

A Guide for Diverse and Inclusive Events



Women of Wildlife Community Team



TWS WORKING GROUPS

A MEMBER-LED INITIATIVE

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The [Women of Wildlife](#) is part of **The Wildlife Society, Inc. (TWS)** – A 501(C)(3) nonprofit incorporated in the District of Columbia. This document is a member-led initiative to support an official position statement of TWS. Members of TWS are integral to developing opportunities that advance the wildlife profession and mission of TWS. As a member-led initiative, viewpoints expressed in this document may not reflect official views of TWS. However, TWS recognizes the importance of diverse member perspectives and the role that member-led initiatives play in increasing visibility, awareness, and effectiveness of TWS strategic plan objectives and support membership engagement in achieving mission-driven outcomes. Click on the links above to learn more about TWS and its associated membership initiatives.

Introduction: How to Use this Guide

The Women of Wildlife (WOW) Community Team is a community of TWS members of all genders who promote and support women in the wildlife profession. One of the ways that we pursue our mission is through hosting events that promote and educate TWS members and other wildlife professionals about diversity, inclusion, and equity. We offer this guide to help and encourage others to host their own events throughout the various organizational units of TWS.

Wildlife professionals have hosted various types of events since the beginning of the profession. These events have included conferences, workshops, and symposia. Almost exclusively, they dealt with wildlife topics and issues, usually based on the latest science and on-the-ground management. Wildlife professionals know how to put on great wildlife-oriented events. What we may lack are the skills and knowledge to make those wildlife-oriented events inclusive, or how to host an event that educates ourselves about diversity and inclusion.

Diversity is an action, inclusivity is cultural, and belonging is a feeling. Change doesn't start from top-down leadership; it happens at every level. We can all be leaders if we choose to be, and we can all try making people we know feel comfortable. When you feel like you belong, your work ethic improves. Study after study has shown that diversity leads to more creative teams and more successful organizations.

As our society changes, so must our profession in order to stay relevant and to attract and retain the best and the brightest. To be inclusive and welcoming often requires different ways of thinking about relationships and communication. It requires expanding your comfort zone, and your willingness to embrace different ways of being. Events of various types can help raise awareness of what it means to be inclusive and can be structured to help learn how to be more inclusive. In this document we provide the information you will need to put on an event promoting diversity and inclusion.

We provide a blank form on Page 5 that you can use to start planning your own event.

Starting on Page 6, we share three examples of ethnic-gender diversity events held in the past. These examples show the range of event types, and you are encouraged to use these examples to help plan your events, or as stimulants to your creativity. We would love to see where your imagination takes you and include your example in this guide so please provide us with your event so we can continue to grow.

The first example is from the 2015 Annual Wildlife Society Conference in Winnipeg, Canada put on by Women of Wildlife. This event was a panel discussion followed by a social mixer. The second example is of a pandemic-era student potluck held in 2021 by Texas A&M University-Kingsville Women of Wildlife Chapter. The third example is a virtual training on microaggressions and biases held by Women of Wildlife Sciences (WOWS), a group of USDA Wildlife Services employees.

After the examples, we provide details on important logistical considerations when organizing an event, such as looking for a venue and recruiting volunteers. We also provide additional resources such as tips for engaging audiences at virtual events.

Remember, WOW are open to all and these events can be hosted at any level of TWS including Section and Chapter meetings. Student Chapters and universities are encouraged to use this guide as well. These events are not limited to professional conferences, and they do not necessarily need to be a particular format. There are many other TWS member led initiatives that promote inclusion, diversity, and equity as well, such as the mission of the Out in the Field community team. We encourage those interested in learning more about TWS diversity initiative visit this [webpage](#).

Our goal is to promote awareness of ethnic and gender issues as well as encourage all to participate in the dialogue.

Blank Event Form

Below is an example outline for anyone to use when organizing an event as described in this guide. In bold are some important things to have pinned down for your event. The information you include in this form can be sent to colleagues who will help run this event, participates you want to encourage attending the event, and even funders to help raise awareness.

Title of Event:

Details of Event:

Even Date and Time:

Event Location:

Event Description:

Event Length:

Organizers of Event (please provide contact information)

Financial support for Event provided by:

Additional Supporters of Event:

Abstract: (Something that can be provided to conference organizers or university business staff)

Detailed Description of the Event:

Required Materials:

Event Example 1: Panel Discussion and Reception

Here we have our first example of a past event put on by Women of Wildlife at the annual TWS conference. This was an in-person panel discussion hosted at a convention center. In this example there is basic information about the event (i.e., time, place, required materials) as well as an outline for the moderator of this panel discussion.

