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Better **TOGETHER**

SEAFWA
Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies



Minorities In Natural
Resources Conservation
www.minrc.org



- After-Action Report
- 75th Annual SEAFWA Conference
- Roanoke, Virginia
- October 17 – 20, 2021
- Chair: David Buggs



MINRC
Minorities in Natural Resources Conservation

Student Selections

The 2021 SEAFWA Conference convened in a hybrid format. Due to the still high rate of discomfort fostered by the Covid-19 outbreak, this year's Minorities in Natural Resources Conservation committee had only 13 students to apply compared to 35-40 in past years. The committee selected 9 out of 13 students to attend the conference, representing member states of Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and North Carolina. Two of the nine students selected were graduate students.

Meet Our 2021 MINRC Students



First Name

Elysea

Kaitlyn

Caris

Alex

Jessica

Kalie

Christian

Kimberly

Sabine

Last name

Jackson

Tiffany

Jones

Troutman

Moses

McDaniel

Walker

Bowman

Bailey

University

Troy State University

North Carolina State University

Tuskegee University

Georgia Southern University

University of Florida

Tuskegee University

Auburn University

Alabama A&M University

Auburn University

Major

Biology/Biomedical Sciences

Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology

Animal and Veterinary Sciences

Masters of Biology

Natural Resources Conservation

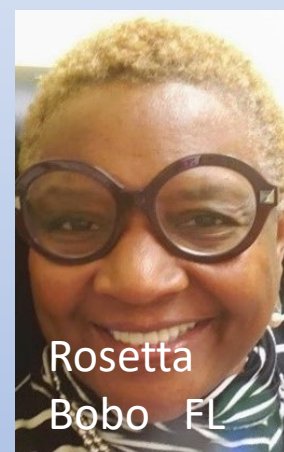
Agribusiness

Wildlife Enterprise Management

Plant and Soil Science

Forestry and Wildlife Sciences

SEAFWA MINRC Professionals In Attendance



Rosetta
Bobo FL



Phillip
Stephenson FWS



Luis Suau
NC



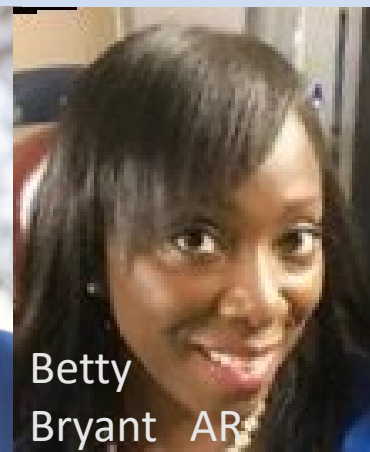
Mike
Hill VA



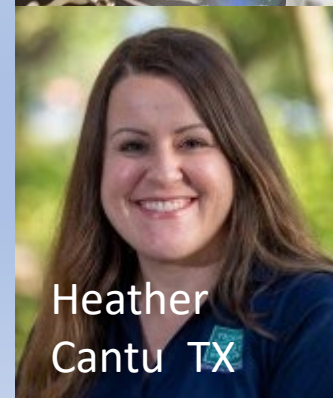
Mercedes
Maddox AL



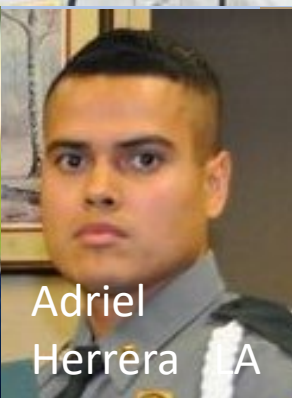
George
Braxton VA



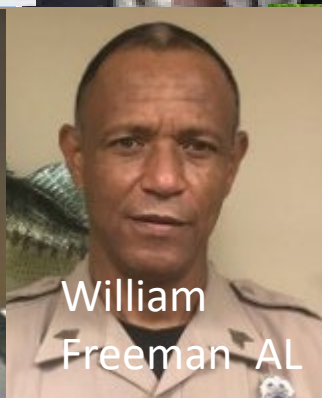
Betty
Bryant AR



Heather
Cantu TX



Adriel
Herrera LA



William
Freeman AL



Alix Pedraza
SC



Eric Suarez FL



Lisa
Kruse GA



Cayley
Birchfield TX



David
Buggs TX

MINORITIES IN NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION

MINRC STUDENT WORKSHOP

Saturday, October 16, from 5:00 – 7:00
p.m. – Sunday, October 17, from 8:30 -
12:00

Purpose of Meeting: This pre-conference workshop focused on creating a welcoming environment to University students studying Conservation and create a pathway to future employment in this field.

