

SPRING ISSUE 2021

NEWSLETTER

THE NORTHEAST SECTION OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY



Photo Credit: Anthony Frazier

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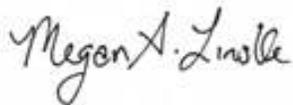
A message from the president

Hello Northeast Section Members!

I wanted to take a moment to thank you all for choosing me to be you next Northeast Section President. It was not long ago that I was encouraged to join the Wildlife Society as a student and early career professional. I only knew it as a large, national entity, but had no concept of the inner working or the people that kept it running smoothly. I attended my first members meeting at the Northeast Fish and Wildlife Agencies Conference and was immediately hooked at the possibilities and potential that our section provided. That day I signed up for any committee that would have me. Since that time, I have transitioned from being solely a student member, to a committee member, to a chairperson, to your section executive secretary, and now I find myself in the role of president. I am honored and humbled at the new possibilities and potential in this two year position. I am coming into this role during a time when connectivity is crucial and conservation is imperative. I hope that with the entire female executive committee we can bring a wave of accessibility and inclusivity that will last well past my time as president.

Message from the president continued...

My primary role is to serve this section and members such as yourself. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact me. I would also like to encourage you to actively engage in this community. We are always looking for new members to join any (or all) of our committees. I am beyond excited to be working for and with all of you, and I once again thank you for allowing me to serve you for the next two years.



Megan A. Linske, Ph.D.
President, Northeast Section

Chapter Updates

Maryland and Delaware Chapter of TWS

The Maryland and Delaware Chapter of TWS held their Spring meeting in April, with a theme of “Looking to the Future: Technologies in Wildlife.” Research presentations included MOTUS towers and its findings in the Mid-Atlantic, as well as drone surveys on clapper rail. Our Chapter has also voted to create a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee, which will have a variety of objectives ranging from outreach and education to membership engagement. Finally, we kicked off a new volunteer incentive program. This program will reward members who go above and beyond while volunteering their time.

Interested in hearing more from TWS...

Sign up [here](#) for our free, monthly edition of the *eWildlifer* — your one-stop shop for the latest wildlife news, Section and Chapter updates, TWS announcements, and more.



Award Recipients

2021 John Pearce Memorial Award Recipient *Duane Diefenbach*



The 2021 John Pearce Memorial Award recipient is Dr. Duane Diefenbach, Research Wildlife Biologist, Adjunct Professor, and Unit Leader of Pennsylvania Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit of Penn State University.

Duane is a Certified Wildlife Biologist and has been member of the Wildlife Society since 1987. He has served as Associate editor of the *Journal of Wildlife Management*, Vice-president of the Northeast Section of The Wildlife Society, and Chair of the Biometrics Working Group. Duane was also the 2013 recipient of TWS Caesar Kleberg Award for Excellence in Applied Wildlife Research.

Duane was previously employed by the Pennsylvania Game Commission as a Biometrician prior to joining Cooperative Research Unit in 1999. He has a BS from Washington State University, an MS from the University of Maine, and a PhD from the University of Georgia.

Duane's primary research interests focus on empirically evaluating models used to estimate population parameters and how those models are incorporated in management decisions. Consequently, many of his research projects involve game species (white-tailed deer, black bear, and wild turkey). His research has focused on methods of estimating abundance as well as hunter attitudes and behavior and how that influences harvest rates and the spatial distribution of hunter harvest. Recent collaboration with the Pennsylvania Game Commission and DCNR Bureau of Forestry has involved the use of Structured Decision Making in developing management decision tools. Future research will likely work on integrating these tools in a quantitative manner into decision making processes.

However, not all his research involves game species. For over 10 years, he has been studying grassland sparrows on reclaimed surface mines in Pennsylvania. There are several endangered and special concerns species that use reclaimed surface mines and he has focused on grasshopper, Savannah, and Henslow's sparrows because they are relatively abundant and are obligate grassland species. His research has focused on methods of estimating abundance and his students have addressed ecological issues related to their use of these habitats. With this research on various species, Duane has been an author on roughly 80 publications. Additionally, Duane teaches graduate courses in methods of estimating population parameters and analyzing animal location data.