REMEMBER: Always spell out the acronym in the title of your presentation. This ensures that the audience will always know what's being discussed.

Title of Event: PANEL DISCUSSION: Women of Wildlife (WOW) at Work

Details of Event: 2015 Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
October 20, 2015

Even Date and Time: October 20, 2015, 3:40 pm - 5:20 pm

Event Location: Convention Centre, MR 13

Event Description: Panel Discussion (to be followed immediately by a 1-hour WOW reception and discussion)

Event Length: 100 minutes

Organizers of Event (please provide contact information):

Carol Chambers
P.O. Box 15018, School of Forestry
Northern Arizona University
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Financial support for the WOW Panel and Mixer provided by:

- Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society
- Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society
- South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society
- Southwest Section of The Wildlife Society
- Texas Tech University Department of Natural Resources Management
- Ed Thompson
- An anonymous donor from Texas

Additional Supporters of Event: Women of Wildlife Organizational Committee, Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society, Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society, South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society, Southwest Section of The Wildlife Society, Texas Tech University Department of Natural Resources Management, Ed Thompson, and an anonymous donor from Texas.

Abstract: This panel discussion is intended to build discussion and networking opportunities for women and men working in the wildlife profession. Panelists will address past, present, and future challenges and opportunities they experienced or expect to experience that affect career development. The panel discussion provides a forum to reflect on past perceptions, current values, and specific approaches that employers, employees, and The Wildlife Society can undertake to improve diversity and opportunities for women. Panelists will represent a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives. Each of four panelists will respond to a set of questions about impediments and assistance on their path to a wildlife career, and what the individual, employer, and The Wildlife Society can do to benefit wildlife conservation and the wildlife profession overall. Each set of panel responses will follow with time for the audience to ask questions of any panelist or to put forward questions to the panel at large. The role of the Panelists will be to describe information that most challenged their current perceptions or understanding of gender issues in the workforce and to consider the implications for the future of the wildlife profession.

Detailed Description of the Event: This panel discussion continues the networking and educational opportunities offered by previous Women of Wildlife events in the past (symposium, panel discussion, and workshop in 2013, receptions in 2012 and 2011). It differs from our previous symposium in that it provides a richly interactive approach and discussion with a set of panel members who will reflect on past, current and future opportunities for women in wildlife careers. We anticipate that the symposium will break through misperceptions about gender and be an eye-opener for attendees. A Panel Discussion is important because it provides the time and opportunity to gain from the perspectives and experiences of others, share ideas and suggestions, and obtain clarification and additional insights from the panelists. The panel will include 4 members, selected to represent a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives. They will be called on to address 3 questions. After brief responses by panel members, the audience will be invited to interact with panelists or to put forward questions to the panel at large. Following the formal panel discussion, the audience and panelists will move to a WOW reception (open to any attendee of the entire conference). We will prompt continued discussions at this reception by supplying questions to each attendee of the reception with one of the questions addressed to the panel and will digitally record answers provided by attendees.

Required Materials:

- Contact information sheets
- File cards for questions for the panel
- Pencils
- Basket/box for questions for panel if people don't stand up and ask
- WOW buttons
- Power Point presentation of WOW members from previous years
- Drink tickets for the mixer

EXAMPLE 1: Panel Discussion and Reception (starts on p. 5)

Panel Details:

Panel Moderator: Carol Chambers, Southwest Section Representative to Council 2009-2015

Panelists (Note: we selected panelists to represent diversity in age and experience in wildlife):

1. Tabitha Graves, U.S. Geological Survey, Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center, Glacier Field Station
2. Art Rodgers, Research Scientist, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Centre for Northern Forest Ecosystem Research and Canadian Section Representative to Council
3. Erin Saunders, MS Student, School of Forestry, Northern Arizona University
4. Misty Sumner, Biologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife

Panel Recorders (or microphone handlers): Student volunteers

Questions for Panelists:

1. **The past: What path led you to your wildlife career and what was one of the biggest challenges you (or women you know) faced along the way?**
2. **The present: In your day to day life, what obstacles do you (or women you know) still prevent you from achieving what you (or women you know) want to at work?**
3. **The future: What one thing could TWS do to help increase your success (or women you know) in your career? What one thing could your employer do to improve your career? What one thing could you do?**

Note to Panelists: Please prepare a 5-minute response to each of the above 3 questions. We plan on having the 3 questions up on PowerPoint for audience to see during the panel discussion. We really want this to be interactive with the audience, so your moderator will cut you off at the end of 5 minutes (friendly warning). We would like you to describe these questions in the context of your life but bringing in examples from others is great. We want some 'controversy' (i.e., something to keep the audience on the edge of their seats).

