

WAFWA COMMISSIONERS' COMMITTEE

BRIEFING PAPER



Issue Topic #1

National Level R3 Efforts

Virtual Meeting
July 9, 2020



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

Department of Fish and Game

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Alaska Department of Fish & Game Issue Topics WAFA 2020 Summer Meeting

Discussion about what is happening on a National level for R3 and specifically what is being done to support hunting on a national scale.

Alaska has had an R3 program in place for a number of years now. In our latest evaluation of the efforts made under this program we have concluded that R3 by itself is not sufficient to address the falling participation rates among hunters and anglers in Alaska. The Department has found that the R3 program is too limited in scope and reach to make any meaningful impact. Like other states we are struggling with a way in which to develop meaningful metrics to assess program success. The Department has internally added a 4th "R", which we term "Return on Investment", to assess our future investment in this program.

We are currently diversifying our portfolio to include other tools such as the Wild Harvest Initiative which focuses on the benefits of eating wild foods to draw new hunters and anglers. In Alaska this is a powerful draw especially in current pandemic conditions. We are also looking at other more general strategies focused on increasing participation in hunting and fishing.

Arizona Game and Fish Department

Issue Topic #1 – National Level R3 Review

Introduction

There has been a considerable amount of evolution in the recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3); of hunters, anglers, and recreational shooters, in the last decade. R3 has developed into a movement and a formal career path for many. Over forty state wildlife agencies have committed to maintaining an R3 focused work unit, ensuring that it remains a mission focus priority.

On the national level there are several organizations supporting R3 efforts. In order to achieve the necessary scale, the R3 industry has leveraged collaborations across state wildlife agencies, non-profit organizations, trade associations and foundations. It is only through this collective effort that R3 has been able to document improved sophistication, continuity, and scale.

Below are some of the recent initiatives and organizations driving R3.

American Sportfishing Association (ASA):

The American Sportfish Association is currently leading a multi-state grant request to secure funding that will expand the Data Dashboard Program which could achieve real time, by state license sales and additional customer data on a national level. Currently over 31 states have committed to this program. It has been discussed that this model has the potential of replacing the 5 year National Survey.

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA):

AFWA maintains two standing committees that focus specifically on R3 efforts:

Angler & Boater R3 Committee (Chairman: Ty Gray, Dir. AZGFD)

Hunting/Shooting Sports Participation Committee (Chairman : Chuck Sykes, Dir. AL DCNR)

These committees maintain a stable platform for all concerned partners to present initiatives and opportunities to grow hunting, angling, and recreational shooting in North America.

Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports (CAHSS):

In 2019, the Council closed its 10th year of operation. It completed its first three year business plan for 2020-2022, and executed its first national survey of stakeholders to set its goals for the coming years.

National R3 Community <https://www.nationalr3plan.com> - online platform for real time proof of concept and collaborations. The site has grown to a membership of over 2,500 R3 professionals across all organizational platforms.

R3 Professional Development - Has facilitated over 25 state R3 organizational development meetings to grow R3 programs in state wildlife agencies.

National R3 Implementation Group - National scale workgroup of R3 professionals developing top priorities and techniques to achieve the scale necessary to deliver impactful programs. This effort builds on the Council's National Action Plan. AZGFD staff chairs one of the sub work teams on the Implementation Group.

Legislative Developments:

In 2019 two key acts passed Congress: Target Marksmanship and Pittman-Robertson Modernization Act. With these passed agencies and R3 partners have new opportunities to advance R3 efforts at the state, regional and national level. New marketing campaigns, new target ranges, and new national-level efforts are expected as a result of these bills passing.

National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF):

- 2019/2020 [NSSF Hunting Heritage Trust Grant Program](#) yielded some successful R3 initiatives via mentoring in the class and in the field, learning more about crossing over female target shooters into hunting and testing messages with a state R3 toolkit.
- NSSF's [Future Gun Owners of America](#) report both increases our knowledge base and justifies we are on the right path with R3 efforts that provide the three "I's" to first-time gun buyers :
 - Information on how to buy a gun, what to expect at a retailer, what local laws are...
 - Invitation to join a local shooting league or hunt club...
 - Incentive to get started. Could be a contest or free product.
 - The report also broke down these future gun owners into eight segments, each having a different purchase motivation.
- NSSF is working to increase participation by activating the industry manufacturers, media, retailers and ranges to incorporate the three "I's" in their marketing plans.
- March and April showed a 70 percent increase in firearm sales year over year. We are hearing that many of these sales were first-time gun buyers. NSSF is in the process of better quantifying the number of first-time gun buyers and will survey them to learn more how to retain them and make them active participants in hunting and the shooting sports.

Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF):

State Angler R3 Scorecard

A State Angler R3 Scorecard was developed in partnership with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA)'s Angler and Boater R3 Committee and RBFF to annually assess state progress with the [AFWA Angler R3 Task Force Report Recommendations](#).

All 50 state agencies and the District of Columbia completed the State Angler R3 Scorecard in 2019 providing a baseline one year after the report release. The results provide benchmarks for improvements and inform potential resources and support areas for RBFF.

The State Angler R3 Scorecard is currently being completed by state agencies for 2020 status at this time.

R3 Research: Actionable Strategies for Angler R3

Key findings and recommendations include:

- Support and expand urban fishing programs
- Include diversity in images & communications
- Promote local fishing opportunities
- Target R3 efforts toward outdoor recreationists, particularly boaters and campers
- Retain & reactivate traditional license buyers
- Streamline license offerings to keep the process simple

R3 Grants

- The [George H.W. Bush Vamos A Pescar™ Education Fund](#) provides funds for state agencies to match and sub grant to local organizations to introduce Hispanic families to fishing and boating.
- The [State R3 Program Grants](#) help fund state angler and boater R3 initiatives and plans, with \$200,000 in grant funding this year. RBFF will announce the 2020 grantees in the coming weeks.

Other R3 Resources

- RBFF's 2020 State Marketing Workshop, held in Atlanta, GA on February 25-27, was the largest to date with 170 participants from 49 state agencies, RBFF and its partners and sponsors. All the presentations can be found on our [2020 State Marketing Workshop](#) webpage.
- Additionally, visit our R3 webpage for R3 information, resources and state case studies: www.takemefishing.org/r3

Summer Marketing Campaign

RBFF and the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) are working together to create an industry-wide campaign to launch this summer.

Regional Associations

Each Regional Association houses an R3 committee or workgroup. These committees are made up of state agency R3 staff, non profit R3 organizations and associations.

Western Association Of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA):

WAFWA R3 Workgroup - (Chairman: Curt Mulcher, Dir. OR Fish & Wildlife)

The WAFWA R3 workgroup has a reputation of being a leader in the nation. Vice Chair and meeting development is facilitated by AZGFD staff. Attended by professionals from all regions and often joined by the MAFWA region making the only multi regional R3 workgroup meetings.

Colorado's R3 Efforts



WAFWA BRIEFING PAPER - SUMMER 2020

Summary

Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Hunter Outreach Program supports hunters in numerous ways, addressing recruitment, retention, and reactivation, or R3. Most of our "novice" programs target new hunter recruitment, offering basic hunting skills, shooting clinics, and mentored hunts. Mentored hunts and skills programs purposely bring new hunters together to promote social support, which is an important part of retaining new hunters. We have partnered with non-profit organizations on multiple events where participants get a chance to connect with a community of other hunters, as well as learn the important conservation work that is being done.

1. Colorado Parks and Wildlife wrapped up the 2019 Mentored Hunt Season, with over 350 mentored hunt opportunities. These mentored hunts included 35 participants participating in a yearlong Rookie Sportsperson Program coordinated out of the SE Region, which included seminars, skills clinics, angling programs, and mentored hunts. All four regions offered multiple elk, deer, and pronghorn mentored hunts. Youth, Women Afield, and Novice Adult Hunters also took part in mentored pheasant hunts, small game, waterfowl, and turkey across the State.
2. After learning of Oregon's success with an outreach program, CPW modeled their first annual *Take a Friend Hunting* and *Take a Friend Fishing* Program wrapped up recently, rewarding mentors of new hunters a chance to win valuable hunting and fishing prizes. Local sports retailers donated prizes. While so many CPW outreach efforts involve staff and trained volunteers, these programs simply, encourage experienced hunters and anglers to mentor new hunters and anglers.
3. Hunting interest in Colorado has increased. There were an additional 435 applications for the spring turkey limited draw over last year's applications. There were an additional 39,276 more applications for the big game primary draw in 2020, over 2019's applications.
4. While having to cancel multiple outreach seminars and clinics due to COVID-19 health concerns, Colorado Parks and Wildlife rallied to offer videos to those participants. These videos were posted to

Continued



the CPW YouTube channel. The Secrets to the Big Game Draw Video has been viewed 13,900 times. Several hundred have viewed the four short turkey hunting skills videos. Each effort reached more than the intended 50-80 participants expected in the original events.