**2021 P.F. English Memorial
Award Recipient
Brittin Robinson**



Brittin has been involved with the SUNY Cobleskill Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society since her freshman year. During her sophomore year, Brittin was elected to serve as President. Despite only being in her second year, Brittin excelled in this role and worked to help deliver important outreach and fundraising events including the annual Fisheries and Wildlife Festival which draws ca. 1,000 visitors and the 1st Annual BeastFeast. Unfortunately, Brittin narrowly lost her re-election bid during her junior year. However, rather than disengage, Brittin remained an active student member participating in outreach and fundraising events, regional and national meetings, and the Northeast Student Conclave. During her senior year, Brittin was re-elected to serve as President. Under her leadership, the student chapter delivered important virtual events (as a result of Covid restrictions) including their annual Women in Wildlife networking event and a TWS Certifications workshop. In addition to her service to the student chapter, Brittin was elected in 2020 to serve as the Student Representative for the New York Chapter of The Wildlife Society.

Brittin has simultaneously maintained above average academic achievement and early career experiences during her undergraduate studies. The quality of her work was always above average compared to her peers, and she immersed herself in field-based exercises and independent projects. She has a particular interest in small mammal trapping and conducting songbird surveys. During Summer 2020, when many students couldn't find fieldwork or lost opportunities due to the ongoing pandemic, Brittin secured and excelled in an avian field technician position where she conducted extensive songbird surveys, monitored wood thrush nesting and movements, and measured forest structure in Philipsburg, PA. During Summer 2019, she worked at Mine Kill State Park in North Blenheim, NY where she conducted eastern bluebird monitoring, invasive species removal, herpetofauna surveys, and public outreach. These paid field experiences, along with numerous volunteer opportunities related to winter raptor surveys and public outreach, have supplemented her undergraduate training at SUNY Cobleskill. Indeed, she has developed into an outstanding young professional and aspiring wildlife biologist. As illustrated above, Brittin has successfully integrated consistent involvement in The Wildlife Society with academic achievement and early career experiences during her time at SUNY Cobleskill. She truly is among the most devoted student leaders that the SUNY Cobleskill Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society has had in recent years.

2021 Certificates of Recognition

Cathy Haffner and Diana Day

This Northeast Section of The Wildlife Society Certificate of Recognition is awarded to Cathy Haffner (PA Game Commission) and Diana Day (PA Fish and Boat Commission) for their vision and team leadership in development of Pennsylvania's Conservation Opportunity Area Tool.

Launched in 2019, the Conservation Opportunities Tool is a web-based representation of Pennsylvania's Wildlife Action Plan that includes geospatial data for nearly every wildlife species identified in that plan. It pools species occurrence data from PGC and PFBC sources, linked to information on species accounts, habitat requirements, and conservation needs. The objectives of the COA Tool are to support conservation planning, guide conservation actions, and support and implement the Wildlife Action Plan. Free access to the tool is provided to not only resource managers, but nongovernmental organizations, municipalities, and private citizens. Interactive mapping allows users to draw or select a geographic area and explore the species of greatest conservation need, habitat requirements, and unique or rare habitat types that occur there. The tool provides Area of Interest Reports that include a list species of greatest conservation need, a summary of habitat types, recommended conservation actions, and related research and survey needs for the area. This non-regulatory tool is, as far we know, the first of its kind focusing on a state's Wildlife Action Plan.

Alexander Fish, Dr. Erik Blomberg, and Dr. Amber Roth

This Northeast Section of The Wildlife Society Certificate of Recognition is awarded to Alexander Fish, Dr. Erik Blomberg, and Dr. Amber Roth of Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Conservation Biology at The University of Maine for their efforts to create and coordinate the Eastern Woodcock Migration Research Cooperative, an international collaborative currently consisting of 35 partners studying the migratory ecology for the American Woodcock in the eastern US and Canada. Using these satellite transmitters, these researchers and their partners have monitored woodcock during both spring and fall migration over the past 3 years. These efforts have made significant strides in understanding when woodcock initiate migration, how long it takes individuals to complete migration, what survival is like during migration, and where stopover sites are for woodcock rest and refuel during migration.

