

# CANADIAN SECTION OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY



## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CANADIAN SECTION OF TWS DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

*The following Terms of Reference were approved by the Board of the Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society on 16 May 2023*

### PURPOSE OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The purpose of this document is to establish the composition and mode of operation for the Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society (CSTWS) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee that will help ensure a consistent, unbiased, and meaningful approach is taken when addressing the needs of marginalized groups in the wildlife profession in Canada. Marginalized groups may include those based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

CSTWS is committed to the identification and removal of barriers to recruitment, effective mentoring, retention of a diverse workforce, and to communicating with a diverse array of stakeholders. This Terms of Reference document is consistent with the goals and objectives of CSTWS and TWS and the [\*Charter of the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Awareness Working Group of The Wildlife Society\*](#).

### BACKGROUND

CSTWS recognizes the value of including the richness of human diversity in our efforts to discover, educate, inform policy, and involve the public in wildlife science and management. The CSTWS welcomes all people with an interest in participating in wildlife and habitat research and conservation. However, the intersection of visible and less apparent differences, such as culture, spiritual views, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, unapparent disabilities, and other "invisible" factors nevertheless shape an individual's life experience and thus, the unique perspectives they bring to their vocation (The Wildlife Society, 2020). Participation in our profession must be broadened if we are to include the rich palette of perspectives and approaches needed to meet current and emerging challenges.

The CSTWS holds responsibility to further these efforts to support and empower individual Canadians to succeed in the wildlife profession. It is critical to intentionally support various marginalized communities and underrepresented groups, including but not limited to Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC), as well as LGBTQ2+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Two-Spirit, and other sexuality and gender minority groups) and new Canadians in pursuing careers as wildlife professionals.

To meaningfully address **equity, diversity, and inclusion**, in CSTWS operations, the Board of Directors unanimously decided to create a DEI committee. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)** is a complex subject involving many different **marginalized groups**. The DEI committee should consider all **marginalized groups** in the Canadian wildlife profession.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CSTWS DEI COMMITTEE**

The DEI Committee of the CSTWS has the following responsibilities:

1. Maintain an on-going awareness of the barriers for marginalized groups to join, participate, succeed, and progress within the wildlife profession and/or the CSTWS.
2. Oversee the inclusion of DEI principles in implementing CSTWS's mission, strategic planning, policy documents, day-to-day operations and education of the membership and the wildlife profession broadly on DEI principles and benefits using the most reliable and up-to-date information available.
3. Support CSTWS policies, programs, and practices that recruit, mentor, and retain professionals from a broad spectrum of identities (including self-identification) reflective of the overall human population in Canada.
4. Ensure the leadership positions within CSTWS Board, appointed Committee Chairs and Members, and Ad Hoc Committees reflect principles of DEI by working with Nominations Committee and President to include members who self-identify as part of a marginalized group or an ally.
5. Oversee documents produced by CSTWS to ensure they are consistent with DEI principles and practices including but not limited to changes in mission statement, bylaws, strategic plans, and relevant policy documents.
6. Develop and implement programs or initiatives that increase opportunities for marginalized groups within the CSTWS and the Canadian wildlife profession.
7. Engage and collaborate with other groups that promote DEI practices and policy, both within and outside the TWS networks, including but not limited to the CSTWS Indigenous Engagement Committee, TWS Native People's Wildlife Management Group and the TWS Working group to achieve shared goals in promoting key concepts and implementing DEI within the CSTWS.
8. Continuously assess the diversity of the CSTWS leadership and membership to identify associated gaps in representation based on federal demographics. Help adapt information on DEI from other organizations to make relevant for the Canadian Section context.
9. Provide regular feedback and relevant articles on DEI in the Canadian context to the CSTWS Board and membership on the CSTWS Website and newsletter.
10. Develop, and once approved by the CSTWS Board, maintain a CSTWS Position Statement on workforce diversity within the wildlife profession. When necessary, recommend changes to the Position Statement to the CSTWS Board.
11. Work with the CSTWS Board and Canadian Chapters to ensure best available science and other ways of knowing are available to support the CSTWS mission and beyond.
12. Ensure all work commentary and information provided by the DEI Committee has been undertaken in a manner consistent with the best available information, consistent with the high standards of the CSTWS, and TWS.

13. Set up regular webinars (through the Education Committee) and Newsletter submissions to update membership on DEI opportunities, and committee activities.
14. Work with the Section's Conference Committee to plan events associated with the Annual Conference and at other times throughout the year.
15. Maintain and monitor online input allowing CSTWS members to voice DEI-related concerns by anonymous submission.
16. Provide feedback to the CSTWS Board on ethical concerns or complaints involving DEI-related issues.

## **RELATIONSHIP WITH CSTWS BOARD**

The CSTWS DEI Committee will maintain a close relationship with the CSTWS Board to allow for the efficient flow of information about DEI Committee affairs by attending representatives' meetings and attending CSTWS Board of Directors meetings when requested by the CSTWS Board. The CSTWS Board will work with the Chair of the CSTWS DEI Committee to facilitate the activities of the DEI Committee. All recommendations from the DEI Committee are subject to approval by the CSTWS Board. The CSTWS Board may suggest activities to the DEI committee to be carried out at the discretion of the DEI committee.

## **CSTWS DEI COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

The committee will consist of a minimum of four members, including the Chair. Members may serve an unlimited number of terms, with membership selected/renewed on an annual basis.

### ***DEI Committee Chair***

The primary role of the CSTWS DEI Committee Chair is to convene and coordinate the activities of the DEI Committee. The DEI Committee Chair will also serve as a primary liaison between the DEI Committee and the CSTWS Board. The Chair of the CSTWS DEI committee is appointed to a **2-year term** by the incoming President of the Canadian Section.