5. The Colorado Wildlife Council launched the *This is the Wild Life* campaign. The education campaign targets a demographic who have not yet made up their minds on how they feel about hunting and fishing. The campaign provides messages and education on why, even if they don't hunt or fish, they should support those activities.
6. COVID 19 health concerns have drastically limited our in-person outreach programs. Colorado Parks and Wildlife has canceled multiple seminars, skills clinics, and mentored spring turkey hunts for the safety of the participants, staff, and volunteers involved.
7. Our agency has a robust hunter and angler outreach program that offers seminars, skills clinics, online resources, and mentored hunts. Mentored hunts require the greatest level of support in time, staff and volunteers, and funding, so the program prioritizes these limited opportunities to a target audience. However, there are often challenges reaching this audience, who at the most basic are new hunters with little access to mentors. Extended goals include increasing diversity in our outreach. The Youth Outreach Program, Women Afield, and the most recent Novice Adult programs target hunters that have very little hunting experience and do not come from hunting families. However, applications for these mentored hunts is high, less than half the applicants meet our basic criteria.
8. An additional concern is the impact COVID-19 has on the non-profit conservation community. These partners in outreach and conservation have canceled a great many fundraising banquets this spring. While many non-profit chapters have sought virtual fundraising efforts, it is unclear what future impacts may arise to their efforts on behalf of hunters, anglers, and their conservation work. Partners, such as Pheasants Forever, team up with CPW and Natural Resource Conservation Service to hire habitat biologists to work with farmers and landowners on the Eastern plains on improving wildlife habitat for pheasants, other game species, and non-game species. These organizations also have their own R3 efforts that further pass the hunting heritage to new generations.
9. CPW participated in the AFWA Hunting 101 Research Project. We worked with Lincoln Larson (North Carolina State University) on a multi-state "hunting 101" workshop for college students that included responsibility/ethics, laws/regs, land navigation, survival, processing, cooking and eating elk and small game. Although the program was extremely successful, the challenge comes with determining how to implement this long term with the unknowns of what colleges will look like in the future and how we will implement hunter outreach programming.
10. In response to the COVID-19 health crisis, the Hunter Outreach Program and Creative Services and Marketing are starting a pilot program offering topic specific webinars. The first session had almost 700 people in attendance. If this program continues to gather interest, additional webinar series will be offered covering many more topics for our customers.
11. The Hunter Outreach Program will also be increasing its Novice Adult Hunter efforts. The NW Region has transitioned almost half of its youth hunts to Novice Adults. The NE Region plans to launch a Novice Adult program that includes skills clinics, range qualifications, and mentored big game hunts. Most of our existing youth hunts and Women Afield hunts will continue. Proposed issue papers are in the works aimed at increasing our novice adult mentored hunts to include turkey, and improve opportunities to support disabled hunters.
12. After a year of discussion and planning, the outreach team will be implementing a program evaluation effort. While the initial evaluation will tie in with program participants, we will be investigating an evaluation process based on license sales from participants after attending programs.

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

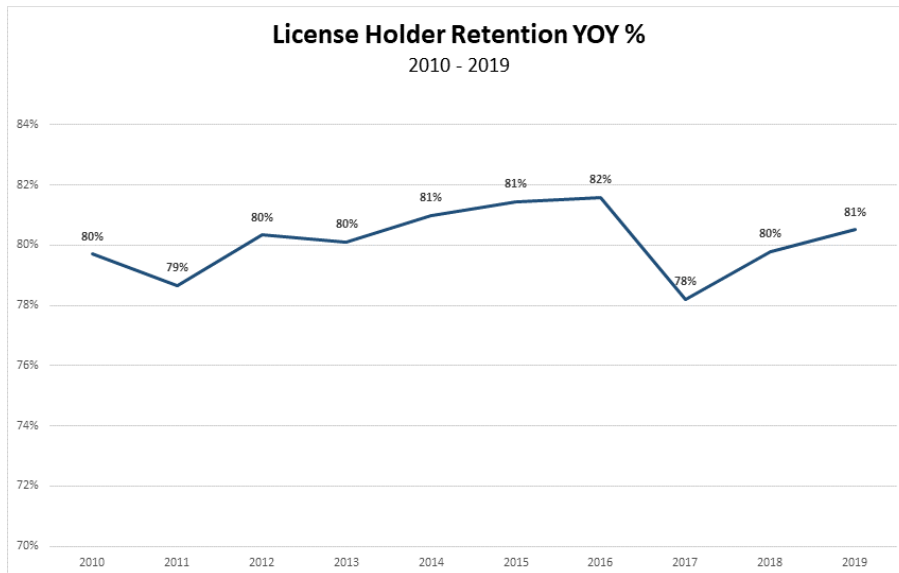
Commissioner Issues Report to the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Summer 2020