Kristi L. Sullivan, Dr. Peter J. Smallidge, and Dr. Paul D. Curtis

This Northeast Section of The Wildlife Society Certificate of Recognition is awarded to Kristi L. Sullivan, Dr. Peter J. Smallidge and Dr. Paul D. Curtis of the Department of Natural Resources at Cornell University for their development of a rapid assessment method for evaluating deer impacts to forest vegetation, known as AVID. AVID is a project for Assessing Vegetation Impacts from Deer. Project participants evaluate the impact of deer browsing by tagging and measuring tree seedlings and/or wildflowers. Users of the AVID method can measure the impacts of deer browsing on New York forests, and document this aspect of forest health. Participants will learn forest and woodland ecology, how to identify important spring wildflowers and tree species, and develop an eye for recognizing signs of deer impacts. For individual property owners or managers, the project allows convenient storage and viewing of data collected on a given property over time. Landowners and managers from other states are able to use the web site and phone apps. Their long-term goal is to maintain healthy and diverse forests for future generations.

New Northeast Section Executive Committee Members!



For the first time in its history the newly elected members of the Northeast Section Committee consist solely of women! Congratulations! And did we mention they are all PhDs?!

President:
Megan A. Linske, PhD

Immediate Past President:
Jacqueline L. Frair, PhD

Secretary:
Andrea M. Feldpausch-Parker, PhD

Treasurer:
Amanda Cheeseman, PhD

NE Section Rep (TWS Council):
Valorie Titus, PhD

Student Corner

2020 NETWS Student Travel Grant Recipients

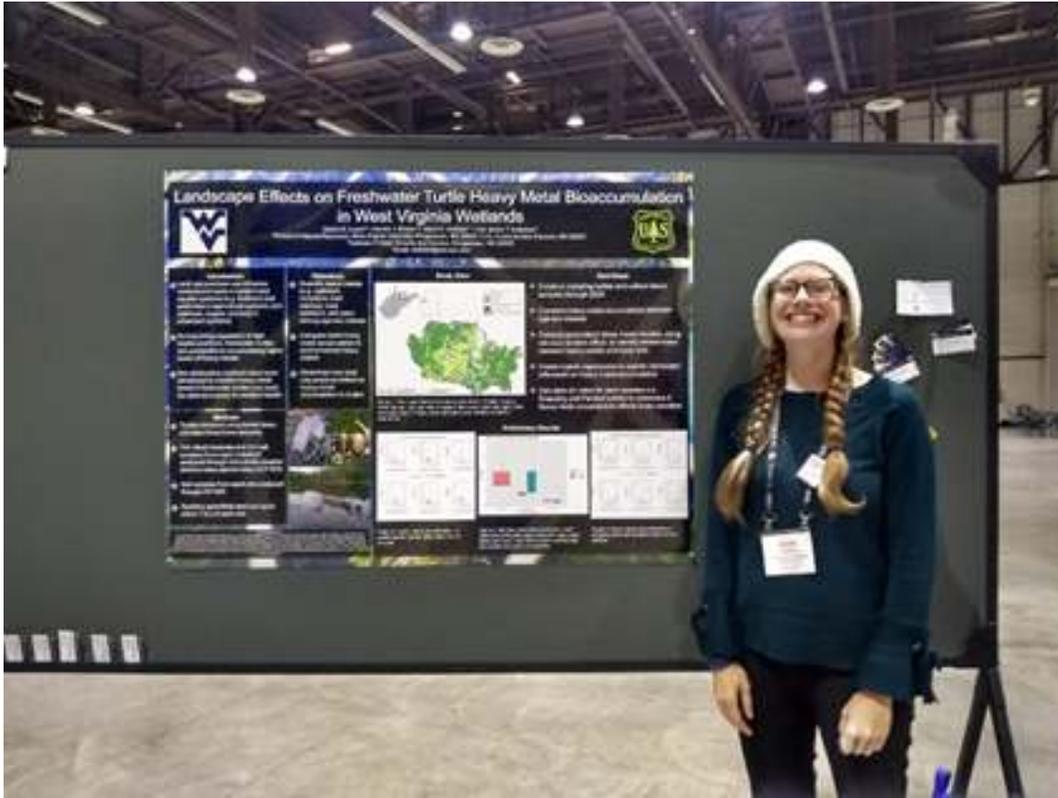
Ariana Cerreta, M.S., University of Delaware

