



ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH
EMPATHY FOR WILDLIFE

February Committee Updates

Communications Committee

Chairs: Amber Reger (ZooMontana), Natalie Stier (Utah's Hogle Zoo)

Representatives: Heather Harelson Nutick (Red River Zoo), Meagan Ashton (Seattle Aquarium)

We spent this meeting debriefing the virtual Summit and determining our new mission and goals. They are as follows: The mission of the Communications Committee is to effectively facilitate communication within and about the Network in an accessible and inclusive way. We accomplish this through: 1) Nurturing connection and collaboration among all Network Members and Affiliates; 2) Cultivating an inclusive learning culture with accessible information and inclusive language use and; 3) Facilitating the flow of information to external audiences. [View our agenda here.](#)

Conservation Action Committee

Chairs: Erica Carnes (Blank Park Zoo), Kelsey Raffel (Como Park Zoo & Conservatory)

Representatives: Bethanie West (Idaho Falls Zoo), Brooke Tucker (ZooMontana), Ryan Retzke (Racine Zoo), Toby Seegert (Zoological Society of Milwaukee)

We came up with a plan for relaunching and finalizing the 2024 edition of our Conservation Action Toolkit and shared our takeaways from the Virtual Summit. [View our agenda here.](#)

DEAI Committee

Chair: Shanna Hillard (Zoological Society of Milwaukee)

Representatives: Adam Winegarden (Racine Zoo), Andrea Tronson (Roosevelt Park Zoo), Crystal Fox (Lake Superior Zoo), Fernanda Mora (ZooMontana), Alejandra Medina (Minnesota Zoo)

We debriefed our takeaways from the DEAI at YOUR Level session at the Summit and identified potential steps to take based on what facilitators heard in their breakout rooms.

[View our agenda here.](#)



February Committee Updates

Membership Committee

Chair: Heather Harelson Nutick (Red River Zoo)

Representatives: Chris Berg (Shedd Aquarium), Tierney Ball (Zoo Boise)

We determined our goals for 2024 and began to think about actionable items to accomplish them. Our goals are 1) Create a robust onboarding process for new ACE for Wildlife Network Affiliates, Members, and Partner Organizations; 2) Monitor strategic recruitment and growth of the ACE for Wildlife Network and; 3) Make leadership opportunities in the Network clearer and more welcoming. [View our agenda here.](#)

Steering Committee

Chair: Shana Kent (Alaska SeaLife Center)

Representatives: Aszya Summers (Lincoln Park Zoo), Hannah Tilden (Woodland Park Zoo), Liz Gilles (Minnesota Zoo), Liz Hines (Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium)

We determined our 2024 goals which are 1) Increase Network-wide awareness of the work being done by the committees to enhance collaboration opportunities; 2) Create a committee creation guideline document; 3) Review, and if needed revise, the current Network mission and vision statements as well as create a review process for the future and; 4) Create a 3-5 year plan to ensure the lasting impact of the Network beyond the current funding structure. Next month we will begin exploring collaboration opportunities with other committees. [View our agenda here.](#)

Strategic Learning Committee

Chair: Melia Paguirigan (Woodland Park Zoo)

Representatives: Cam Whitley (Western Washington University), Isabelle Bieser (Zoological Society of Milwaukee), Jessica Schellhorn (Blank Park Zoo), Ryann Stacy (Racine Zoo)

We determined our new learning questions, which are 1) How does implementing empathy practices into a zoo or aquarium advance organizational missions and commitments to animal wellbeing? and 2) What does culturally relevant conservation action look like?. In March we will be identifying deliverables for our second learning question, and you can find the draft deliverables for the first learning question in [our agenda here.](#)



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Interested in joining a committee?

Reach out to us at empathy@zoo.org and let us know which committee you are interested in being a part of. In addition to an hourly meeting once a month, committee representatives can expect to spend 30 minutes-1 hour outside of meetings on committee tasks per month. Terms are 2 years.

We currently have open seats on the Communications, Membership, Steering, and Strategic Learning committees.