



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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# *January Committee Updates*

## **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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# *January Committee Updates*

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

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



ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
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# 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.](#)



ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
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# 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.](#)



ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
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# *February Committee Updates*

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

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ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
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# *March 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 discussed adding a quarterly addition to the Empathy Matters Newsletter and will be launching our first deep dive into an effective empathy practice in the May edition of the newsletter. We also started the process for creating an empathy in social media toolkit, a resource that's been requested by Network Members and Affiliates. [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 reviewed resources submitted for the 2024 Conservation Action Toolkit and determined the future cadence for toolkit updates. We also began discussing our committee workplan through February 2025, including potential new joint conservation initiatives for the Network. [Let us know what joint initiative you'd like to see!](#) [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 began incorporating feedback received from our DEAI Definitions survey and met with James Flores, the Tribal Liaison at the Milwaukee Public Museum, to discuss how to create a meaningful land or tribal acknowledgement. Learnings from this meeting will inform the committee's next steps with the current Network acknowledgement. [View our agenda here.](#)



ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
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# *March Committee Updates*

## **Membership Committee**

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

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

This was our open meeting. We discussed and welcome input on our new quarterly Network onboarding meetings, the first of which will be [occurring on April 22nd](#). We also talked with meeting guests about the kinds of leadership opportunities in the Network they would like to see to inform the building out of those opportunities. [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)

To ensure Network event experiences are the same for all attendees, we created a disclaimer statement for all virtual Network events. This ensures that everyone who attends has the same access to shared resources and as equal an event experience as possible. We also created a plan for our [open meeting in April](#) in which we will discuss revisions to the Network mission, vision, values and purpose. If you're unable to attend, we welcome input on [this Google Form](#). We hope you see you there! [View our March 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](#). These include the creation of a toolkit that includes examples of empathy in action with accompanying evaluations (when applicable) and coding the mission statements of our 27 Partner Organizations to highlight where/how/when empathy best practices align to create recommendations on how to cultivate empathy buy-in. We will continue this conversation for this learning question and the second one in April. [View our agenda here](#).



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## *March Committee Updates*

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

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ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
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# *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  
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# *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.](#)



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## *April Committee Updates*

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# *May 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 changes to the discussion board to allow for more specific channels and smaller communities. The discussion board will be under renovations and not usable June 25-26. To learn more [click here](#). We also began the content creating processes for the creation of an empathy in social media toolkit. [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 a debrief on the Pollinator Toolkit Lunch-n-Learn, we began outline the goals and topics for our upcoming joint initiative on combating wildlife trafficking. Due to the scope of the wildlife trafficking topic, this joint initiative will likely not be published until early 2025. If you would like to provide input to us for consideration at these early stages, please email [empathy@zoo.org](mailto:empathy@zoo.org). [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), Alejandra Medina (Minnesota Zoo)

After careful consideration of the feedback we received on the first drafts of our definitions for diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion we came to a consensus on new definitions. These definitions will be posted on our [committee's webpage](#) in June for Network participants to use as launch pads in their own organizational discussions around DEAI. [View our agenda here](#).



# *May Committee Updates*

## **Membership Committee**

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

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

We discussed changes to the Network expansion plan that will take effect this year. We will be sending out an update on these changes shortly. 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)

Due to a scheduling error, the Steering Committee was unable to meet in May. They will be re-hosting their second open meeting in June.

## **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)

To accommodate committee representative's summer schedules, the Strategic Learning Committee did not meet in May.



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## *May Committee Updates*

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# *June Committee Updates*

## **Communications Committee**

**Chair:** Natalie Stier (Utah's Hogle Zoo)

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

We began coding social media posts from across our Network for a future toolkit we are creating on the incorporation of empathy practices in social media posts. We also started a conversation about our learnings from a recent professional development class we took together. [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)

To reflect the growth we as a Network have done in the past 5 years, we developed new Network mission, vision, and value statements. Before solidifying, we welcome any constructive input from fellow Members and Affiliates [through this link here.](#) Please provide any input on these statements by July 10th. [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 discussed involvement and input for a forthcoming ACE for Wildlife Network learning agenda and began clarifying the coding system we are using for Network organizational missions to answer one of our strategic learning questions. More on the learning agenda will be coming in the Network's October meeting. [View our agenda here.](#)

*The Conservation Action, DEAI, and Membership committees did not meet this month because of the busy summer season.*



ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
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# *July Committee Updates*

## **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 (Hawthorn Hollow Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum), Toby Seegert (Zoological Society of Milwaukee)