Issue Topic #1: What Is Happening on a National Level for R3 and Specifically What Is Being Done to Support Hunting on a National Scale

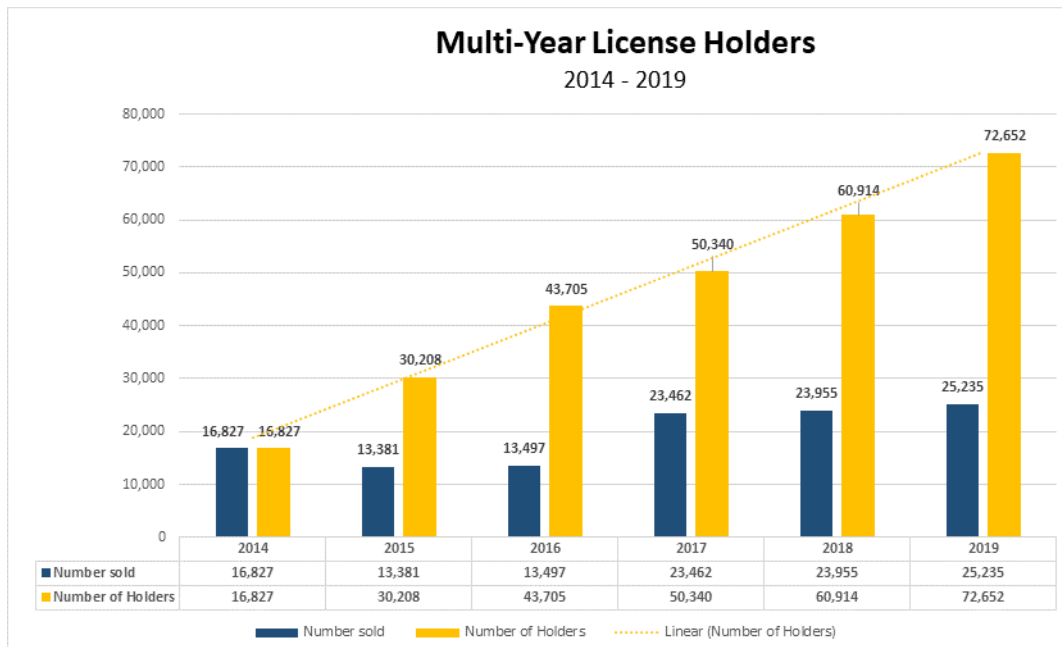
Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) remains committed to hunting-oriented R3 efforts by focusing on our state's initiatives, many of which lend themselves to supporting hunting R3 on a national level including:

- IDFG collaborates with a number of national efforts directed at hunting and fishing R3. Leaders of these national efforts include WAFWA, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, National Shooting Sports Foundation, and Responsive Management; these groups work with states on collaborative solutions to R3 issues such as work plan meetings, surveys, shared tool kits, and disseminating best practices. We also collaborate with our USFWS partners from the Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration group in USFWS Region 1.
- In late 2019, IDFG worked with Boise State University to develop a virtual reality field dressing simulation to teach hunters how to process a big game animal in the field. The simulation is currently being piloted in 2 of Idaho's 7 hunter education regions. It was also presented to multiple state agencies at the western states meeting of the International Hunter Education Association, where multiple states expressed interest in incorporating this tool into their curriculums. The simulation is available for free download to any individual who would like access to the tool.
- Due to COVID-19, IDFG temporarily suspended the requirement to complete an in-person field day for students who completed online hunter education. This allowed Idaho to continue certifying students for hunter education while in-person classes were unavailable. It has been communicated to IDFG that states that did not have an online option to complete hunter education were sending students to our class in order to utilize our reciprocal certification agreement to continue to certify future hunters.
- In conjunction with the COVID-19 temporary suspension of a required field day, IDFG initiated a paid advertising campaign to encourage the public to take hunter education to address concerns that the public would not be aware that certification was still possible. As a result we have seen a year-over-year increase of 502% in March and 915% increase in April for monthly graduates. We will continue to track graduates to determine hunting license purchase.
- While many national surveys have been done related to hunting R3, there is little data that is state or regionally specific. In order to address the state and regional differences, IDFG conducted a survey with Boise State University to better understand angler retention, aptitude for anglers to become hunters, and opportunities to increase our hunter education graduation rate. From the survey, we uncovered communication preferences of hunters and anglers, participation barriers, and motivations driving participation that can be used by agencies to better address needs of constituents.
- Through season setting and rules for license and tags, the Idaho Fish and Game Commission and IDFG has created opportunities to support recruitment-specific R3 including youth seasons, youth controlled hunts, youth licenses, the Passport Program, and our Mentor Hunt Program.

