Becoming a Wildlife Professional

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Professional Diversity

The Key to Conserving Wildlife Diversity

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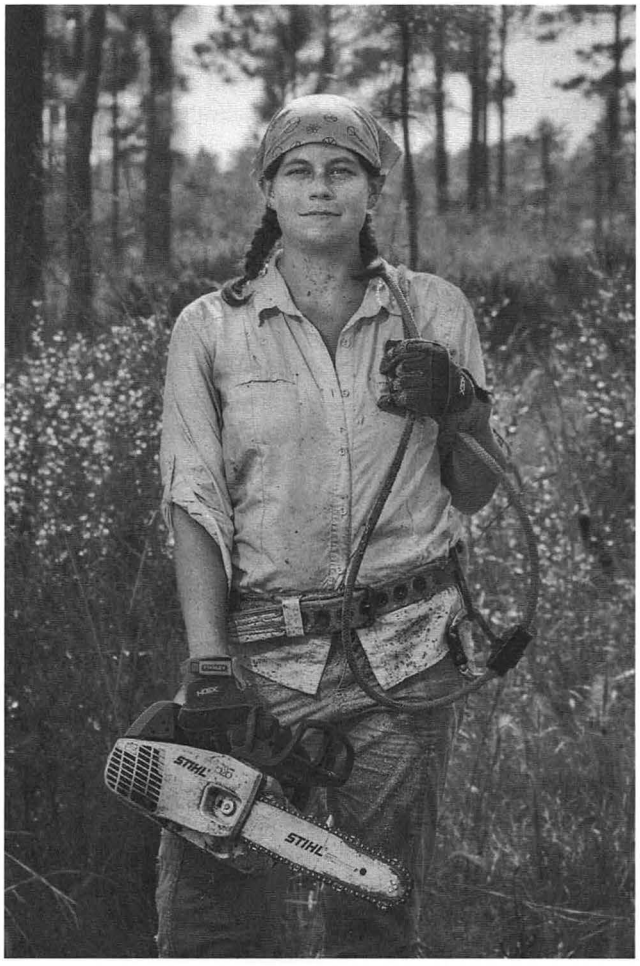
Our profession faces a challenge in managing increasingly complex environmental issues that require professionals with diverse perspectives and wide-ranging skills. Many have recognized that it is imperative for us to develop and retain a workforce reflective of changing demographics. By doing so, both the profession and wildlife in general will benefit substantially, because greater stakeholder participation will result in greater acceptance of conservation efforts and provide a more diversified funding base (Lopez and Brown 2011). Fortunately, governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and professional societies recognize the power of a multifaceted workforce and are prioritizing human diversity. Some examples include the US Department of Agriculture's (2015) Cultural Transformation goals, the US Department of the Interior's (2012) Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, and The Wildlife Society's (2015) Position Statement on Workforce Diversity. Such initiatives have made great strides in increasing racial, ethnic, and gender diversity within the wildlife profession by recruiting and retaining a rising number of candidates from minority and marginalized groups (Tuggle 2011). Much, however, still remains to be achieved.

Over the past hundred years, wildlife management has been transformed from a career path dominated by middle-class white males to one that is more reflective of societal demographics. The founders of the formal discipline of wildlife management and early members of The Wildlife Society, a professional organization for wildlife biologists, were representative of most natural resource professionals at that time. There was little inclusion of men from minority groups, and virtually no involvement by females. Today, a greater number of wildlife professionals have come from diverse backgrounds, various ethnicities, and nontraditional groups (e.g., nonhunters, people from urban areas). Recent trends in gender diversity are positive, with female membership in TWS increasing from 1.5% to 22.2% in the years from 1937 to 2006 (Nicholson et al. 2008). Similarly, women's contributions to wildlife science—as authors of articles in TWS publications (e.g., the *Journal of Wildlife Management*, *Wildlife Monographs*, the *Wildlife Society Bulletin*) and through presentations given at the annual TWS conferences—have exhibited an upward trajectory since the 1990s. More women are starting to serve in TWS leadership roles, yet this organization has elected only two female presidents in its more than 75-year history.