I am Ariana Cerreta, a recently graduated MS student from the University of Delaware, and I would like to give my sincerest thanks to the Northeast Section of The Wildlife Society for the travel award to attend the Northeast Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Annual Conference (NEAFWA) in April 2020. Well, when I received the award, the plan was to attend NEAFWA in April 2020, but, as we all know, COVID-19 had other plans for the year.

That conference, among others, was cancelled as schools turned to virtual learning and social distancing became the norm. While it was disappointing that I could not attend NEAFWA, 2021the virtual format adopted by other conferences provided me the opportunity to use the travel grant to participate in not one but two virtual conferences and a workshop. Without those funds, I otherwise would not have been able to attend both conferences. First, I had the pleasure of presenting a poster at the Wildlife Society Annual Conference in September 2020 on the landscape connectivity challenges facing the southern expansion of bobcats in New Jersey. I greatly enjoyed being able to attend live panels, such as Women of Wildlife in the Field, while still being able to access on-demand symposium presentations and posters on my breaks from writing my thesis. The highlight of this conference was attending the Multi-Species Occupancy Modeling workshop where I was introduced to the program MARK and the R package unmarked. In October, I virtually attended the Northeastern Transportation and Wildlife Conference to give an oral presentation on using spatially explicit, individual-based models to evaluate different management scenarios for bobcats in New Jersey. Despite social distancing via computer, I enjoyed being able to interact with a live audience, talk with attendees, and answer questions.

While not the typical experiences expected from conferences, I know that I grew as a presenter and scientist by communicating my research remotely. I learned new analytical techniques and refined my digital presenting skills. I enjoyed attending these conferences from the comfort of my home with my cat in my lap, and hope that we will all soon be able to connect with our colleagues in person at future conferences.

Darien N. Lozon, M.S., Wildlife and Fisheries Resources, West Virginia University



A Year of Firsts

Over the course of 12 months, I had the privilege of experiencing two TWS conference firsts: the first joint conference with the American Fisheries Society in 2019 as well as the first virtual TWS conference in 2020. Over 4,000 people were packed across the Atlantis Casino Hotel and Reno-Sparks Convention Center for the joint conference with countless exhibitors, poster sessions, and symposia. This experience set the stage for comparison to what happened around the same time in 2020. The Wildlife Society chose to host their first virtual conference. Rather than being welcomed by registration desks, we were welcomed by the home page of the conference website. Before we even signed into the first day's plenary sessions, we received many emails that informed us about the technical and logistical details regarding the conference.

Instead of walking around the poster hall and making small talk with students and professionals, we scrolled a page of PDF documents with recorded narrations and scheduled Zoom Q&A sessions. When I presented my poster at TWS in 2019, there was a specific time for posters where people congregated and could initiate conversation with exhibitors, professionals, and other students. I would always take note of people with speaker labels on their nametags if they came to my poster. I would then try to attend their talks to support them as well. Because my pre-recorded talk was on-demand for the duration of the 2020 virtual conference, I didn't know how many people viewed my presentation. Although the virtual conference attempted to facilitate interaction with "like" buttons and comment sections, not much interaction happened.

There were other opportunities for interacting with other attendees in the form of workshops and working group meetings. I had the opportunity to attend a Geospatial Analysis in R workshop on the last day of the conference, and the best part was being put into small groups and working on problems. I particularly had a fun time laughing about mistakes in my R code with a professor who I had met previously in the Fellowship of Christian Conservationists meeting at the beginning of the conference.

