



Society for Conservation Biology North America

The North America Section of a global community of conservation professionals

July 13, 2018

SCBNA Response to Immigration Policy Changes & Reaffirmation of Commitment to Equity & Inclusion

The Society for Conservation Biology North America (SCBNA) is deeply troubled by the current US Presidential Administration's policies around immigration. The recent zero-tolerance policy has highlighted the hostility toward refugees and immigrants and continues a trend of hostile positions toward migrants, including the travel ban from Muslim-majority countries, detaining lawful residents, separating families at the U.S.-Mexico border, and threatening the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program. The policies of the current US administration threaten the rights and opportunities for people affected and society more broadly (including those outside of the US).

SCBNA stands against acts of racism, bigotry, hatred, bullying, and xenophobia. We are committed to preserving biodiversity around the world, and we are aware of how biodiversity conservation benefits diverse people in diverse ways, and also how biodiversity conservation benefits from diverse perspectives. Increasingly hostile and restrictive immigration policies and hostility toward refugees and migrant peoples have been proposed or enacted by numerous countries and impact both our members and conservation efforts.

By prejudicially limiting people's movement, these policies threaten the ability of some of our members to engage in biodiversity conservation and the ability of **all of us** to benefit from the exchange of ideas and knowledge important for conservation.

Directly related, we realize that these policies in the US may lead to members from multiple countries feeling that they are not able to travel to the 2018 North American Congress for Conservation Biology (NACCB) in Toronto (Ontario, Canada) given concerns about either entering the US as a stop on the way to Toronto or concerns about reentering the US after the conference. We also realize that members and potential attendees may choose not to travel due to concerns about increased persecution of individuals based on immigration status, race, and religion across North America. Finally, we recognize that many government employees may not be able to travel to the conference due to the anti-environmental or anti-science policies in both the US and other jurisdictions. This negatively impacts SCBNA in general, NACCB, and the individuals unable to attend. We recognize that all people, regardless of nationality, race, gender, religion, profession, or immigration status, have a valuable contribution to make to conservation and that no person is "illegal."

After reflection on these events, SCBNA has decided to initiate a new presentation video posting effort to increase the ability of those not able to otherwise participate in the conference. Participants unable to attend physically will be able to request talks via Twitter that they would like to see. Upon presenter permission and availability of our



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volunteers, we will post recordings to the [NACCB Facebook page](#). These videos will be posted publicly for any participants that wish to view the material and are unable to attend the conference physically. [Please visit the SCBNA website for instructions](#) on how to request a presentation to be filmed, volunteer to film or offer a filmed presentation, and how to view them.

Additionally, we encourage presenters to let their audience at the conference know if they are comfortable with their presentation being recorded and posted to Facebook. If this occurs, we invite volunteers in the audience to post the presentation on our Facebook page. Presenters may also let us know if they wish to have their talk filmed via the NACCB Registration Community Board in the Harbour Foyer of the Westin Convention Center. We ask presenters to provide advanced notice as possible.

Additionally, we will record plenary sessions and post videos to our [YouTube channel](#) for all to view after the conference. Finally, we look forward to sharing reports from the new Interactive Sessions at NACCB. These may include video, audio and written recordings of session results, accomplishments, and future opportunities for engagement for all to continue work on a diversity of topics. These shared reports will be highlighted in Fall 2018 on the [SCBNA website](#).

We recognize that being able to view the presentations is no substitute for being able to attend NACCB and engage with all the other attendees, but we hope that this small step will help those unable to attend to engage with the SCBNA community and benefit from the amazing presentations scheduled.

In addition to this program, we wish to remind all attendees of their agreement to follow the [NACCB Code of Conduct](#). Please review the Code of Conduct before you arrive in Toronto. If any violations occur we have hired a conflict resolution officer and will have an after-hours response team as well. While we hope that there will be no events requiring resolution, we request that all participants **actively** engage in preventing such events and reporting them if they do occur. Harassment, discriminatory language, comments or actions, bullying, or any type of abuse towards attendees, exhibitors, or staff of SCBNA or the venue will not be tolerated.

SCBNA recognizes discriminatory policies and bigotry have significant negative impacts on individuals, society, and on biodiversity conservation. We stand with those who are affected by this and will continue to work to fight oppression in all forms and to grow and improve in our response to discrimination.

Dr. Jessa Madosky, President
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