Despite the increased involvement of women within the wildlife profession, racial and ethnic diversity across its membership and its leadership positions has lagged. For example, the current demographic estimate for the US population is 62.1% Caucasian, 17.4% Hispanic or Latino, 13.2% African American, 5.4% Asian, and 1.9% American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (US Census Bureau 2015). In comparison, recent estimates of TWS membership demographics (for those who identified their ethnicity) are 94.4% Caucasian, 2.3% Hispanic or Latino, 0.4% African American, 1.8% Asian, and 1.1% American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Although TWS membership by underrepresented groups has increased slightly during the past few years and is more in line with the breakdown of ethnic diversity for those who enter college as wildlife majors, the numbers still fall short of those for the US population as a whole. Additionally, many important aspects of identity that shape a person's life experiences, values, and perspectives (e.g., cultural background, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation) are not yet addressed in recruitment and inclusion efforts.

These statistics demonstrate a significant deficit across our profession. Does human diversity really matter to wildlife conservation? We think the answer is a resounding "Yes!" The intricate relationships of a diverse biological community



The field of wildlife management has increased its diversity in recent years, with more females joining the profession (photo: Dustin Angell)

can help explain and emphasize the importance of inclusivity in a profession. Consider a forest comprised of conifer and hardwood trees of different heights and sizes. It also has many species of herbaceous plants growing near the ground, as well as standing dead trees and other deadwood distributed randomly throughout. Gaps in the canopy allow sunlight to reach the forest floor, providing ideal growing conditions for young trees. With plentiful resources, the community supports a wide array of invertebrates, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and even humans, due to the various environmental conditions available to each organism. The forest also helps produce clean water and provides many other ecosystem services. This complex community is resilient, resisting natural disturbances such as storms, lightning-ignited fires, and drought, thus providing suitable, long-term habitat types for an entire biotic community. In stark contrast, imagine a monoculture composed of aging trees. This community is devoid of most flora and fauna and is susceptible to disruptions, such as disease and insect infestation. The same lesson can be applied to the wildlife profession. A workforce lacking differences in identities, life experiences, and backgrounds limits our ability to meet the multiple wildlife challenges of today and the future.

A diverse workforce also is needed to fill varied employment roles. The wildlife profession includes statisticians, spatial analysts, social scientists, economists, hydrologists, ecologists, and wildlife biologists. But life experiences and personal values are also important. We need people with dissimilar sociopolitical views, coming from circumstances that range from poor to affluent, and representing all walks of life. So how do we measure diversity? Most wildlife biologists have a strong background in scientific methods. As such, our primary approach to understanding diversity trends has been to categorize and count people in groups. Yet this practice oversimplifies human complexity. Individuals have both an observable identity, such as white male, and less obvious characteristics, such as low socioeconomic status or a disability. Unless we take the time to learn about each individual beyond those characteristics that can be relegated to simple checkboxes (e.g., sex, race), we cannot properly evaluate how a person's unique life experiences influence his or her knowledge, skills, and other abilities with regard to wildlife resources.

DIVERSITY: SEEN AND UNSEEN

While the concept is important as a whole, there are also different kinds of diversity that can and should be part of the wildlife profession. Rather than including an exhaustive list, we provide a broad overview of the types of human diversity that should be present in wildlife biology and related fields. We also discuss the unique knowledge and important perspectives that such a workforce can bring to the profession.

Primary diversity consists of external characteristics, which are visible and not easy to change. Examples include race and ethnicity. A high degree of cohesion is beneficial when individuals are comforted by familiar settings, such as being among groups of people with similar ages or ethnicities. Yet primary diversity commonly influences both conscious and unconscious bias and discrimination. In comparison, secondary diversity often cannot be seen and, if an individual so chooses, can be hidden from others. Examples include people's socioeconomic, educational, and veteran status, as well as the region where they grew up, their age, and their sexual orientation. It can be equally as important as primary diversity, since wildlife biologists must relate to a public rich in these secondary characteristics.

Primary diversity, such as ethnicity and gender, is essential if wildlifers hope to gain an understanding of new and unique wildlife management scenarios and the conflicts that can occur when cultures clash. A profession that includes both men and women is more effective, because they may sometimes work and manage situations differently.

