



ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
**EMPATHY FOR WILDLIFE**

# *January 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 solidifying the sessions we are responsible for at the 2024 Virtual Empathy Summit in addition to revisiting our committee mission, name, and goals to align more with the needs of the Network and committee representatives. We will continue the conversation around our committee's mission, potential new goals and name change in our February meeting. [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)

After the debrief from the all-chair meeting that occurred at the end of 2023, we reviewed the Conservation Action Toolkit evaluation results from the Member & Affiliate survey that went out in fall 2023. We will use these results to update the 2024 edition of the Conservation Action Toolkit in the coming months. [View our agenda here.](#)

## **DEAI Committee**

**Chairs:** Camoya Evans (Woodland Park Zoo), Shanna Hillard (Zoological Society of Milwaukee)

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

We finalized Network definitions for diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion and made a plan to share them with the Network and receive feedback. We will be revisiting the Network land acknowledgement starting in our February meeting. View [our agenda here](#) and provide [feedback on our definition drafts](#) by February 29th.



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## **Membership Committee**

**Chair:** Heather Harelson Nutick (Red River Zoo)

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

We refined goals for the 2024 year and in looking at our strategic plan determined our priorities and tasks for future recruitment strategies. In this meeting we focused heavily on how to increase engagement within the ACE for Wildlife Network. [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 priorities for 2024, including; revisiting the Network's overall mission and vision on our About Us page, creating an elevator pitch for who the Network is and what we do, identifying and creating answers to the top questions about empathy for wildlife and the Network, creating a step-by-step guide on how to create a committee, and reviewing information from the February Summit to inform the direction for the next 3-5 years of the Network. In February, we will be solidifying the revision of committee goals and creating concrete timelines for each 2024 priority. [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 continued to work on the 2024 edition of the Empathy Training Toolkit and began reassessing our committee's two strategic learning questions. We will continue assessing those learning questions in our February meeting and hope to have new revised ones that reflect the current phase of the Network soon after. [View our agenda here.](#)



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## **Interested in joining a committee?**

Reach out to us at [empathy@zoo.org](mailto: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.