

Friday, May 18, 2018

1-hour discussion –via GoToMeeting

Meeting began – 10:00 am Pacific/AZ

### Discussion Topic: *What's the best way to get students and/or youth involved?*

**Present on the call:** LoriAnne Barnett (NCO); Judy Davis (Ding Darling NWR); Nicole Menard (MN Valley NWR), Jennifer Jones (Yreka NWR); Tiffany Sprague (McDowell Sonoran Conservancy); Rachel Wostl (UTexas Arlington); Janet Barton; Stella Kovacs (Santa Barbara Botanic Garden); Sarah Anglo (CalNaturalist)

### Take-aways from today's discussion: *Whats the best way to students and/or youth involved?*

- Think about the reasons you are using NN and why you'd like to engage students first. **Design your experience to reflect your stated outcomes.** The outcomes should also match your audience – if you are hoping to work with school kids, brought to your site via the school, your activities will look different than they would if you are recruiting students to work on a research project of if they are coming because they are interested in the program
- If you have lots of students participating in a **one-day experience it is better to have them use paper datasheets** and just have the leaders make the entry in Nature's Notebook. That way there is not conflicting information entered by, potentially, 50 to 100 kids.
- If your intent is to create a dataset for research use, **make a plan for engaging other groups at your site outside of the school calendar.** Otherwise you'll wind up with a large gap in the annual dataset. However, if your intent is mostly for engagement purposes, then having a gap in the data during non-school months may not be a big deal. **The USA-NPN is happy to have the data regardless.**
- If your **site is remote or not easily accessible** by transportation or public transportation, consider **seeking funding to engage people via a friends group or a local grant designed to get people outdoors.** If you are unable to obtain funding, consider **recruiting some volunteer members to offer to provide rides** to youth on certain days from their schools or consider working with local youth development organizations or agency partners who have access to forms of transportation for youth. **Just be sure that volunteers who are providing rides have proper liability coverage** to do so if students are under 18.

### Intros and Celebrate a Success

- Tiffany Sprague – McDowell Sonoran Conservancy – largest urban preserve in the nation. They led a 2.5-hour workshop recently and trained about 15 people. The workshop included an in-class overview of their monitoring program and background in phenology. They also went outdoors to observe some of the plants marked along the trail and practiced making observations.
- Sara Evans – Green-wood Cemetery in Brooklyn. Recently completed the LPL course. Sara is going to be training her first volunteer on Monday. She also made an excellent StoryMap for her site. Check it out here: [Green-wood Phenology Project](#)
- Nicole Menard – Minnesota Valley Wildlife Refuge – picking up where prior coworker left off and is excited to try to keep Nature's Notebook going. They have about 10 dedicated volunteers who continue to regularly monitor.
- Judy Davis – Volunteer, Ding Darling – has 3 active volunteers in Sanibel. She is on her way to Minnesota for the summer, spent 10 days in Ottawa NWR in Ohio tracking spring – she is more than ever aware of budding plants from her work with NN. Spent a lot of time looking at plants instead of looking for birds this time. She can link up with Nicole when she arrives. Has some volunteers continuing to work at Ding Darling over the summer and is pleased with her volunteers b/c they are doing a great job. Volunteers also notice more around them
- Jennifer Jones Yreka NWR – also took the local phenology leader course in fall of 2016 – finally got her video to work!! Seven high school students were able to rebuild the video and now it works! Was a great project for them because they learned about using media and she was able to have her video edits done!