Secondary diversity, such as the region where a person grew up, will play a larger and larger role in our various management decisions. Wildlife conservation will continue to shift toward urban and suburban settings, due to the increas-

ing growth of populated areas and the subsequent adaptation of wildlife to these altered landscapes. As professionals, we are tasked not only with managing wildlife, but are also charged with increasing participation in wildlife-related recreational activities by people living in urban areas, as well as those of lower socioeconomic status, who may not have been involved in these types of activities historically. Veterans, nontraditional college students, and people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) community are only a few of the groups who may approach wildlife management issues differently and have life experiences that are dissimilar to those of other students. A field rich in secondary diversity will increase our ability to implement innovative strategies that address wildlife management challenges.

Adding a high level of primary and secondary diversity to our profession may provide more avenues for communicating the benefits of wildlife and habitat conservation to a diverse public. For example, imagine a situation in which a state wildlife agency is hiring an urban wildlife biologist in a primarily African American district of Dallas, Texas. The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department might select two candidates for the position who have similar credentials but differ in the scope of their diversity. One is an African American male who grew up in the area; the second is a Caucasian male who was raised in rural Texas but has had more experience than the other in working with urban wildlife. In this scenario, the ability of the first candidate to relate to the public may outweigh that of the second potential employee, thus increasing the odds of success for the urban wildlife program. We do not mean to suggest that ethnicity should play a role in job selection, but rather to acknowledge the increased conservation potential provided by biologists who are able to relate both to the people they encounter and the wildlife they manage. The first candidate may share similar life experiences with the public and thus be able to guide the program in a direction that appeals to members of the community. This example, although simplistic, demonstrates that our profession needs job candidates who understand both the people and the landscapes in which they work, thus ensuring that human populations are aware and supportive of local wildlife issues.

CHALLENGES

Establishing an inclusive workforce is a complex undertaking. A critical mass of biologists from traditionally underrepresented categories will contribute to the creation of a more welcoming professional environment for those individuals. But underrepresented groups in natural resources face numerous difficulties that, individually and taken together, influence their entrance and retention in the profession. Unless all members of a crew, an organization, or a profession are actively heard, included, and empowered, the only thing we will have achieved is half-hearted symbolism. Shaping an inclusive professional culture will require each of us to recognize and hold in abeyance our own implicit biases and behaviors. Even the most talented and skilled individuals can be dissuaded and handicapped by an unwelcoming environment. Fortunately, overt discrimination toward underrepresented groups is less tolerated than it once was, yet reports of sexual harassment and abuse of women in field settings indicate that negative experiences still occur (Clancy et al. 2014). Thoughtless "jokes," subtle suggestions about employees not being fit for work, and sometimes intentional bullying can drive out even the most dedicated would-be biologist.

Nor are challenges in our field limited to students and early-career professionals. Because the organizational structures of universities, wildlife agencies, and other employers were developed primarily by and for white males, lingering effects of these institutional systems are felt by all levels of wildlife professionals from other backgrounds (Acker 1992, Bird 2011). These unconscious biases can produce an uncomfortable atmosphere, as well as affect employment and promotion decisions. For example, research indicates that both men and women rate male applicants as being better qualified, and hiring managers of either sex are more likely to offer men a higher starting salary, even when resumes are otherwise identical (Moss-Racusin et al. 2012). People now recognize that microaggressions—subtle, pervasive, intentional or even unintentional slights or negative messages about people, based on race or membership in a socially marginalized group—further contribute to an unwelcoming atmosphere and decrease workforce talent. Examples of this behavior include comments arising from assumptions, such as that an Asian American is foreign born or that a woman is married and has children. Similarly, jokes or other remarks based on stereotypes, particularly when made by supervisors or people in positions of power, add to workplace issues that can be difficult to confront or harmful to internalize. For those belonging to more than one marginalized group, such as an African American woman, these challenges multiply. Negative biases affect professional success, and they may be one reason why women in research positions within the fields of science and engineering publish less overall, have fewer first-authored publications, and often feel overlooked in terms of opportunities for advancement (Angus 1995, Cameron et al. 2013). Understanding and identifying implicit biases are the first steps toward overcoming them.

