BUILDING MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS: PERSPECTIVES AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM TWS
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She | Her | Hers
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The Wildlife Society

Founded in 1937, our mission is:

• To **inspire**, **empower**, and **enable** wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation.

The Wildlife Society promotes professional growth of its members by expanding and adapting its professional development program, mentorship opportunities, and conservation leadership training.
Mentorship

A collaborative, mutually beneficial relationship focused on knowledge and skill building to support personal and professional development
Benefits of Mentorship

• Sounding board for advice and decision making
• Higher level of comfort and job satisfaction
• Support throughout education and career
• Organizational benefits
• Networking
• Leadership development
• Career advancements
Various Structures

- Formal vs informal
- Dyad, triad, collective, networks, online communities, etc.
- Peer and near-peer
- Student mentorship
- Workplace or profession mentorship
- Internship, assistantship, fellowship programs
- Professional societies or affinity groups
Typical Steps of Mentorship

**Step 1:** Identify a potential mentor

**Step 2:** Set expectations

**Step 3:** Engage in activities for positive growth and development

**Step 4:** Establish if and how you will continue your relationship
Demonstrate Your Values

• Show that you value participation in mentorship programs
• Engage at all levels of your organization
• Ensure sustainability of the program
• promote institutionalization of mentorship
Personalized Relationships Based on Trust

- Authentic Engagement
- Expectations for professional behavior and conduct
- Establish trust between all involved
- Mutual accountability and responsibility
- Confidentiality & privacy
Discuss Diversity Topics

• Be conscious of individual preferences and personal development
• An opportunity for self-assessment and growth
• Move away from colorblind views and toward being culturally responsive
• Benefits to mentor
• Address implicit bias directly
• Value of mentoring through groups with shared identity
Mentorship and Support at All Stages

- K-12, college, early career, established professionals
- Mentors need tools, training, and education
- Provide leadership training for everyone
- Be prepared to adapt
Cultivate A Supportive Community

• Encourage connections
• Create a safe space
• Improve outreach
• Disseminate best practices
• Ensure everyone feels invited and welcomed
Collaborate & Evolve

- Explore potential partnerships
- Ensure mechanisms for feedback
- Considerations for the virtual workplace
Look at Existing Programs

• Collect information on successful mentoring programs and/or programs that incorporate a mentoring component

• Adapt existing programs to fit your needs and group
References


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