Meeting Organizer: William Freeman (AWFF)



William
Freeman AL

Workshop Agenda

Saturday, October 16, from 5:00 – 7:00

- **Introductions & Housekeeping**
 - **Introduction to MINRC (David Buggs - TPWD)**
 - **Professionalism in the Workplace**
Facilitator: Mercedes Maddox, Alabama Department of Conservation
 - **Elevator Speech 101/ Social Media**
Facilitator: Adriel Herrera, Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries

Sunday, October 17, from 8:30 -12:00

- **Putting MINRC to Use (Eric Suarez, South Region Biologist, Florida Wildlife Commission)**
- **How being a part of MINRC can create networking opportunities and a successful career path.**
- **Resumes and Cover Letters (Betty Bryant, AFGC)**
- **How to present a professional employment package to employers.**
- **Careers in Conservation Panel (William Freeman- Moderator)**
 - **Panelists:**
 - **Adriel Herrera - LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries – Agent**
 - **Lisa Kruse - Georgia Dept of Natural Resources**
 - **Luis Suau – NC Fish and Game Department**
 - **Phillip Stephenson - USFWS - Wildlife Biologist**
- **Student-Professional Questions and Answers**

Elevator Speech Practice and Student-Professional Questions and Answers



Former SEAFWA MINRC Student Speaker

Eric Suarez , South Region Biologist, Florida Wildlife Commission

Eric received a B.S. degree in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation at the University of Florida in 2010 and went on to work for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to research alligator snapping turtles in the Suwannee River and three other major rivers across Florida's panhandle. During his time working for FWC, Eric got the opportunity to branch out and work with diamondback terrapins in the Gulf of Mexico. His Master's research focuses on understanding the interactions between terrapins and crab traps.

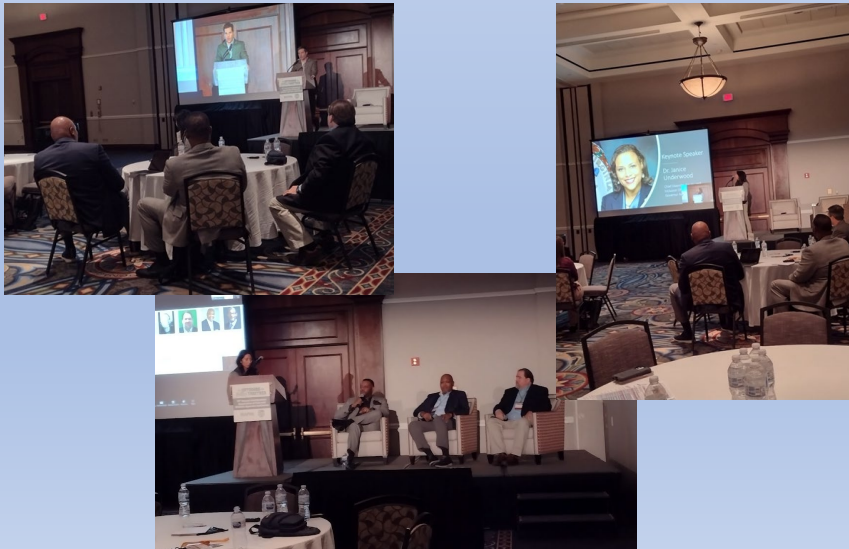
Topic: Putting Your MINRC Experience to Use



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP Hosted by MINRC Monday, October 18, 2021 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. CST

Purpose of Meeting: This conference workshop will focus on creating an inclusive environment, how to develop a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategic plan, and identifying small things you can do to increase DEI within your department.