We recognize that not all roles in the wildlife profession will be attractive to all individuals at all stages of their lives and careers. Hardships tend to hamper diversity, and retention can include 60- to 70-hour workweeks without overtime pay, few or no childcare facilities, and a lack of paid leave for ailing children or other family members. The logistics of fieldwork may impede some people from becoming wildlifers, because positions can require long and irregular hours (e.g., seven workdays on, followed by three days off, with early morning and late night schedules) and physically demanding work in remote and difficult environmental conditions. The instability and scarcity of funding for wildlife-related projects can lead to low salaries and a need for volunteer labor, further discouraging a diverse workforce. Fortunately, there are many types of positions in our profession that support wildlife conservation,

including in education, management, research, and policy. By broadening our definition of *wildlife biologist*, we will reap maximum benefits from a more diverse workforce.

Other professional challenges are more likely to impede early-career members of underrepresented groups. Being the only person from a minority or marginalized group on a team or in an office creates additional daily stresses and energy demands. For example, individuals can feel isolated and may lack access to mentors who understand the unique challenges that underrepresented groups face. Some research suggests that institutional change does not occur until a critical mass equals roughly 15% of the workforce (Etzkowitz et al. 1994). Without diversity, minorities may feel excluded from or awkward participating in the formal and informal social networks that influence retention and career advancement. Further, when informal events center on traditional wildlife skills, such as hunting or skeet shooting, people from nonhunting or urban backgrounds may not be able to participate in such team-building opportunities, which enhance trust and help develop stronger relationships. Awareness and active leadership to create inclusivity are important skills to master.

Institutions can create formal opportunities to combat isolation through diversity networks that foster inclusion. It is vital, however, to ensure that they effectively reach their target audiences across all parts of the organization. For example, minorities in the wildlife profession living in rural and far-flung regions may benefit most from networking opportunities, but formal networks may unconsciously exclude them, due to the remoteness of their station areas. Mentors are important, because they can provide advice about wending your way along a successful career path, and lend a safe and empathetic ear. Sponsors are individuals in positions of power who can act to increase the visibility of and request promotions for individuals. For those in underrepresented groups, nurturing relationships with mentors and sponsors may lead to career advancement. Yet finding appropriate individuals who appreciate and understand the unique challenges that such groups face in wildlife careers is difficult. The situation should improve as human diversity in the profession increases.

Cultural conflict can prevent some individuals from entering the wildlife field. People from some minority communities might not be encouraged to become wildlife biologists, due to a fear of outdoor places and wildlife or to the social stigma attached to performing manual labor and working outside (Sexton et al. 2015). Families might also urge their children to pursue careers with higher pay or greater social status. In the United States, race, socioeconomic status, and the quality of a person's education are often linked, leading to potential difficulties for underrepresented groups to meet college admission standards or obtain financial support to attend a university. Further, it can be difficult to convince students from families with low socioeconomic and educational backgrounds to pursue a position as a minimum-wage wildlife technician, to go to graduate school, or to work 60 to 70 hours a week when they also have responsibilities to care for children or other family members.

A consistent theme among studies in the scientific disciplines is that real or perceived conflicts between careers and family are causing women and minorities to drop out of the career pipeline (O'Brien and Hapgood 2012). For many women, having and raising children coincides with the time when they start looking for their first professional job after undergraduate or graduate school. A gap in their work history, due to leaving to raise children, may put women at a permanent disadvantage in this competitive profession. Several studies suggest that women with children face a "motherhood penalty," because they are less likely to receive tenure or other career promotions, while men with children are viewed as being more committed than their childless counterparts (Goulden et al. 2009). Thus women may face difficult decisions regarding when to have children (and how many) versus career advancement, all while often taking on a disproportionate share of household chores and childcare. For wildlife professionals, additional challenges arise in finding adequate childcare and family-support systems in remote or rural locations, and conducting intense and lengthy fieldwork while pregnant or breastfeeding. Similarly, people from backgrounds where close physical connections to extended family is an important part of their culture may find it difficult to navigate through undergraduate and graduate degree programs, seasonal employment, and a job search across a wide geographic area while also meeting family demands.