The benefits of having a virtual conference were not to be ignored. The timing of the conference was always tricky for me because I had field work to do in October. Not needing to travel minimized the stress of managing field work and attending the conference, and I crossed paths with a handful of people who said the most encouraging thing a virtual conference attendee could say: "I wouldn't have been able to attend if this conference wasn't virtual." So many open doors! The navigation of the conference was a bit better than in-person as well, where instead of having a 12-page booklet of abstracts, we had an Excel document with each day's events on its own sheet. This eliminated the anxiety of not knowing where rooms were, too!

Because the TWS 2020 virtual conference registration for students was drastically discounted (only \$100 for a week of intellectual fun - what a steal of a deal!), I had the opportunity to use my travel grant from the Northeast Section of TWS to attend the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies conference that was also virtual for the first time in April 2021. The first thing I noticed about this conference that I had never seen before was the personality we could exhibit in our attendee profiles. I wasn't just a graduate research assistant from West Virginia University presenting a poster. I was a dog lover, social distancing expert, and adventurer. I also was full of bright ideas and stress! I could then relate to people I had never met on the attendee list even before I interacted with them.

Like the TWS 2020 conference, workshops were available to attendees. Some were catered specifically to students and early career professionals. I stumbled upon one and thought I would pop in since it didn't require pre-registration, and I found the Chief of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources was one of the professionals in the panel. We thought our field was small to begin with, but technology is making it even smaller!

Other workshops were tailored to educators, facilitating conversations about how organizations implemented virtual teaching components to their programs or, in the case of the Pennsylvania Game Commission, created a completely new program structure to provide quality material during the pandemic. As a student/early-career professional, there is a lot of performance anxiety when it comes to talking with more experienced professionals, but the virtual environment made asking questions more comfortable. When I sent a message to one of the speakers at the end of the conference, she responded with a thank you... For what? ...for contributing to the conversation. I never would have had that affirmation unless I took the initiative to follow up, which was easy to do because it didn't take much to seek out the speaker in a list of attendees.



I'm glad to hear that some components of virtual conferences will continue past the pandemic to accommodate for those who cannot attend conferences in person. A virtual forum could be a great complement to an in-person conference. Although the virtual conference experience does not allow the full experience an in-person conference can, we are finding creative ways to get our information to the science community and the public. I'll never forget one of the questions posed in the TWS 2020 Plenary Session Q&A: How do we effectively use social media to share scientific information in this time in history when fake news runs rampant? I don't have much of a social media presence (my Instagram is on private, and I'm not a huge fan of Twitter), but I love to share my passion for research and education. I think my October 2020 self has summed up the virtual conference experience well: Covid can't stop us.



 **cnidarian_lasagna** ...

 **cnidarian_lasagna** Welp, it's October. Happy new month, everyone! 🍂🍁

Kodah and I are here enjoying #TWS2020 🐶🐱🐹 Lots of really cool research being presented. Covid can't stop us! 🦠🦨🦫🦏🦑🦒🦘🦙🦚🦛🦜🦞🦟🦠

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 Liked by **brinsta_gram_ and 9 others**

OCTOBER 1, 2020

 Add a comment... Post

THE NORTHEAST SECTION OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

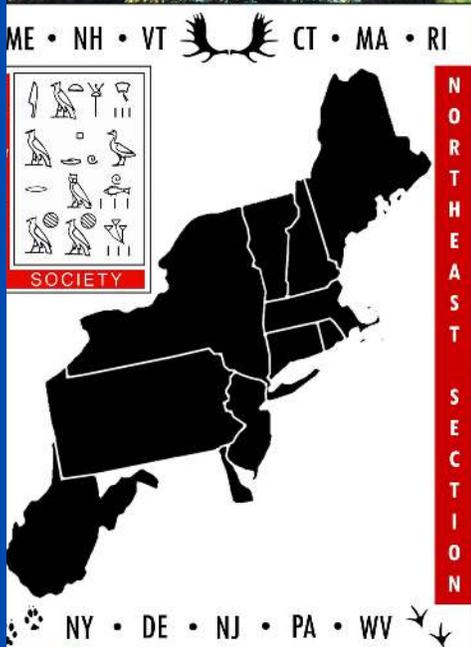
ACCEPTING
APPLICATIONS
NOW!