Meeting Moderator: Mercedes Maddox (ADCNR)



Agenda

- **Welcome & Opening Presentation by Ryan Brown, VA DWR Executive Director**
- **Keynote Speaker – Dr. Underwood, Chief DEI Officer of the VA Cabinet**
- **Presentation from 2020 Diversity Award Winners Texas Parks and Wildlife**
 - TPWD's Carly Blankenship gave a presentation on activities and programs they promoted within their agency that increased diversity and inclusion in their workplace and outreach
- **Diversity & Inclusion Officers Panel**
 - This panel focused on the fundamentals of DEI and strategic planning, and answer submitted questions from the audience.
 - Panelists: Dr. Rosezetta Bobo | Diversity Director, FWC
 - George Braxton | Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, VA DWR
 - David Buggs | Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, TPWD
 - Dr. Luis Suau | Diversity and Inclusion Program Coordinator, NWRC
- **Breakout Groups – The what, why, and how of DEI**
 - Attendees were separated into groups of six to discuss the what, why, and how of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Each group had a facilitator who led the discussion. After 30 minutes of small group discussions, everyone came together to discuss perspectives
- **Wind down & final thoughts**

Other topics
Attendees
would like to
see covered
in Future
Professional
Workshops

Diversity and Inclusion 101

What does Equity and Fairness mean

Active Bystander Education

Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Planning

Dealing with Conflict

Emotional Intelligence and Diversity

Unconscious Bias

Allyship

2021 Teddy Roosevelt Award and Student Review October 19th 2021 1:00-1:30

The 2021 award winner is Sabine Bailey from Auburn University. The award was presented to Sabine by Larry Williams from the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Sabine has always loved the outdoors and is particularly drawn to the water. She has had amazing opportunities to conduct freshwater research in Montreal, Canada and marine field research in Fiji, Australia, and the Florida Keys. Congratulations Sabine.



MINRC Committee Meeting 10/19 1:30 - 2:30

2022 Officer Selection for MINRC
and After-Action Meeting

Chair for 2022: George Braxton
(Selected by Directors)

Vice Chair for 2022: Mercedes
Maddox (Last year of three-year
term)

Secretary for 2022: Cayley Birchfield

Student Coordinator: Alix Pedraza
(Tentative)

Meeting Adjourned: 2:20 p.m.



SEAFWA Agency Diversity and Inclusion Awards
Tuesday, October 19, 2021
5:30-7:00





On behalf of the MINRC committee, we'd like to express a special appreciation for our long-time colleague and committee member, Ms. Betty Bryant from the great state of Arkansas.

Betty has served on the MINRC committee for coming up on 19 years and has held every position within the committee including trusted advisor. She is moving to another position within her organization, but we hope she is not totally out of our reach.

We want to acknowledge how important she has been to MINRC, SEAFWA and the countless number of former MINRC students she has help to become Conservation professionals.

Thank you, Betty!

Special Recognition for All Nominees





- Director Parker Pauley was nominated because of her actions to increase the strategic focus on the value of diversity and inclusion, both in her state of Missouri and through her leadership as the chair of AFWA



- The first nomination from Alabama focused on the engagement of a young man by the name of Haris Inam. He is now the first game warden in Alabama of Pakistani descent and the first Muslim to wear the Alabama Conservation Enforcement Officer Uniform.
- Last year their staff participated in 126 events, that served nearly 1600 participants, 47% of which were female and 22% POC.





The nomination from Oklahoma focused on their relationship with Mid-America's Paralyzed Veterans of America. Through their partnership, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation provides physically challenged persons an opportunity to participate in adaptive shooting sports.



The Winners of
the 2021 SEAFWA
Diversity and
Inclusion Awards
are...



-The first winner of This years SEAFWA Diversity and Inclusion Award is, The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources for their focus on Workforce Diversity and Inclusion.

-Virginia DWR developed and implemented a workforce recruitment strategy which targeted students from Historically, black colleges and universities inside and outside of the state of Virginia.

-They also have within their strategy the recruitment of student athletes, and partnerships with affinity police officer associations.

-They added more diverse images to their media and increase the places which they distributed that media.

-Their efforts have resulted in the most diverse applicant pool of Conservation Officer Cadets in the agencies history.



The other winner is the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources for the development of a Targeted outreach program which has also resulted in an increase in Workforce Inclusion.

- South Carolina Department of Natural Resources expanded outreach within the Hispanic community and African American population of South Carolina, which has allowed SCDNR to better understand the broader diverse South Carolina population, and aided their agencies commitment to employ and retain the best and brightest talent across all demographics.