We reviewed our scope of topics for the upcoming Wildlife Trafficking toolkit and decided to host Network listening sessions in the fall to gather information from people on what sort of content and resources would be useful to them. [View our agenda here.](#)

## **Membership Committee**

**Chairs:** Tierney Ball (Zoo Boise) & Heather Harelson Nutick (CuriOdyssey)

**Representatives:** Chris Berg (Shedd Aquarium)

We discussed the recent Social Network Analysis and its implications on Network growth. We also worked on upcoming bylaw amendments regarding changes to long-term Network expansion. [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)

To reflect the growth we as a Network have done in the past 5 years, we determined a new Network mission, vision, and value statements. You can see the new statements on the Network's [About Us page](#). We also began determining goals for the Network's presence at this year's AZA Conference. [View our agenda here.](#)

*The Communications, DEAI, and Strategic Learning committees did not meet this month because of the busy summer season.*



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## *July Committee Updates*

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# *August Committee Updates*

## **Communications Committee**

**Chair:** Natalie Stier (Utah's Hogle Zoo)

**Representatives:** Natalie Stier (Utah's Hogle Zoo), Meagan Ashton (Seattle Aquarium), Delanie Jellison (Santa Barbara Zoo), Brent Weston (Dakota Zoo), Leanne Schuh (Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center)

After a discussion of the new discussion board format, we began working through the social media posts that we coded for our upcoming Social Media Toolkit. We will be going through the posts and re-coding them before our next meeting as well as outlining goals for the toolkit. View our agenda [here](#).

## **Conservation Action Committee**

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

**Representatives:** Ryan Retzke (Hawthorn Hollow Nature Center), Toby Seegert (Zoological Society of Milwaukee), Brooke Tucker (ZooMontana), Bethanie West (Idaho Falls Zoo)

We reviewed our scope of topics for the upcoming Wildlife Trafficking toolkit and decided to host Network listening sessions in the fall to gather information from people on what sort of content and resources would be useful to them. [View our agenda here](#).

## **DEAI Committee**

**Chairs:** Shanna M. Hillard (Zoological Society of Milwaukee)

**Representatives:** Abigail Flores (Racine Zoo), Crystal Fox (Lake Superior Zoo), Alejandra Medina (Minnesota Zoo), Sharon Spencer (Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens)

In this month's meeting, we discussed what stood out to us from Network responses to our land acknowledgement survey that went out at the beginning of the summer. This month's conversation helped us begin to understand the scope of our work and how we want to help Network Partners in their endeavors to support local Indigenous communities. Find our agenda [here](#).



ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
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# *August Committee Updates*

## **Membership Committee**

**Chair:** Heather Harelson Nutick (Red River Zoo) / Tierney Ball (Zoo Boise)

**Representatives:** Heather Harelson Nutick (Red River Zoo), Tierney Ball (Zoo Boise), Chris Berg (Shedd Aquarium), Autumn Russell (Akron Zoo), Sarah Bowser (Oakland Zoo)

We discussed putting questions into the fall Member/Affiliate survey to gauge people's perceived benefits and barriers to taking a leadership role or being active in the ACE for Wildlife Network. We also finalized our bylaw amendment edits for Steering Committee consideration. [View our agenda here.](#)

## **Steering Committee**

**Chair:** Shana Kent (Alaska SeaLife Center)

**Representatives:** Hannah Tilden (Woodland Park Zoo), Shana Kent (Alaska SeaLife Center), Liz Hines (Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium), Aszya Summers (Lincoln Park Zoo), Liz Gilles (Minnesota Zoo)

This month we discussed bylaw amendments proposed by the Membership Committee. While we understood their proposed edits, we felt it would be best to have a discussion with Membership Committee representatives before finalizing the amendment for Network voting. [View our agenda here.](#)

## **Strategic Learning Committee**

**Chair:** Melia Paguirigan (Woodland Park Zoo)

**Representatives:** Isabelle Bieser (Zoological Society of Milwaukee), Melia Paguirigan (Woodland Park Zoo), Ryann Stacy (Racine Zoo), Cameron Whitley (Western Washington University), Jessica Schellhorn (Blank Park Zoo), Kelly McAdams (Clearwater Marine Aquarium)

This month we provided further feedback on the current draft of the ACE for Wildlife Network learning agenda and discussed how we coded Network Partner Organization missions per our first strategic learning questions. The later topic will be resumed in our next meeting. [View our agenda here.](#)



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# *August Committee Updates*

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# *September Committee Updates*

## **Communications Committee**

**Chair:** Natalie Stier (Utah's Hogle Zoo)

**Representatives:** Natalie Stier (Utah's Hogle Zoo), Meagan Ashton (Seattle Aquarium), Delanie Jellison (Santa Barbara Zoo), Brent Weston (Dakota Zoo), Leanne Schuh (Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center)

We continued consolidating and re-coding posts and continued outlining goals for our upcoming social media toolkit. You can [view our agenda here](#).