Art will present his perspective and he'll be talking about what he has seen with regard to women in the wildlife profession and will also contrast his experiences personally (for example, was it easier for him to achieve some things, what did he see happening with female colleagues).

The moderator would like to meet with panelists before the panel discussion to have a chance to talk over what you're presenting and to get panelists familiar with each other. We will meet Saturday evening at the hotel restaurant.

Please provide the moderator with a short biographical sketch for your introduction.

EXAMPLE 1: Panel Discussion and Reception (starts on p. 5)

Panel and Reception Timeline

Panel Duration: 3:40 pm - 5:20 pm

3:40-3:45 pm

Introduction of moderator and panelists; ground rules for the panel discussion (5 minutes)

3:45-4:05 pm (5 minutes each = 20 minutes)

Past challenge: Each panelist presents their response to a question about their development in the wildlife profession and a past challenge they experienced: **“What path led you to your wildlife career and what was one of the biggest challenges you faced along the way?”**

4:05-4:15 pm (10 minutes)

The floor is opened for all in attendance to address questions to specific panelists or to the panel at large.

4:15-4:35 pm (5 minutes each = 20 minutes)

Current challenge: Each panelist presents their response to a question about a current challenge: **“In your day-to-day life, what obstacles do you still find prevent you from achieving what you want to at work?”**

4:35-4:45 pm (10 minutes)

The floor is opened for all in attendance to address questions to specific panelists or to the panel at large.

4:45-5:05 pm (5 minutes each = 20 minutes)

Envisioning the future: Each panelist presents their response to 3 questions about future challenges: **“What one thing could TWS do to help increase your success in your career? What one thing could your employer do to improve your career? What one thing could you do?”**

5:05-5:15 pm (10 minutes)

The floor is opened for all in attendance to address questions to specific panelists or to the panel at large.

5:15-5:20 pm (5 minutes)

Wrap up and concluding remarks.

Reception Duration: 5:30-6:30pm

The panel discussion will be followed by a reception. At the reception, we will continue our discussion of questions asked of panelists, especially those used to envision the future.

Event Example 2: Social Distancing Potluck

Our next example was a socially distant potluck put on by a student chapter of Women of Wildlife. In this example there is basic information about the event (i.e., time, place, required materials) as well as a description of the event for participants.

Title of Event: Welcome Back Students Potluck

Details of Event: Texas A&M University-Kingsville Chapter of Women of Wildlife

Even Date and Time: February 21, 2021, 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Event Location: Backyard of Amanda Veals' House

Event Description: Socially distancing potluck to encourage new students to get to know others in the department

Event Length: 3 hours

Organizers of Event (please provide contact information):

Amanda Veals

Kristyn Stewart

Financial support for Event provided by: NA

Additional Supporters of Event:

Wildlife and Agriculture Graduate Student Organization at Texas A&M University-Kingsville

Detailed Description of the Event:

Many of you are new to Kingsville and due to the pandemic, have not been able to meet other students in the department. We would like to host a socially distanced potluck to help old and new students gather to get to know each other.

The Women of Wildlife Kingsville Chapter and the Wildlife and Agriculture Graduate Student Organization would like to invite you all to participate in an afternoon of socially distanced fun. We will be hosting a potluck on Sunday February 21st at (*Address retracted*) from 3-6 pm in the backyard.

Masks are required unless you are actively eating/drinking. We ask that you bring your own chair and come in through the side gate. There is parking available on the street. There will be a bathroom available inside the house with hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes. We will provide some food, but we encourage you to bring a dish you would like to share, as well as your own beverages.

If you are interested and available, please RSVP to (*information retracted*). Also, please let us know if you have any diet restrictions. We look forward to reconnecting and meeting you all! Stay safe out there!

Event Example 3: Microaggressions Virtual Training

The final example in our guide was a virtual training on how to spot and respond to microaggressions. This event included a pre-survey to gauge how much the participants knew in advance on the topic, followed by an educational presentation and breakout groups for discussion. The organizers of this event provided additional resources on the topic.

The pre-training survey and file for reporting harassment in this example are unavailable. Please check with your own agency, company, or institution for these resources. The Wildlife Society also has resources for this in a Special Focus Issue of the Wildlife Professional.

Title of Event: Dealing with Microaggressions and Biases

Details of Event: Women of Wildlife Sciences (WOWS)
Virtual: Microsoft Teams

Even Date and Time: Thursday June 9, 2022 2-3:30PM EST

Event Location: WOWS Microsoft Teams

Event Description: Understanding what microaggressions and biases are, as well as how to handle them.