- As a part of their inclusion strategy, SCDNR has increased the number of underrepresented students in their internship program, they have assisted with event sponsorship of diverse organizations, they have increased diverse images in their educational, marketing and outreach materials, and created outdoor education programs which target students from diverse communities to expose them to careers and opportunities within the various areas of natural resource conservation.



Current & New MINRC Committee Members

Name	Agency	Email	Position	Comments
Bill Freeman	AL	William.Freeman@dcnr.alabama.gov	CEO	Active
Mercedes Maddox	AL	mercedes.maddox@dcnr.alabama.gov	Wildlife Biologist	Active
Betty Bryant	AR	Betty.Bryant@agfc.ar.gov		Active
Lazendra Hairston	AR	Lazendra.Hairston@agfc.ar.gov		Active
Maurice Jackson	AR	Maurice.jackson@agfc.ar.gov	Fisheries Biologist	Active
Rosezetta Bobo	FL	Rosezetta.Bobo@MyFWC.com	Diversity Director	Active
Paul Clemons	FL	Paul.Clemons@myfwc.com	Senior Management Analyst	Active
Lisa Kruse	GA	Lisa.Kruse@dnr.ga.gov	Senior Botanist	Active
Linda May	GA	Linda.May@dnr.ga.gov	Outreach Coordinator	New
Brent McCarty	KY	brent.mccarty@ky.gov	R3 Specialist	New
Stan House	LA	shouse@wlf.la.gov		Active
Sean Green	LA	sgreen@wlf.la.gov		Active
Adriel Herrera	LA	aherrera@wlf.la.gov	CEO	Active
Chris Kennedy	MO	Chris.Kennedy@mdc.mo.gov	Assistant to Director of DI	New
Salvador Mondragon	MO	Salvador.Mondragon@mdc.mo.gov		New
Kevin Dockendorf	NC	Kevin.Dockendorf@ncwildlife.org	Fisheries Research Coordinator	New
Anna Barcafer	NC	anna.barcafer@ncwildlife.org	Admin Specialist	New
Kenya Walls	NC	Kenya.Walls@ncwildlife.org		New
Vicky Scaggs	OK	Vicky.scaggs@odwc.ok.gov	HR Administrator	Active
Amanda Storck	OK	amanda.storck@odwc.ok.gov	CFO/Chief of Admin	New
Cayley Birchfield	TX	Cayley.birchfield@tpwd.texas.gov	Manager of Classification and Recruitment	Active
David Buggs	TX	David.Buggs@tpwd.texas.gov	Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer	Active
Heather Cantu	TX	Heather.Cantu@tpwd.texas.gov	Student Recruiter	New
Terry Whittaker	USFWS	Terry_whittaker@fws.gov		Active
Phillip Stephenson	FWS (OK)	phillipleestephenson@gmail.com	Wildlife Biologist	Active
Mike Hill	VA	mike.hill@dwr.virginia.gov		Active
George Braxton	VA	george.braxton@dwr.virginia.gov	Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer	Active
Michael Sellers	GA	Michael.Sellers@dnr.ga.gov	Volunteer/Internship Coordinator	NEW
Leopoldo Miranda	FWS	Leopoldo_Miranda@fws.gov		New
Sarah Southerland	OK	sarah.southerland@odwc.ok.gov		NEW
Tamara Jackson	MS	tamara.jackson@wfp.ms.gov		NEW
Karla Beatty	OK	karla.beatty@odwc.ok.gov		NEW
Lois Saua	NC	luis.suau@ncwildlife.org	Diversity and Inclusion Program Coordinator	NEW
Alix Pedraza	SC	PedrazaA@dnr.sc.gov	Diversity Outreach manager	New
Andrea Fout Tinsley	WV	Andrea.L.FoutTinsley@wv.gov	HR Director	New
Brian Ferguson	MS	Brian.Ferguson@wfp.ms.gov	Director Administrative Services	New
Jason Thompson	MS	jason.thompson@wfp.ms.gov	Asst Director Administrative Services	New
Joy Sweeney	TN	Joy.Sweaney@tn.gov	Alternate to Chuck Yoest	New
Eric Suarez	FL	eric.suarez@myfwc.com	South Region Conservation Biologist	New

Thank You to Our
Host Organization for
Your Outstanding
Hospitality



DEPARTMENT OF
WILDLIFE RESOURCES
CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.



Special Thank You to Delaney meeting & event management team for their outstanding support our MINRC Committee