## **Conservation Action Committee**

**Chairs:** Erica Carnes (Blank Park Zoo), Kelsey Raffel (Zoological Society of Milwaukee)

**Representatives:** Ryan Retzke (Hawthorn Hallow Nature Center), Toby Seegert (Zoological Society of Milwaukee), Brooke Tucker (ZooMontana), Bethanie West (Idaho Falls Zoo)

We discussed our learnings and key takeaways from our committee professional development. Together we took a 5-hour Masterclass taught by Jane Goodall on conservation.

## **DEAI Committee**

**Chairs:** Shanna M. Hillard (Zoological Society of Milwaukee)

**Representatives:** Abigail Flores (Racine Zoo), Crystal Fox (Lake Superior Zoo), Alejandra Medina (Minnesota Zoo), Sharon Spencer (Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens)

As a committee we began re-evaluating our scope of influence, how and where we want to focus our energy for future committee projects, and what we could do internally as a committee to facilitate sharing and learning from each other. You can [view our agenda here](#).



# *September Committee Updates*

## **Membership Committee**

**Chair:** Heather Harelson Nutick (Red River Zoo) / Tierney Ball (Zoo Boise)

**Representatives:** Heather Harelson Nutick (Red River Zoo), Tierney Ball (Zoo Boise), Chris Berg (Shedd Aquarium), Autumn Russell (Akron Zoo), Sarah Bowser (Oakland Zoo)

We discussed continued revisions to current Network expansion, debriefed Network related happenings and events from the annual AZA Conference, and talked about committee agency. You can [view our agenda here](#).

## **Steering Committee**

**Chair:** Shana Kent (Alaska SeaLife Center)

**Representatives:** Hannah Tilden (Woodland Park Zoo), Shana Kent (Alaska SeaLife Center), Liz Hines (Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium), Aszya Summers (Lincoln Park Zoo), Liz Gilles (Minnesota Zoo)

Due to multiple last minute scheduling conflicts, this committee's September meeting was cancelled.

## **Strategic Learning Committee**

**Chair:** Melia Paguirigan (Woodland Park Zoo)

**Representatives:** Isabelle Bieser (Zoological Society of Milwaukee), Melia Paguirigan (Woodland Park Zoo), Ryann Stacy (Racine Zoo), Cameron Whitley (Western Washington University), Jessica Schellhorn (Blank Park Zoo), Kelly McAdams (Clearwater Marine Aquarium)

This month we finished coding Network Partner Organization mission statements for answering our first strategic learning question. You can [view our agenda here](#).



ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
**EMPATHY FOR WILDLIFE**

# *September 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, and Steering committees.



ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
**EMPATHY FOR WILDLIFE**

# *October Committee Updates*

## **Communications Committee**

**Chair:** Natalie Stier (Utah's Hogle Zoo)

**Representatives:** Natalie Stier (Utah's Hogle Zoo), Meagan Ashton (Seattle Aquarium), Delanie Jellison (Santa Barbara Zoo), Brent Weston (Dakota Zoo), Leanne Schuh (Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center)

We continued consolidating and re-coding posts and continued outlining goals for our upcoming social media toolkit. You can [view our agenda here](#).

## **Conservation Action Committee**

**Chairs:** Erica Carnes (Blank Park Zoo), Kelsey Raffel (Zoological Society of Milwaukee)

**Representatives:** Ryan Retzke (Hawthorn Hallow Nature Center), Toby Seegert (Zoological Society of Milwaukee), Brooke Tucker (ZooMontana), Bethanie West (Idaho Falls Zoo)

We discussed our learnings and key takeaways from our committee professional development. Together we took a 5-hour Masterclass taught by Jane Goodall on conservation.

## **DEAI Committee**

**Chairs:** Shanna M. Hillard (Zoological Society of Milwaukee)

**Representatives:** Abigail Flores (Racine Zoo), Crystal Fox (Lake Superior Zoo), Alejandra Medina (Minnesota Zoo), Sharon Spencer (Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens)

This month, the DEAI Committee discussed shifting the purpose of the committee and implementing regular DEAI special interest group (SIG) meetings in 2025 to give people in the Network a structured, but informal space, to share about their own and learn from other's DEAI initiatives. The committee aims to implement these changes starting in early 2025.

You can [view our agenda here](#).