**STUDENT
SECTION**
REPRESENTATIVES

We are seeking both undergraduate and graduate students with a passion for wildlife to represent their fellow students for a one-year term in the NE Section!

Preference will be given to juniors or exceptional sophomores for the undergraduate position.

Some duties include: voicing student opinions, assisting with social media pages, and aiding in planning student events at Conclave and NEAFWA.



PLEASE SEND A COVER
LETTER AND A RESUME
INDICATING YOUR
INVOLVEMENT IN TWS
TO : VAL.TITUS@KEYSTONE.EDU

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Spotlight with Nature Photographer Anthony Frazier



WRITTEN BY
TAMMY COLT

“We see trees and forest . . . They see landing, launching, and nesting places. They see trees from the top down; we see them from the bottom up.”

Anthony Frazier was explaining to me how thinking from the birds’ perspective helps him to capture stunning photographs of bird activity. Anthony describes himself as an amateur photographer, but his photos suggest otherwise. He has a knack for capturing movement and critical moments in the everyday lives of wildlife, particularly raptors. He shares his photos of nature and community almost daily on a Facebook page he named “Walking Photography.” It’s ironic that he alluded to perspective at the very start of our conversation, because I had asked him for an interview to hear his perspective on the subject of race and outdoor activities.

Unlike those of you reading this, Anthony never studied or worked in natural resources. He was not a kid who spent time in the woods, or went to nature camp, or was fascinated by wildlife. He grew up in Washington D.C., where (he tells me) there were plenty of parks and trails, but they were a thing “you passed through to get to somewhere else.” He never even saw a live deer during his childhood. We sat down over coffee to chat about how he came to appreciate nature and his experience as a black man visiting local natural areas here in rural Western Pennsylvania, where the demographic is exceedingly dominated by whites.

TC: Anthony, I wanted to talk to you today because it’s indisputable that people of color are underrepresented in my field and in the natural resources in general. I’m interested in hearing different perspectives on how we can remedy that.

AF: I don’t even know what you just said there. People of color? Everybody has a color. Everything in nature has a color. Let’s embrace the differences instead of separating them.

TC: My job is all about wildlife diversity. You told me you used to teach diversity, meaning, of course, cultural diversity. Tell me more about that. [Note: Anthony worked as a social worker specializing in gangs, cults, and hate groups.]

AF: I taught diversity to all kinds of people—police, supervisors, teachers and school administrators . . . but when people talk about diversity now, they mean something different. I grew up in the civil rights era . . . Martin Luther King never talked about equity, he talked about equality. There’s a difference. People talk about bias—everybody has bias. Bias is what tells you not to step off a cliff; bias makes you wary of something that’s different than you or what you’re used to. That’s normal.

Diversity Spotlight continued...

TC: *You're in the parks almost every day. Do you ever feel—and you might not, because you seem like a person who's so comfortable in your own skin—but do you ever feel out of place, because everybody else there is white?*

AF: No, not at all. I don't go to parks to check out the ethnicity of the people there. . . in my interactions with the people there—because I know race is not a person, race is not a culture. I'm aware of the biases that I have. I'm trying to be open to the experiences that I have there. The park is an experience, not just a place. I don't see it as “look at all the fishermen—they're white.” I see colors—I see greens and blues. I see black fishermen, I see white fishermen. Diversity is something that's coming at you in the parks in so many different ways. If you want to check your biases, your divisions, your “difference meter,” go to the park! Just go to the park and just sit there. How many shades of green are there in the park? But we walk right by this, we don't notice. That's how far we've removed ourselves from diversity.