Event Length: 1.5 hours

Organizers of Event (please provide contact information):

Megan Helsel

Financial support for Event provided by: NA

Additional Supporters of Event:

The Wildlife Society

Women of Wildlife Committee

Detailed Description of the Event:

What is a microaggression? Have you experienced microaggressions at work or in the field? How can you safely respond in those situations? How can you report situations where you may not feel safe?

Please complete the anonymous survey prior to the meeting.

We will host a virtual meeting to explain what microaggressions and common biases are. We will run through a quick presentation to go over some important information before going into break out rooms to work through some of the scenarios shared in the survey.

EXAMPLE 3: Microaggressions Virtual Training (starts on p. 11)**Flyer for Event**

Dealing with Microaggressions and Biases

What is a microaggression? Have you experienced microaggressions at work or in the field? How can you safely respond in those situations? How can you report situations where you may not feel safe?

Please complete this anonymous [survey](#) prior to the meeting. We will utilize break out rooms to work through some of the scenarios shared in the survey.



WOWS

Join us to throw negative encounters in the trash!

Thursday, June 9th 2-3:30PM EST
WOWS Microsoft Teams

EXAMPLE 3: Microaggressions Virtual Training (starts on p. 11)**Break out rooms: Scenarios**

1. Gender/Race Stereotypes:
 - a. Being called, or treated as, a secretary and being given more “housekeeping” type tasks.
 - b. When with one of my older male employees and we are approached in public, the older male employee is always the one spoken to and looked at, even though I’m his boss and the directions should be directed at me.
 - c. While in the field with a person of color, they are treated as if they are not there and I am the only one addressed.
 - d. Female worker professionally operating a motorboat and trailer has been confronted by older, usually male, locals asking “You’re going out all by yourself? Are you sure you’re going to be okay?”
 - e. My female colleagues and I are frequently referred to as “girls”, while I never hear people refer to my male colleagues as “boys”.
 - f. Men on my team are assigned the tasks of moving heavy equipment with the underlying message/tone that safety is important and a big, strong man could do this more safely.
2. While working with a partner on a project, my (female) input was never considered. When my partner was not present, I made an executive decision that was blown out of proportion when they found out, only to learn months later what I did was correct and there were no issues.
3. Someone “casually” telling you that they don’t plan to ever hire a gender/race/sexual orientation/family status again because they made the mistake of hiring that gender/race/sexual orientation/family status once and they were terrible.
4. “Mansplaining”

EXAMPLE 3: Microaggressions Virtual Training (starts on p. 11)

Microaggressions/Biases Resources:

“Microaggressions are not trivial and insignificant but have a continuing and oftentimes macro impact.”

WATCH (9 Minutes)—[TED Talk: Eliminating Microaggressions: The Next Level of Inclusion](#)

Microaggression is a term used for brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative prejudicial slights and insults toward any group. In this TED Talk, Tiffany lays out how this behavior manifests itself, the role you play, and what you can do to avoid perpetuating its continued existence in society.

LISTEN (21 Minutes)—[NPR: Microaggressions Are A Big Deal: How To Talk Them Out And When To Walk Away](#) Kevin Nadal, a professor of psychology at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, has spent years researching and writing books on the effects of microaggressions. As these big structural issues play out, he says it's important to confront the small stuff.

ATTEND — [Righttobe.org](#) Free trainings on bystander intervention, responding to and preventing harassment, and conflict de-escalation

Mild Call-Outs

- I don't want to put you on the spot, but that comment makes me uncomfortable.
- Can you repeat what you just said? I'm not sure I heard you correctly.
- Okay, I am having a strong reaction to that, and I need to let you know why.
- Hmm.. maybe you want to think this one through a bit more and speak about it later.
- It sounds like you're making some assumptions that we need to unpack a bit.
- I don't find that funny. Can you tell me why that's funny to you?
- You may or may not realize this, but you're talking about (me, my culture, my identity) ... with those comments.

Strong Call-Outs

- I feel obligated as your (peer, colleague, co-worker, friend) to tell you that your comment wasn't okay.
- I don't see it that way.
- That's not our culture here. Those aren't our values.
- I need to leave the room if the conversation is going to continue down this road.
- Is the (stereotyped category: sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, class, ethnicity, religion, ability, immigration status, body type, marital status, parental status, age, pregnancy) ... relevant to your point? How?
- I want you to know that someone hearing that comment you made would think that you were (racist, xenophobic, sexist, etc.)

Event Coordination and Planning Advice

There is more to running an event than just the who, what, when, where of it all. Below are some additional things to consider when planning your event. We have provided some advice for common hurdles encountered when coordinating these types of events.