- Stella Kovacs – Santa Barbara Botanic Garden – hosted an education session with Susan Mazer – put in the plug for recruiting observers. There are several new staff at the garden, including Michelle Gee who took the LPL class this spring. They now have 3 more people who are interested in observing. Michelle reached out to Stella and thanked her for helping to continue the project. They are getting ready to open the phenology project to younger students. Susan said she used to take people out on camping trips to do viewing and learning. But now when she works with folks, most people have never camped – logistics are so different these days. Good idea to capture kids when they are young and get them into the field.
- Sarah Anglo – Cal Naturalist – moving pieces along to connect to the variety of programs doing phenology. She attended the training at Santa Barbara Botanic Garden the end of April with Susan... see above! Wants to connect cit sci project to statewide initiatives – more UC projects so CA Phenology Project is a good one to connect with. Have a grant to assess what is happening in ag and natural resources. Has used the map she made in class for discussing cit sci happenings with partners. Is adding to it!

### **Discussion Topic: What's the best way to get students and/or youth involved?**

- Sarah – just heard from the education dept at Santa Barbara Botanical Garden hoping to add phenology to school tours. They are worried about the **data quality** on a one-day sort of event. Stella – garden is kind of isolated, so makes it **difficult to get kids there**, kind of inaccessible to having students coming on their own - field trips would have to be scheduled.
- Sarah - **What do you do when kids are there but not engaged**, one-time visits vs over and over again – lose interest what can you do to add to it in the field? Think of other activities to supplement what they are doing while out collecting data. Could include:
  - o Have kids ID the plants and animals and build up to making phenology observations
  - o Record other abiotic variables in the environment, practice taking data
  - o Look for other things that might be present at the time of plant observations such as pollinators, birds. Practicing IDing on those things as well
  - o If they are observing the same plant though time and more than one of them, have them make a comparison between what they are seeing on each at any given time
  - o Add other things link nature journaling, writing narratives, learning and reporting on plant/animal natural history
- Sometimes it will be hard to get youth or adults to really buy into the activity or do it correctly if they are not making the decision to participate on their own. Life-long learners, like Master Naturalists, are a great audience because they are interested in being there and learning. If your group of youth is at your site for a field trip for school, they may be less interested in doing the work correctly – suggestion to use paper datasheets for those kinds of groups is good b/c they are not then directly connecting with the database and creating conflicts. However, if it is a group of youth who have signed up for a specific program, you'll have an easier time getting them to seriously participate in the process and in the end they will all wind up learning more.
- People of any age want to know why there are being asked to do what they are doing. Tying the experience to learning outcomes or bigger picture – such as why your site is interested in having the phenology data set is really important. Design activities related to, for example, climate change and how phenology might fit into that to keep them engaged. They can then more easily make the connection between the activity there are doing and why it matters.
- Judy – deals with experienced adults but has to be careful about how she teaches them to make observations because some people have lots of experience and they may get offended if you talk down to them. In that case, identify the skill sets that are in your audience and use them to help teach others. Don't make the assumption that no one knows anything. Also using the app is sometimes hard b/c they don't use it right away and don't know how. Take a look and [share our mobile app tip sheets](#) if you need them!
- Nicole – They have a great set up to get school kids there – they are able to work with their Friends' Group who raise money to get school kids outdoors. They also have grant \$ in the county open to funding student experiences in the outdoors. Ding Darling does the same thing. Would be worth checking with local county agencies or foundations to see if anything like that exists in your area.

- Tiffany – trail heads are far away. Thought about getting college kids to come – LA suggested that they recruit a few volunteers to meet and drive kids from campus. Look into plant and wildlife clubs on campus and offer to drive them if they need rides. It is a good audience to tap into, we've tapped into students at UA that way.
- Stella – bike to the garden! Recruit bikers!
- Sarah – they have gone into the communities to help set up phenology projects on school campuses – easy. Harder to get someone at the school to buy in to continue monitoring and caring for the plants.
- School calendar is difficult to maintain year-round observations – bring in another group for the summer to fill in the gaps

### **Next time**

- **Next Call June 15th at 10 am Pacific time. Topic:** Visualization tool refresher

### **Ideas for upcoming calls**

- *Evaluation of our Local Phenology Leader Program at the National Level- what elements can you apply to your programs?*
- Another education discussion

**Thanks everyone!**

**Meeting Adjourned** – 11:03 am Pacific/AZ time