It is common for natural resource professionals to be in personal relationships with other workers in this field, due to the isolating nature of the profession and their shared values about and appreciation for wildlife. Therefore, partners are faced with the difficult task of finding acceptable employment in the same locale for two people in a very competitive line of work. Dual careers are relevant when discussing greater diversity in the workplace, because a majority of women in the sciences indicate that their spouse's career limits their own employment, often leading to both professional and personal stresses (Primack and O'Leary 1993). When relationships begin during individuals' undergraduate degree programs, accommodating those partners during graduate school is an important but often overlooked part of increasing professional diversity. Unfortunately, the family-friendly institutional structures in place for faculty in academia (e.g., job placement for the spouse of a recent hire, help in finding childcare) are typically unavailable to undergraduate, graduate, or postdoctoral researchers at a university. Without access to these types of assistance, future biologists develop negative perceptions about becoming a faculty member early in their studies and often shift their careers away from an academic or research path.

Professional challenges for underrepresented groups in wildlife fields also are manifested in compensation gaps and fewer advancement opportunities in their jobs. Most research regarding disparities in pay compares men with women. These studies show that the pay gap begins immediately after graduation from college and, throughout a lifetime, can amount to women earning $1.2 million less than men (Women Are Getting Even 2015). Negotiating for fair and equal pay may

narrow the compensation gap, but women and minorities working in organizations that do not make salary information public (e.g., private colleges, industry) face a disadvantage. It is difficult to bargain with an employer about your salary without information on what your peers are receiving. Similarly, women in the sciences are often dissatisfied with the smaller number of opportunities for promotion and the lesser recognition they receive for their work. These issues are contributors to a leaky pipeline, where only a small percentage of women who are trained as scientists remain employed in scientific research fields, particularly in academia. These factors also may compound feelings of job dissatisfaction and contribute to people from underrepresented groups leaving the wildlife field. There clearly are many opportunities to improve the practices, pathways, and institutions that nurture and employ natural resource professionals.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

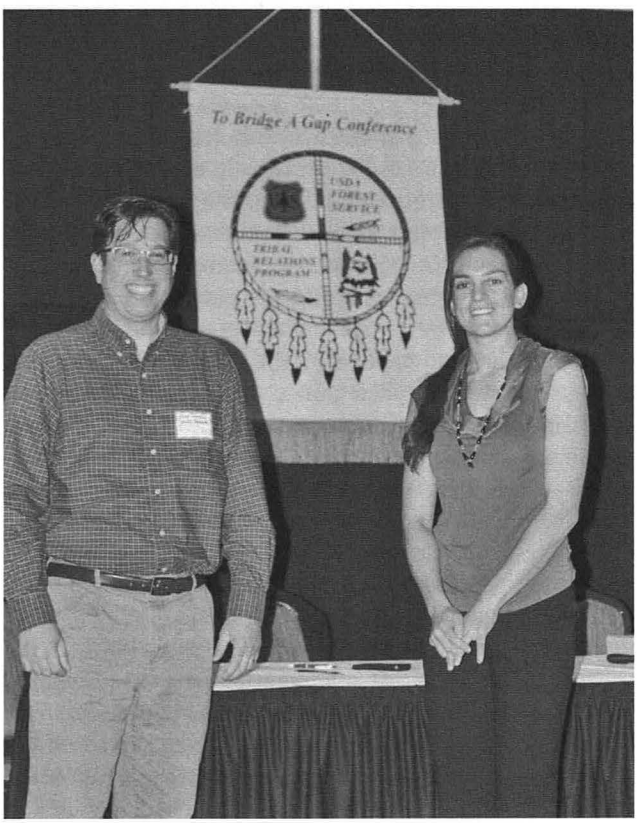
A Path Forward

The wildlife profession has made strides to recruit and retain students from minority and marginalized groups. From 2006 to 2012, the number of females in natural resource undergraduate programs in the United States has increased, from 34.6% to 39.9% (Sharik et al. 2013). Other underrepresented groups, however, continue to lag behind, both within wildlife programs at universities and in professional wildlife organizations (Davis et al. 2002). This lack of diversity is not due to a limited pool of potential and future employees, but rather to a dearth of creativity in identifying and engaging a more broadly representational group of people (Lopez and Brown 2011). Undergraduate students form the core target of recruitment strategies by professional organizations. For example, personnel in the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Southwest Region attend career fairs at colleges and universities that are historically associated with minority groups (Tuggle 2011). Nonetheless, the wildlife profession must diversify its recruitment strategies to engage a potential applicant pool prior to college and the choice of a career path.

