorado, where he earned his bachelor's degree in environmental conservation at the University of Colorado in Boulder and worked with several conservation organizations in Denver and Greeley. Sean is passionate about protecting America's special places and the critters that depend on them. He is an avid outdoorsman and enjoys numerous adventure sports.



Johnnie Smith

Johnnie is the interim director of outreach and education for Texas Parks and Wildlife, responsible for outreach, conservation education, and TPWD's hunter, boater and angler education programs. His background includes a 21-year U.S. Air Force career, an elementary and middle school science educator, education programs manager at the Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi, public school campus leadership as assistant principal and principal, and is a past president of the Informal Science Education Association of Texas. He holds a master's degree in educational leadership from Stephen F. Austin University.



Speakers



Tracy Stratman

Tracy Stratman has worked in the recreation field for nearly 17 years. She has spent the last 13 years with the City of Omaha Parks and Recreation. As a recreation manager, Tracy oversees 13 community centers, 18 swimming pools, two tennis centers, a nature center and an ice rink. She provides leadership for staff development for 20 full-time employees and over 300 part-time/seasonal employees. She holds a bachelor's degree in finance from Creighton University and a master's degree in recreation administration from the University of Nebraska Omaha, and she is an Adjunct Professor at UNO. As an active member in the Nebraska Recreation and Park Association, she is the chair of the Great Park Pursuit Program. The Great Park Pursuit has become a pivotal program within NeRPA and serves as an advocacy program for statewide partnerships. She has presented at the National Recreation and Park Association's Aquatics Conference in 2008, the Midwest Region NRPA Conference in 2010, the Neighborhood USA Conference in 2014, the Iowa/Nebraska IN the Neighborhood Conference in 2014, and the 2015 Northstar Publishing Fall Festival.



Holly Vaughn-Joswick

Holly is the wildlife communications coordinator for Southern Michigan with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. She is based out of the Detroit Metro Customer Service Center in Detroit. Holly loves to communicate with people about Michigan's wildlife. She has a Bachelor of Science in fisheries and wildlife and a Master of Science in park, recreation and tourism resources from Michigan State University. Holly is an avid birder and wildlife viewer.



Miranda Wait

Miranda is the assistant manager of the Spring Lake educational programs at the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment. Her educational background is in biology with an emphasis in wildlife ecology. She has worked at the Meadows Center since 2006 and has held many roles. Miranda has a passion for getting kids and adults outdoors and excited about nature. Currently, she is working on bringing a research component to the Meadows Center's educational programming as well as increasing community involvement. She recently co-authored a field guide published through the Meadows Center on the flora and fauna of Spring Lake. In her spare time, she spends time on her ranch in the hills of San Marcos enjoying her dogs and chickens and enjoying the wildlife that shares the space with her.



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