



GP RED National Think Tank 2020 Outcomes Report

The 2020 Think Tank had been planned to be held in Raleigh, NC November 18-20th. As the COVID 19 Pandemic continued we moved to a fully virtual event. Being aware of Zoom “fatigue” and the challenges of long days “on-line”, knowing that Thought Leaders would need to become familiar with WHOVA, and that the Think Tank depends heavily on building relationships – the Think Tank was extended to begin on Monday November 16th with a tutorial on WhoVA to meet with fellow Thought Leaders. Engagement activities were also offered on Tuesday with the Think Tank Presentations

Thought Leaders: There were **55 Thought Leaders** representing the following disciplines: Parks and Recreation (by far the profession most represented), others – Economic Development, Higher Education, Land/Water Conservation, Landscape Architecture, Outdoor Industry, Planning, Public Health, Research – and others. (Unlike other conferences – participation is limited to encourage the building of relationships and networking among those in attendance – Thought Leaders. The Think Tank is by invitation and involves an application and approval process

Topic Experts: There were **13 Topic Experts** including the keynote speaker.

Topic Sessions: There were **7 Topic Sessions** presented (including the Keynote – see below). They were: Community Resilience: From Response to Recovery; the Keynote; Trends in Outdoor Recreation – Providing Access to Nature; This Land is Your Land: The Future of the National Park Service; Developing the New Normal: Green Space/Open Space Standards for the Future; Changing Law Enforcement Perception through Recreation; Who Will Lead us Tomorrow: The State of Education in Parks and Recreation.

Love Thy Nature/Keynote: The award-winning documentary *Love Thy Nature* was screened with a “View Party” and a presentation by the filmmaker, **Sylvie Rokab** and an interactive discussion followed.

Presentation Format: In past Think Tanks each session has been broken down into three 30-minute sections with one section is the topic presentation, followed by breaking up into small groups for another 30 minute of small group discussion, then conclude with 30-minute large group discussion to present ideas from the small groups. For the virtual format these were shortened to three 20-minute sections with the same format. We added a Deeper Dive or Interactive Discussion that followed each session for those that wanted to explore further. These were very well received, and this format may be followed going forward with a longer small group discussion and shorter large group discussion.

Virtual Networking: Many opportunities were presented for Thought Leaders to engage with others, including a virtual brunch every morning, Yoga moves, Relaxation techniques etc. In addition, sponsors were given an opportunity to present small sessions in the morning, concurrent with the brunches.

Evaluation: There is a full Summary Evaluation Report available. Some highlights are that 81% enjoyed the virtual format although only 26% said they preferred it to being “in person”; 85% would recommend the Think Tank to their friends and colleagues. Identified strengths included: Collaboration, networking and the perspective gained from topics and presenters; that it was a diverse group with varying areas of expertise. The primary weaknesses revolved around the virtual format.

Committee: There was a full Think Tank Committee that met on a regular basis as well as a smaller Program Committee. In addition, there was a Tech committee who made it all happen.