

Nature Tourism Evaluation Comments

10 Participants – Roundtable discussion, no instructors or organizers present

- **How was your week?**
 - Great, perfect, interesting
 - Ability to roll with punches with the weather situation
 - Like the best – couldn't tell what went wrong – people being missed
 - Food was great, facilities were perfect
 - Making contact with group of people e.g. learned about elder hostel
 - Made networks
 - Can call each other, been nice learning from each other
 - Information right on target
 - Kathy good keeping things on track – kept anyone performing from stealing the show – learned about people management from Kathy
 - Everything on the mark – go to managers and don't hear what need to hear, but this on the mark
 - Professional Speakers
- **Did you learn anything new this week?**
 - Almost everything
 - People who open land/facility up to public, was heavy initially, but more comfortable after seeing others doing it. Not so much afraid of it as once was
 - Had an awareness of birding but neutral, but now going home with understanding of demographics, economic potential greater understanding of sport and interest
- **Of everything you experienced, what sticks with you most?**
 - Although involved in agri-tourism for years, not as familiar with legal ramifications
 - Not only important to get background, but also understand how to protect yourself from legal aspect
 - Learn there are people out there to help us, like the birds and come out and assess what you have – services available and they want you to succeed. Government employees who want you to succeed it's not always like that in the real world
 - Dan took my knowledge level up at least 2 notches, more interesting use to look at birds in backyard
 - Historical orientation of business
- **What was the most useful thing you learned or did this week?**
 - Take home message/lesson

- Flexibility – e.g. birding, hunting, geological aspects, agriculture- rice field – in diversity – more than just birding, or hunting, picture the whole landscape
- May be able to see comparable bird species but highlight uniqueness to area, e.g. rice field, bottom and hardwoods
- There is some economic potential for people to supplement income in my area
- From lady in Stuttgart, needs to be a community effort, a group who will work together over the long haul
- In southern Louisiana, took 7 years for them to get started
- Useful:
- Legal
- Marketing – some specific things I needed to know
- The whole process – now I have a guideline or outline of how to assess or evaluate, I hadn't given it much thought before and the resources
- May cost you some money to find out that this is the business you may not want to be in

- **What did you enjoy the most?**

- People, getting to know, visiting
- Travis
- Learn about a part of country didn't know about
- Mix of people and interest
- Food
- Combine learning with having a lot of fun. Example – Dutch oven cooking, storytelling, lessons learned, educational but fun
- Meet people in charge of the movement in AR, and meet people who operate different places, and see involved in what we are interested in, how to survive, how to manage and their struggles. Circumstances happen, you keep on going, stay with it.
- Shared different experiences
- Activity incorporated within format (even if didn't want to) it was good.....

- **How helpful was preparing a plan of action? How can you make sure it won't just sit on your desk when you get home?**

- Hearing what other people said about their plans helped me. Also coming to a place that is so different from where I am. Appreciate that they might like to visit us.
- How are you going to make sure you use it.
- Motivated this week
- Financial barriers
- Not enough to make a decision in some cases but we have plenty of info, so this can't be an excuse. We got the tools.
- We are going to check up with us. Shannon and others will call us.

- Use plan all the time. They are very important.
- Use framework when talk with other people
- **What suggestions would you make to improve this retreat?**
 - List of participant names
 - Permanent nametags, hanging nametags
 - Not an issue for everyone - need 30 min to an hour for access to internet
 - Need some “down time”, an hour
 - Some presentations had significant overlap so that repetition taken out and free up downtime. Little more coordination between presentations
 - Habitat management and nature tourism – need another e.g. around a lodge, trees around pond
 - Water control structures, more info
 - Better format to have a small group like this
 - Logistics could be a nightmare
 - We got to talk and participate more
 - List of agri-tourism in state of AR – want name on list for future workshops