TC: *How long have you been into nature photography? How did you get into it?*

AF: I was getting to a place with technology and all the stuff I was doing, I was becoming unhealthy; I had all these health issues. In college I was an athlete, constantly moving. Then I got to this point of sitting more, eating more, getting overweight. When I say my photography is a ministry, it is—it saved my life. One day, I was supposed to go somewhere—I don't remember where—and I said, instead, I'm going to go to the parks. Not for any specific reason—just to get away from this suffocating. Next thing I know, it turned into Walking Photography. We have to take care of ourselves, just like we have to take care of the environment. If we don't understand it, we can't take care of it.

TC: *Minorities, particularly blacks, are underrepresented in the wildlife profession. I don't think we can increase diversity in the profession until we increase the diversity of participants in outdoor activities. From your perspective, how can we make that happen?*

AF: It's not the institution that's the problem. The reason you don't see these people in outdoor careers is they don't see those opportunities. Because we're so stuck on color now, when we see a group that's all—something—say, all women, or all men—we say, “I'm not going to that.” It's about familiarity.

In order to grow things, you have to cultivate them. You can't legislate growth—you cultivate it. If you want to promote diversity? Get those teachers, those mentors. . . Take your program into the communities that don't have it. Put videos out there on the web, showing kids doing these things in the outdoors. Let me people see it's a thing they can do. You don't do it through shouting, scaring, cancelling, legislating people. You do it through cultivating people. No rose will grow through force.

Whos Who in the Northeast?

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Operations Committee		
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Field Course Rep.	Bill Healy, PhD, CWB	healybg@hotmail.com
Field Course (Alternate)	John McDonald, PhD	twsrmdonald@gmail.com

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Pennsylvania Chapter President	Samara Trusso	satrusso@pa.gov
Pennsylvania Chapter, NE Section Liaison	Jeremy Banfield	jebanfield@pa.gov
West Virginia Chapter President	Mack Frantz, PhD	Mack.W.Frantz@wv.gov

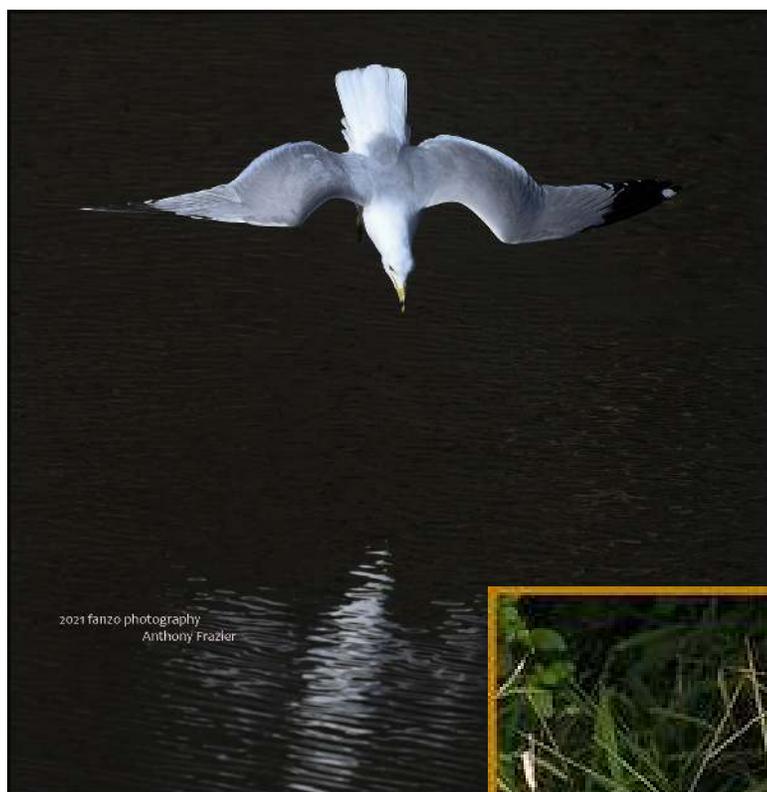


Photo Credit:
Anthony Frazier