Considerations for running in-person and virtual events.

1. Location and Timing – Consider a location that is easy to find and access by attendees, or having more regularly scheduled events (e.g., monthly meetings) rotate locations to allow people from different regions, who are less able to travel, a chance to participate. For larger events (e.g., conferences), consider the draw of a location for attendees, while reducing expenses. Plan around ALL religious holidays.
2. Venue – What are the requirements for the event you wish to host? Make sure your venue meets the needs of your event. Consider the costs associated with renting additional equipment (e.g., screen, projector, podium, microphone) and rooms. Consider room setup and how to accommodate varied mobilities. Ask attendees in advance if they need accommodations. Use captions for video content. Use a venue that has gender-neutral bathrooms. Ensure adequate lighting and audio. How an audience hears/sees during an event impacts overall enjoyment.
3. Budget – How will the event be funded? Consider what you expect attendees to contribute or implicitly expect for attendance (i.e., travel, entrance fees). Seek out sponsorship if possible, from your local chapter or related organizations (e.g., Rotary Clubs, on-campus student body leadership, TWS State Chapter or Section). If charging a registration fee, consider having a range of rates (student, early career, mid-late career, retired).
4. Virtual Events– Consider who will host the event, i.e., will it be via zoom or other virtual account and who is willing to use their account for the event. While you do not need to pick a location or venue, you do need to design a successful virtual event. See the resources list for tips on holding a great virtual event.
5. Planning Committees, Event Organizers, Volunteers – How many people do you need to successfully pull off your event? How far in advance should you meet to begin planning your event together? Reaching out for assistance within your chapter is a great place to start.

Event Coordination and Planning Advice (starts on p. 15)

6. At the event:

- Allow attendees to provide a preferred name for registration and nametags. Include pronoun options.
- Ensure registration materials are legible. Make them available in various formats as needed.
- Make translation services available. Collaborate with area organizations that offer various languages, including American Sign Language (ASL).
- Encourage and assist speakers in presenting visuals that are easy to see and read. This includes projected presentation (PowerPoint, Prezi) and handouts.
- Curate a diverse slate of panelists and presenters.
- Consider dietary needs. If you provide food, consider the widest array of options and needs. Try to separate foods that are subject to common restrictions – like nuts and gluten.
- Train staff and volunteers on accessibility etiquette.

Additional Resources

Here we provide some resources for in-person and virtual events since we will host these long after the pandemic. These resources are not specific to WOW events, but we feel they are useful for hosting a successful event.

1. Slido for Conferences: engage your audience with an easy-to-use Q&A and polling platform that has become a standard at the most renowned conferences worldwide. Free for basic use, \$49 for an event with additional features.

<https://www.sli.do/conferences>

2. Tips for making in person or virtual panels more engaging:

<https://www.duarte.com/dont-shoot-the-moderator-how-to-host-a-great-panel/>

<https://www.ihollaback.org/how-to-host-a-panel-discussion/>

<https://meetingpool.net/3-ideas-to-make-sessions-a-little-more-interactive-engaging/>

3. Discussion on more events from attendees at TWS 2021 virtual.

What events would you like to see WOW host:

<https://padlet.com/carolchambers/bcp57gg1xf6fhku0>

Events you have participated in the past that were targeted for women and other genders:

<https://padlet.com/carolchambers/ufs7shuljldyt9p1>

4. Padlet (or other virtual bulletin boards like Miro, Stormboard, MURAL, Limnu, InVision Freehand, phpBB)

<https://padlet.com/> (free membership includes 3 free padlets, other memberships start at \$6.99 per month)

5. Societies Consortium on Sexual Harassment in STEMM (<https://societiesconsortium.com/>): The Wildlife Society is a member of this consortium which offers resources and guidance documents, including those for hosting inclusive virtual and in-person meetings. Many resources are available through the link above and login access to detailed guidance documents is available to any TWS member by contacting, Cameron Kovach (ckovach@wildlife.org)

Contact Us

This guide was compiled by Amanda Veals-Dutt, Carol Chambers, Kathy Granillo, and Jennifer Malpass on behalf of the Women of Wildlife and Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Awareness Working Group.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions regarding the guide at amveals@gmail.com. You can direct more general questions about Women of Wildlife to womenofwildlifetws@gmail.com

We also encourage you to check out our pages on The Wildlife Society's website and social media pages for more information.

We hope that anyone who hosts an event will send your example events to us (with photos and necessary materials). We would like to include these events on our [website](#) to share with others and promote more of these events in the future.



TWS Women of
Wildlife