Other duties include:

- Establishing a committee each year.
- Actively working towards membership recruitment in collaboration with the CSTWS Board.
- Ensuring that each DEI committee member understands their responsibilities.
- Supporting the members of the DEI committee as appropriate.
- Planning and scheduling DEI committee conference calls as needed.
- Ensuring an efficient and appropriate flow of information between the DEI Committee and the CSTWS Board including providing oral and/or written progress reports to the CSTWS Board as required.
- Attending (or designating an appointed representative) the CSTWS Representatives' meetings every 3 months and provide a written and verbal report at those meetings and monthly TWS DEI meetings.
- Submitting a written annual summary of the CSTWS DEI committee activities for the previous year, and

- Overseeing and coordinating the responsibilities of the DEI committee as outlined above.

### ***DEI Committee Members***

The primary roles of the members of the CSTWS DEI committee are to fully participate in the activities and deliberations of the DEI committee, and to work with the Chair of the DEI committee to ensure as full a slate of nominees as possible for all potential awards that the committee oversees. Members of the CSTWS DEI committee are recommended by the Chair of the Committee and approved by the incoming President of CSTWS.

Members should have a commitment to DEI principles and be committed to continuing the process of self-understanding and education and should be comfortable talking about race and discrimination issues. In instances when potential committee recruitment is high (>10 members), consideration may be given to a potential member's geographic location and specific area of **expertise** or **lived experience** to ensure a diverse committee from across the province and with a range of perspectives. Area of **expertise** can include which **marginalized groups** the member identifies with or has worked with, different kinds of programs the member has been involved in, or other areas of **expertise** that ensure a **diversity** of perspectives and experience are represented on the committee, as well as the current composition of the DEI committee.

The DEI committee will strive to be composed of diverse members from different cultures, spiritual views, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic background, unapparent disabilities, and others. Members of the DEI committee are expected to join the committee in good faith and either have a general knowledge of DEI issues and/or a willingness to continue learning. All members of the DEI committee recognize that DEI is a complex, multi-faceted topic and agree that continued learning, programming flexibility, and an adaptive approach is essential to ensure committee goals are met.

Members must commit to adhering to [TWS Guidelines of Professional Behaviour](#). Exploring, identifying, and overcoming exclusion, discrimination, bias, racism, sexism, etc. in the CSTWS and the wildlife biology field requires courage, an openness to personal growth, constructive and respectful challenge to personal biases (conscious and unconscious), and taking risks as committee members share their own identities and experiences.

It is expected that members of the DEI committee will not serve as representatives of their employers but rather as individual professionals working to advance the goals and mandate of the CSTWS.

## **OPERATIONS OF THE CSTWS DEI Committee**

### ***Decision Making***

The CSTWS DEI committee shall make decisions based on consensus whenever possible, where consensus is defined as no substantive disagreement and may include agreement on a document that describes different perspectives on an issue. When a consensus cannot be reached, decisions with the DEI committee will be decided by majority vote. In the case of a tie vote, the Chair of the DEI committee will break the tie. Contradicting perspectives will be recorded in meeting minutes.

Should there be a need to revisit a decision previously taken by the DEI committee, the DEI committee will strive to do so in a timely manner, including providing an explanation for taking such action.

Transparency, openness, and complete disclosure of information will be key for the successful operation of the DEI committee. All information related to commentary generated by the DEI committee (e.g., position statements, correspondence with partners, correspondence with institutions and government, etc.) will be made public.

The CSTWS Board will maintain final approval authority on communications, commentary, and information issued on behalf of the CSTWS.

## **MEETINGS**

The CSTWS DEI Committee will meet every 4 months or sooner as needed by phone or other electronic means to fulfill the responsibilities of the DEI Committee. Whenever possible, the DEI Committee will meet annually at the CSTWS Annual General Meeting.

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**Ally** – An ally is a self-identified person that recognizes that though they may not be a member of a marginalized group(s) they support, they make a concerted effort to better understand and address that marginalization.

**Barriers** – Several barriers to representation in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) have been identified through research and the peer-reviewed literature. References to this research and identified barriers are in the EDI committee’s Additional Resources document, which will be available in the ACTWS Google Drive folder and on the ACTWS website once approved by the EDIC.

**Bias-free workplace** – One that ensures a strong, inclusive, healthy, and respectful workplace that is free of harassment, violence and discrimination.

**Diversity** – A diverse workforce is necessary for development of conservation and management practices and communications that resonate with all of society.

**Equity** – Equity is an approach to ensure that everyone can access the same opportunities, regardless of their personal and cultural characteristics. Inequity occurs when there are systematic disparities between groups with different levels of underlying social advantage/ disadvantage.

**Expertise** – Expertise or people with experience are defined as those with professional training, schooling, or work experience regarding EDI, or those with lived-experiences pertaining to EDI issues, and/or those with an interest in addressing EDI in our profession who have dedicated time outside of their work to self-educate in areas pertaining to EDI.

**Inclusion** – Including the perspectives and skills provided by a diverse professional community of individuals to strengthen and improve approaches to research, education, management, and policy making.<sup>2</sup>

**Marginalized Group** - Marginalized groups are different groups of people within a given culture, context and history at risk of being subjected to multiple discrimination due to the interplay of different personal characteristics on grounds such as sex, gender, age, ethnicity, religion or belief, health status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, education or income, or living in various geographic localities. Belonging to such groups, or even being perceived to belong to them, heightens the risk of inequalities in terms of access to rights and use of services and goods in a variety of domains, such as

access to education, employment, health, social and housing assistance, protection against domestic or institutional violence, and justice.