



ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
**EMPATHY FOR WILDLIFE**

# *April Committee Updates*

## **Communications Committee**

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

**Representatives:** Meagan Ashton (Seattle Aquarium), Delanie Jellison (Santa Barbara Zoo)

We determined the outline for the article in the May 2024 newsletter. We also created a plan for a restructuring of the discussion board to better foster smaller, topic-specific conversations. Changes to the board will be made during the summer and will likely result in the board being down for a few days. More updates to come! We've also been working with the Steering Committee to create the Empathy Photo Contest working group. [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 determined our new 2025 joint initiative, which will be focused on wildlife trafficking. Please let us know if there are any angles on this topic you would want us to consider. We hope to launch the resource for this initiative around the 2025 Empathy Summit. We also decided to host a lunch and learn event to promote our Pollinator Initiative toolkit, [join us on May 16](#) for this conversation. [View our agenda here.](#)

## **DEAI Committee**

**Chair:** Shanna Hillard (Zoological Society of Milwaukee)

**Representatives:** Adam Winegarten (Racine Zoo), Andrea Tronson (Roosevelt Park Zoo), Crystal Fox (Lake Superior Zoo), Alejandra Medina (Minnesota Zoo)

We created survey questions to ask the Network so we better understand the current landscape of what sort of land acknowledgements or similar statements currently exist at our Partner Organizations. Survey responses will allow us to craft an applicable call-to-action statement for the Network. [View our agenda here.](#)



ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
**EMPATHY FOR WILDLIFE**

# *April Committee Updates*

## **Membership Committee**

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

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

We discussed potential changes to the Network expansion plan that if passed, would take effect in 2024. These changes would ensure that Network expansion remains sustainable over the next 3 years and that the benefits of being a part of this Network remain tangible for all participants. [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)

This month was our open meeting. We discussed feedback and potential revisions for our Network mission, values, and vision. This conversation will continue in later meetings and sharing the new drafts with the entire Network for feedback once they're complete. We've also been working with the Communications Committee to create the Empathy Photo Contest working group. We will be hosting another open meeting in May to continue this conversation. [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 identified multiple ways to begin addressing our [first new learning question](#) and determined a timeline for the first task associated with it. We are also currently brainstorming ideas for literature reviews on topics related to both current learning questions. For these learning questions, we are answering one at a time to allow our full capacities to be dedicated to them. [View our agenda here.](#)



ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
**EMPATHY FOR WILDLIFE**

## *April Committee Updates*

### **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, DEAI, Membership, Steering, and Strategic Learning committees.