# *October Committee Updates*

## **Membership Committee**

**Chair:** Heather Harelson Nutick (Red River Zoo) / Tierney Ball (Zoo Boise)

**Representatives:** Heather Harelson Nutick (Red River Zoo), Tierney Ball (Zoo Boise), Chris Berg (Shedd Aquarium), Autumn Russell (Akron Zoo), Sarah Bowser (Oakland Zoo)

We discussed continued revisions to current Network expansion, debriefed Network related happenings and events from the annual AZA Conference, and talked about committee agency. You can [view our agenda here](#).

## **Steering Committee**

**Chair:** Shana Kent (Alaska SeaLife Center)

**Representatives:** Hannah Tilden (Woodland Park Zoo), Shana Kent (Alaska SeaLife Center), Liz Hines (Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium), Aszya Summers (Lincoln Park Zoo), Liz Gilles (Minnesota Zoo)

Due to multiple last minute scheduling conflicts, this committee's September meeting was cancelled.

## **Strategic Learning Committee**

**Chair:** Melia Paguirigan (Woodland Park Zoo)

**Representatives:** Isabelle Bieser (Zoological Society of Milwaukee), Melia Paguirigan (Woodland Park Zoo), Ryann Stacy (Racine Zoo), Cameron Whitley (Western Washington University), Jessica Schellhorn (Blank Park Zoo), Kelly McAdams (Clearwater Marine Aquarium)

This month we finished coding Network Partner Organization mission statements for answering our first strategic learning question. You can [view our agenda here](#).



ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
**EMPATHY FOR WILDLIFE**

# *October Committee Updates*

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

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ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
**EMPATHY FOR WILDLIFE**

# *December Committee Updates*

## **Communications Committee**

**Chair:** Natalie Stier (Utah's Hogle Zoo)

**Representatives:** Natalie Stier (Utah's Hogle Zoo), Liz Hines (Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium), Delanie Jellison (Santa Barbara Zoo), Brent Weston (Dakota Zoo), Leanne Schuh (Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center), Cher Vatalaro (Lehigh Valley Zoo)

This month, we finalized coding for the posts in the 2025 edition of the Social Media toolkit and identified icebreaker activities for in-person attendees at the Empathy Summit.

## **Conservation Action Committee**

**Chairs:** Erica Carnes (Blank Park Zoo), Kelsey Raffel (Zoological Society of Milwaukee)

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

This month, we began discussing how we want to gather input from Empathy Summit attendees on what we have drafted in the Wildlife Trafficking Toolkit.

## **DEAI Committee**

**Chairs:** Crystal Fox (Lake Superior Zoo)

**Representatives:** Abigail Flores (Racine Zoo), Crystal Fox (Lake Superior Zoo), Alejandra Medina (Minnesota Zoo), Sharon Spencer (Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens), Julie Pickard (Zoological Society of Milwaukee), Shanna Hillard (Zoological Society of Milwaukee), Kirinne Slaughter (Visitor Studies Association)

This month the committee further began outlining plans for their co-hosted Summit session and plans for launching DEAI-focused virtual coffee-chats in 2025.



# *December Committee Updates*

## **Membership Committee**

**Chair:** Heather Harelson Nutick (CuriOdyssey)

**Representatives:** Heather Harelson Nutick (CuriOdyssey), Chris Berg (Shedd Aquarium), Autumn Russell (Akron Zoo), Isabelle Bieser (Zoological Society of Milwaukee)

This month we determined our topic for discussion at the Empathy Summit and began to identify what is needed ahead of time for the committee to make progress on long-term planning with the Steering Committee.

## **Steering Committee**

**Chair:** Shana Kent (Alaska SeaLife Center)

**Representatives:** Hannah Tilden (Woodland Park Zoo), Shana Kent (Alaska SeaLife Center), Aszya Summers (Lincoln Park Zoo), Liz Gilles (Minnesota Zoo), Austin Reich (Zoo Boise), Courtney Cordova (Henry Vilas Zoo)

This month, we determined our focus area for gathering Network feedback at the Summit to inform our long-term Network planning with the Membership Committee.

## **Strategic Learning Committee**

**Representatives:** Cameron Whitley (Western Washington University), Jessica Schellhorn (Blank Park Zoo), Kelly McAdams (Clearwater Marine Aquarium), Dani Ford (ZooMontana), Jennifer Gauble (Saint Louis Zoo), Monica Digre (Como Park Zoo & Conservatory)

No meeting for the month of December.



ADVANCING CONSERVATION THROUGH  
**EMPATHY FOR WILDLIFE**

# *December Committee Updates*

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We currently have open seats on the Conservation Action Committee and Membership Committee