Without a culture that fosters retention, recruitment efforts are wasted. Underrepresented groups often encounter intended or unconscious biases from peers, contributing to a movement away from the wildlife profession (Holland et al. 2012). It is important for each of us, regardless of our personal set of identities, to understand the value of a heterogeneous workforce and work toward providing a welcoming, culturally sensitive, respectful work environment. Although the burden of responsibility for ensuring a more diverse workforce is incumbent upon entrenched leadership and more privileged wildlifers, for those from underrepresented groups, Brown (2011) describes steps you can take to expand diversity in the wildlife profession. These include embracing who you are, remaining open to change, listening to others, building relationships, seeking guidance, and expressing thanks to those who help along the way. Prospective students or employees from underrepresented groups should research views about and institutional support of diversity prior to decisions regarding college attendance or job acceptance, in order to understand the culture of the prospective school or organization (table 12.1). All wildlife professionals must become skilled at recognizing and removing unconscious biases. We urge everyone to actively seek out knowledge- and skill-building opportunities, such as Exploring White Identity at Oregon State University or the Welcoming Diversity Workshop (see appendix B). These activities take each person into a discomfort zone, and the participants examine messages about other groups that they are not generally aware of (Harro 2000). Uncovering our implicit biases is difficult and can raise new and powerful emotions, but it is a valuable experience that enables each of us to better understand those around us.

A Student's Guide to Success

As a student, several of these challenges may seem like distant concerns, whereas others may confront you today. Nowadays, many government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and professional societies provide scholarships, employment, and networking opportunities that may interest you (table 12.2). Collectively, these groups assist students in the development of their own professional networks, including access to peers



Serra Hoagland (*right*) and Mike Dockry (*left*) were presenters at a To Bridge a Gap conference, where tribal entities and federal, state, and nonprofit organizations gather annually to discuss tribal relations issues (photo: Serra Hoagland)

Table 12.1. A starter guide for researching the diversity commitment of prospective universities, organizations, and employers

Component	Potential source of information
Diversity and inclusive climate	Prominent diversity and inclusion statement on web page
	Formal diversity networks or centers
	Diversity officer or coordinator on staff
	Diversity reports showing goals, progress, and prejudice-reduction learning opportunities
Partners with dual careers	Dual career statement, office, or officer
	Examples of spousal hires
Work/life balance	Delayed promotion reviews (e.g., tenure) for having/adopting a child or other family event
	Generous maternity/paternity leave
	Childcare/eldercare assistance
	Flexible working hours and work location
	Modified duties for illness/disability/pregnancy
	Lactation rooms
	Family housing
	Dependent and partner health care
Salary and promotion	Transparent system of salaries and promotions available
	Opportunities for lateral or vertical advancement
Mentoring programs	Formal mentoring of new employees
	Informal networking opportunities available to all

Table 12.2. Organizations dedicated to increasing diversity in science and to supporting the development of individuals from underrepresented groups

Organization	Website
American Indian Science and Engineering Society	www.aises.org
Association for Women in Science	www.awis.org
Ecological Society of America SEEDS Program	www.esa.org/seeds/
Ethnic and Gender Diversity Working Group of The Wildlife Society	http://wildlife.org/egdwg/
Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences	www.manrrs.org
Minorities in Natural Resources Conservation	http://minrc.org
Native American Fish & Wildlife Society	www.nafws.org
Native Peoples' Wildlife Management Working Group of The Wildlife Society	http://wildlife.org/npwmwg/
Native Student Professional Development Program	http://wildlife.org/npwmwg/
Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science	www.sacnas.org

who encourage and support a diverse profession and cultural understanding. Seek out such organizations and begin building your professional network.

