

Minorities In
Natural
Resources
Conservation

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- **72nd Annual SEAFWA Conference**
- **Mobile, Alabama**
- **October 21 – 24, 2018**
- **After-Action Report**



This years, the Minorities in Natural Resources Conservation committee selected 20 students representing six of our SEAFWA member states. The states represented were Georgia, Alabama, Texas, Florida, Louisiana, and Arkansas.

- Theresa Allen GA
 - Darren Beachem AL
 - Lynette Caseman GA
 - Terri Cooper AL
 - Gabriel Diaz FL
 - Adrien Dougherty FL
 - Mallory Edwards OK (Not Pictured)
 - Ashton Gulczewski TX
 - Jacob Harriet OK
 - Nathalie Jaramillo FL
 - Christopher Jones AL
 - Brittanie Loftin LA
 - Rebekah Magee LA
 - Teresa Montalvo AL
 - Peyton Niebanck GA
 - Cameron Ramey FL
 - Katherine Rose FL
 - Chinara Starland AR
 - Tamia Thomas AR
 - Olivia Wilkes AL
- * Mercedes Bartkovich, Alabama Outdoor (Front Center)



Saturday October 20th

The students are welcomed to the 2018 conference and participated in a get to know you Icebreaker. Student orientation took place from 3:30 to 7:30.

The Orientation agenda included the following:

- Welcome-David Buggs, TX Parks & Wildlife, MINRC Chairperson and Terry Whittaker, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Ice Breaker with Students and MINRC Committee Facilitator: Terry Whittaker, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- MINRC Program Presentation; Facilitator: David Buggs, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, MINRC Chairperson (Q&A's 15 min)
- Elevator Speech: Eric Howard, LE Recruiter, TPWD
- Presentation: Mercedes Bartkovich, ACTWS (Q&A 15 min)
- Group Photo
- Closing Announcements, Logistics, Q&A Facilitator: David Buggs, TPWD/MINRC Chairperson
- Dinner for MINRC students provided by former MINRC student Mercedes Bartkovich and the Alabama Chapter of The Wildlife Society (ACTWS)



MINRC Professionals in Attendance

- Eric Howard TX
- Sean Green LA
- Stan House LA
- Maurice Jackson AR
- Peter Oliver LA
- William Freeman AL
- Chris O'Bara WV
- David Buggs TX
- Betty Bryant AR
- Rebecca Lane VA
- Pamela Wheeler TX
- Kasey Rodgers TX
- Terry Whitaker AK

Sunday October 21st

The days agenda was as follows:

- Minorities in Natural Resources Conservation Student Welcome; Facilitator: David Buggs, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- Ice Breaker Activity; Facilitator: Bill Freeman, Game Warden, AL Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Student Workshop: Intergenerational Awareness in the Workforce; Facilitator: Terry Whittaker, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Resume Do's and Don'ts; Facilitator: Kasey Rogers, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department)
- Student Workshop: Careers in Conservation – Panel Discussion; Facilitator: Terry Whittaker, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service





Sunday October 22, 2018

Following the morning workshop, MINRC professionals met to discuss the student sessions which took place on Saturday and Sunday morning.

Students were encouraged to attend the Student Professional Meet and Greet and the welcome reception taking place at the USS Alabama Battleship site.



Monday October 22

MINRC Students and professionals attended the Monday morning Plenary Session. Topics of the session were “Public Attitudes Towards Fish and Wildlife Management in the Southeast”, “The Changing Faces of Wildlife User Demographics”, and “The Challenges and Potential Solutions to Developing Future Wildlife Professionals”.

Students and Professionals also attended the student mentoring luncheon sponsored by Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society. Between each session, students were encouraged to interact with professionals in their field of interest.

Students were required to attend at least two Technical sessions and Symposia that related to their individual disciplines or an area of interest. All students were given the opportunity to visit the poster sessions and support fellow MINRC students presenting during those sessions.



Tuesday October 23rd

All student were required to attend at least two technical sessions and symposiums that focused on a particular area of interest of within their discipline. From 1:00 to 3:00, all MINRC students and Professionals attended the MINRC Students After Action Meeting and Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Award. This event as facilitated by Terry Whittaker of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Teddy Roosevelt Conservation award is given to the student who clearly addresses the predetermined essay topic. The essay topic was “As a Minority pursuing a career in conservation, tell us what you believe are the most challenging conservation issues faced by your generation? Describe creative strategies that you, your peers, or your community can implement to address these conservation issues.”

The award was presented by Terry Whittaker of USFWS. This years award winner was Ms. Rebekah Magee from Louisiana Tech University. The ceremonies was concluded by students sharing what their take-aways were from attending the 2018 SEAFWA conference and by professionals providing insight and coaching to the students. Each student was awarded a certificate of appreciation from the SEAFWA MINRC committee.

Tuesday October 23rd

On the evening of the 23rd, MINRC students attended the annual SEAFWA banquet where they were given another opportunity to interact, in a semi-formal social setting, with state directors and personnel, federal and state human resources personnel, presenters and NGO's staff.

The 2018 SEAFWA Diversity and Inclusion award was extra special this year. The winner of this years award was Alabama Outdoors. What really made this years award special was the State of Alabama was presented the award by Mrs. LaDonna James, the widow of long-time Alabama Conservation Officer Steve James. Officer James was a supporter of Diversity and Inclusion within Alabama's Wildlife and Fisheries Department.





Wednesday, October 24th

The students were given instruction for checkout and travel plans the night prior to departure. David Buggs, Betty Bryant and Officer William Freeman attended the Conference Debrief Committee Meeting. It was reported that all went very well and all feedback from the students was positive.

The MINRC committee would like to give a special thanks to Alabama Conservation Officer William Freeman and all of the Alabama Conservation Officers who made this event a success by assisting with transporting both people and materials to and from various shops and transportation terminals.