

**FINAL DRAFT FOR CCTWS BOARD ADOPTION**

**23 June 2021**

**Colorado Chapter of The Wildlife Society**

**IDEA**

**Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Awareness Statement**

The Colorado Chapter of The Wildlife Society (CCTWS) values human diversity as a foundation of the Chapter's identity and culture, philosophical framework, and operational priorities. We further strive to be an anti-discriminatory organization that identifies and removes barriers for individuals from underrepresented groups and all walks of life (based on race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, ethnicity, education, economic status, employment, nationality, and physical or mental ability). We endorse and comply with The Wildlife Society's Position Statement on Workforce Diversity within the Wildlife Profession (see attached at end of this statement). Whereas our chapter values inclusion, diversity, equity and awareness (IDEA), the CCTWS currently remains characterized by lacking diversity in our membership. With this statement, we clearly convey our support for and commitment to IDEA values and provide approaches to implement IDEA strategies. Our statement acknowledges the importance of IDEA within our chapter and in our communications and collaborations with other TWS chapters, wildlife professionals, natural resources managers and scientists, and stakeholders including the public.

**The CCTWS will enact the following approaches to bolster efforts to enhance the operationalization of IDEA values:**

1. The CCTWS will quantify our current membership diversity and with a baseline we will strive to increase diversity in our chapter especially in areas where we lack significant representation. A committee will be formed to develop a process to survey members and determine appropriate metrics of improvement and success.
2. The CCTWS will develop new or create access to existing IDEA training modules and/or workshops including implicit bias training, bystander intervention training, and other modules and make these available to members.
3. The CCTWS will create an IDEA Certification for all CCTWS members which will be awarded for completion of a series of trainings. Additionally, IDEA Certification through the CCTWS will be an option for Certified Wildlife Biologists (CWBs) and Associate Wildlife Biologists (AWBs) completing annual professional development. IDEA workshops/training sessions and other similar activities currently qualify for CEUs under Category I of the CWB Renewal and/or Professional Development Certificate applications.
4. The CCTWS will empower the Membership Development Committee to develop strategies and incentives to recruit and retain members from diverse backgrounds. Further, all CCTWS committees will be charged with embracing IDEA efforts into their operations.
5. The CCTWS will support Student Chapter IDEA initiatives and develop opportunities for student chapters to support the CCTWS's diversity work. The CCTWS will collaborate with student chapters to recruit members to their chapters and to state, regional and national chapters. Recruitment efforts may

include reaching out to high school and middle school students around the state, as well as to current college students not engaged with TWS. The CCTWS will develop and publish a listing of possible recruitment programs/internships hosted by federal and state agencies and other partners and potentially work with universities and student chapters to develop recruitment programs such as a summer wildlife camp that creates a gateway to a wildlife degree and career. The CCTWS may also work with partners to develop a summer internship that will promote retention of underrepresented students who actively pursue a university wildlife program degree in Colorado.

6. The CCTWS will work with universities and student chapters to develop robust collaborations with other student organizations such as the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) and Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS), as well as groups like the Black Students' Alliance, Asian and Pacific Islanders organizations, LGBTQ+ groups, among others.

7. The CCTWS will encourage and provide guidance to other Colorado universities to develop student chapters to help introduce and recruit a diversity of students around the state to a career in wildlife through an academic degree program.

8. CCTWS, in collaboration with the IDEA Committee, will host workshops or other events at the annual conference that recognize and honor diversity.

9. The CCTWS board will communicate with the IDEA committee during annual conference planning to ensure a diversity of speakers are invited to and participate in the annual meeting and ensure a diversity of topics are highlighted to reflect the diversity of topics on which Colorado's wildlife biologists work. Honorariums and travel reimbursement will be provided for speakers from underrepresented groups.

10. The CCTWS will recruit diverse members to serve in leadership positions in the organization.

11. The CCTWS will create a Diversity Award to celebrate professional engagement by members who promote IDEA values.

12. The CCTWS will create an IDEA Grant as part of the research, management and education small grants program and will annually award this to a student or professional member from an underrepresented group. Grant applications and communications will include language that encourages and supports the submission of applications from members representing diverse backgrounds.

13. The CCTWS will diversify communications through use of varied platforms to reach current and future members that rely on numerous communications platforms.