Although balancing educational demands with family and work obligations can feel overwhelming, we suggest researching diversity initiatives at your university (table 12.1), diversity organizations in natural resource fields (table 12.2), other student-body associations for minority groups (e.g., Native American Student Council, African American Student Council), or diversity centers that may be active on your campus. Participation in these groups may provide mentors, a welcoming atmosphere, and a sympathetic ear for students that otherwise feel isolated in their degree program.

First-generation college students from minority or low socioeconomic backgrounds may encounter discouragement from their families about entering the wildlife profession, a historically low-paying field. These students may bypass an undergraduate wildlife degree and its initial financial hardships in search of equivalent salary for a job at a local business or company. If you are among this group, we hope you will use the careers portion of this book (chapter 5) to show family members that while entry-level positions in wildlife can be low paying, the potential for advancement in this profession, and thus a larger salary, is much greater than perceived.

Another obstacle for some minority students is the difficulty associated with leaving the region of the family unit. This may include either personal hardships or pressure applied from family members. We understand that such strong ties

can make it especially uncomfortable to attend school or accept employment far from home. Technological advances, however, such as inexpensive long-distance phone services, video call services (such as Skype), and various other Internet applications can provide easy methods of communication, thus softening your transition away from your family unit.

For wildlife students from nontraditional backgrounds (e.g., urban residents) who lack experience in outdoor activities such as hunting or camping, it may feel comforting to acquire those skills. Organizations such as Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow (see appendix B) offer hands-on learning opportunities about the role of hunting in wildlife conservation and management. Student chapters of TWS and the Ecological Society of America provide ample occasions to expand your wildlife experiences. Through these groups, you can pursue leadership roles, undergraduate research projects, and jobs that will contribute to making you a more marketable wildlife biologist. Moreover, you will be able to display the value and importance of your unique skill sets to your peers.

Outreach efforts should engage diverse groups of elementary school–age children, to demonstrate the needs and benefits of a conservation-based career (Lopez and Brown 2011). We urge university wildlife students to become involved with educational programs that go to K–12 schools in the community and teach youth about the need for diversity within the wildlife profession. One of the most powerful tools is for young students from underrepresented groups to see others like themselves and follow in their footsteps.

If you are a student in the natural resource disciplines, you will soon enter the world of wildlife professionals. Once you have started on this career path, opportunities may open for you to move into supervisory and leadership roles. We ask you to return to this chapter then and remember that for our profession to reap the benefits of workforce diversity, we require leaders who are perceptive and cognizant of the need for multicultural, diverse perspectives and employees (Aghazadeh 2004). All of us must refocus our efforts from simple personal improvement and expand them to institutional transformation. As Bird (2010) explains, "if our only plan for advancing underrepresented groups is to continue enhancing personal skills for navigating the existing system, then the barriers will remain in place." We also need mentors and role models (Maughan et al. 2001), as well as a commitment to long- and short-term strategies that address challenges, such as the low enrollment of underrepresented groups in wildlife programs and the retention of candidates from all ways and walks of life in the workplace (Davis et al. 2002). Through these leadership decisions, we can guide our profession to a promising future.

SUMMARY

Today's society encompasses increasingly diverse backgrounds, values, and beliefs. Unless we develop and retain a professional workforce that understands and relates to this society, both our profession and the wildlife we manage are likely to suffer hardships across a wide range of conservation efforts, because not all stakeholders will feel that their views are shared by decision makers. Our profession has made strides to incorporate underrepresented groups, but we still face a significant diversity deficit, due to challenges like negative bias, microaggressions, socioeconomic barriers, and isolation. Together, these influence the recruitment and retention of such groups in what we do. Our hope is that this chapter will help you navigate these barriers through diversity-directed organizations and increase your marketability. We also challenge you to recognize and overcome your unconscious biases, so you can contribute to a welcoming atmosphere in our profession. With that, we leave you with a quote by Keith Basso (1996) about the Apaches, for whom wisdom "is achieved by relinquishing all thoughts of personal superiority and by eliminating aggressive feelings towards fellow human beings." Simply put, the wisest action our wildlife profession can engage in is an equitable representation across the wide spectrum of human diversity, to ensure that every creature on our planet has an opportunity to flourish.

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