## **The Wildlife Society**

### **Standing Position Workforce Diversity within the Wildlife Profession**

The conservation of native plant and animal species, communities, and populations is affected by the actions of all people, acting individually and collectively. The future of biological diversity, therefore, requires the conscious engagement of all people, regardless of their nationality, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, spiritual views, or social status. This engagement applies to individuals belonging to the range of stakeholder groups in society and to those within the wildlife profession.

The Wildlife Society recognizes the value of including the richness of human diversity in our efforts to discover, educate, inform policy, and involve the public in wildlife science and management. Wildlife will be the ultimate beneficiary of management, science, and education that reaches a greater variety of people that use and enjoy wildlife. Aldo Leopold recognized the necessity of an egalitarian wildlife policy that enfranchised all citizens in the welfare of our wildlife rather than an antiquated system that distributed the benefits to a privileged segment of society. During the past 75 years, the wildlife profession has grown significantly more diverse in its philosophies and strategies, but not to the same level in its personnel. The increasing human diversity in our society further emphasizes the need to evaluate whether or not the broad array of interests are adequately addressed within the wildlife profession. To achieve the best possible science and management of wildlife, The Wildlife Society is committed to the identification and removal of barriers to recruitment, effective mentoring, retention of a diverse workforce, and to communicating with a diverse array of stakeholders.

Achieving workforce diversity representative of the people who impact and are impacted by wildlife is an important goal for the profession. Human diversity includes aspects that are apparent, such as age, race, ethnicity, sex, and disabilities. However, the intersection of visible and less apparent differences, such as culture, spiritual views, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, unapparent disabilities, and other "invisible" factors nevertheless shape an individual's life experience and thus, the unique perspectives they bring to their vocation. Participation in our profession must be broadened if we are to include the rich palette of perspectives and approaches needed to meet current and emerging challenges.

Diversification of the workforce offers valuable benefits and will address many challenges facing the profession and wildlife. Inclusion of the perspectives and skills provided by a diverse professional community of individuals can result in the strengthening and improvement of approaches to research, education, management, and policy making. A diverse workforce is necessary for development of conservation and management practices and communications that resonate with all of society. Furthermore, fostering a professional culture that embraces diversity in perspectives will increase retention of skilled practitioners.

Ultimately, a shared public understanding and appreciation of the value of wildlife, science, and management determines the degree to which society shows its support with funding and trust in our profession's work. By engaging a greater proportion of the population, we enable ourselves to more effectively manage wildlife, the ecosystems on which they depend, and the human communities that interact with them.

The policy of The Wildlife Society regarding workforce diversity within the wildlife profession is as follows:

1. Support policies, programs, and practices that advance efforts to recruit, mentor, and retain professionals from a broad spectrum of identities reflective of the overall human population, including individuals from historically underrepresented backgrounds.
2. Promote a professional culture that welcomes individuals from diverse backgrounds and values the resultant richness of perspectives and contributions.
3. Recognize the diversity of human cultures and linkages between these cultures and conservation of biological diversity at regional, national, and international scales. Such recognition includes acknowledging the roles and values of traditional and cultural knowledge in wildlife studies, management, and conservation at all scales.
4. Further develop research, conservation, management, and educational programs that enhance human diversity in the workforce and increase enjoyment of wildlife among diverse populations of people.
5. Expand and develop successful, collaborative programs for training, recruiting, and retention of underrepresented groups in the workforce. Collaborate with other professional societies, private foundations, state and federal agencies, and institutions to build upon programs that have demonstrated successful outcomes.

**TWS Resources:**

TWS Strategic Plan

<https://wildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/20190517-2019-2023-TWS-Strategic-Plan-FINAL.pdf>

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion webpage

<https://wildlife.org/dei/#:~:text=The%20Wildlife%20Society%20is%20committed,a%20diverse%20array%20of%20stakeholders.>

On TWS Web Page see links to the following:

Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Awareness Working Group

Early Career Professionals Working Group

International Wildlife Management Working Group

Native Peoples' Wildlife Management Working Group

Native Student Professional Development Program

Student Development Working Group

TWS Council Diversity Subcommittee

Out in the Field

Women of Wildlife

U.S. Forest Service Native American Research Assistantship

Diversity Joint Venture for Conservation Careers

Vocalizations Project

TWS Diversity Award