- Facilitated by legislation in 2017, the Idaho Fish and Game Commission implemented the “Price Lock” discount in 2017 for residents who purchase a license every year to improve license buyer retention. Price lock seems to have a positive effect on stabilizing, and possibly increasing, our retention of license buyers. The below graph represents license holders that purchased any annual license in the previous year, as well as the current year. For example, the “2019” row represents that 81% of license buyers in 2018 also bought a license in 2019.



Implementation of a 3-year license, as well as the ability to enroll in the Price Lock program with a 3-year license, have had a very positive effect on license retention. As shown in the below graph, both annual purchases and total number of 3-year license holders have seen a steady increase. For reference, an annual purchase of a 3-year license results in a buyer being a “3-year license holder” for the year they purchase, as well as the following two years.



National R3 Briefing
Tanna Fanshier, R3 Coordinator
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism

Introduction

The national R3 movement was founded based on declines in hunting and fishing participation rates that have been documented since the 1980s. The movement has since gained significant momentum in its efforts to recruit, retain, and reactivate hunters, anglers, and target shooters. There are a wide range of efforts taking place across the nation, focused mainly in the areas of program design and implementation, data collection and evaluation, digital marketing, mentorship, outreach to underrepresented audiences, and collaboration, each of which are outlined in the following briefing. This briefing is not meant to serve as an all-encompassing report, but rather a wide-angled synopsis as to the major efforts to date.

Program Design and Implementation

One of the most useful tools to program design and implementation in R3 is the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model, or ORAM. The ORAM is based on a variety of ideas, however, its foundation lies in research conducted by Bryce Ryan and Neil Gross, rural sociologists at Iowa State University in the 1940s and 1950s. Ryan and Gross explored the process of farmers adopting new farming techniques to better understand what was needed for new practices to be accepted and implemented. Their findings provided the background for the ORAM, constructed by the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) in 2007. The ORAM outlines the stages of participation individuals experience when involving themselves in a new outdoor activity. Matt Dunfee, Director of Special Programs for WMI describes the model as a “useful interpretation of the human process of accepting new ideas.” By mapping outdoor programming against the model, we can visualize which stages of the process are supplemented by agency and partner programming, as well as identify gaps and areas in which new participants are not being supported. This model lends itself to the notion that programming is more successful when strategically planned and interconnected to ensure engagement with participants at the numerous pivotal stages in their journey to activity adoption.



The ORAM continues to be utilized throughout the nation by agencies, R3 coordinators, industry partners, and NGOs to ensure planning is strategic, and efforts are collaborative. The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism has deployed the model in statewide KS R3 Committee meeting discussions and program planning/evaluation work sessions, and looks forward to its continued use.

Data Collection and Evaluation

To better gauge the effectiveness of current and future R3 efforts, a heavy emphasis has been placed on data collection from event participants and license buyers, largely through survey work and demographic analysis. The MAFWA R3 Committee (Megan Wisecup, Chair, Iowa DNR) has organized a subcommittee to focus on evaluation efforts, and ensure that universal methodologies are in place to provide states with the templates to conduct peer-reviewed and regionally agreed-upon surveys, allowing for the collection of data that can be

compared across state lines. This work will facilitate increased collaboration and broader exploration of event and program effectiveness.

The need for human dimensions work has become apparent in informing R3 related survey methods and ensuring quality data is being collected. Conversations lead by the MAFWA R3 Committee and Matt Dunfee of the Wildlife Management Institute have explored contracting with a human dimensions firm, or Ph.D. student to design and improve surveys and tactics. This conversation is ongoing and serves to benefit states with limited to no human dimensions staff employed, greatly increasing their survey design and data collection capacity. Current work is being done to explore the usefulness of multistate conservation grants in securing this position, student, or firm.

License data is being compiled in national data dashboards, pioneered by Rob Southwick with Southwick & Associates. This program allows states to compare license trends on one, comprehensive platform. This enables states to track their outdoor participation trends compared to those of their neighbors, and better identify state-by-state anomalies, potentially leading to the identification of agency or program strengths and weaknesses, as well as regional trends. Currently, 10 states participate in the dashboard. A 2020 AFWA Multistate Conservation Grant has been awarded which allows additional states to participate at no cost, making the dashboard available to many others. Kansas is excited to be one of the multiple new participants in 2020.

Digital Marketing

With an increasing amount of business being conducted online, it has become vital that state wildlife agencies reach online consumers in new and engaging ways. Many recent R3 gatherings have addressed this topic and explored what it may mean for fish and wildlife agencies. Various grants have been made available to allow states to explore digital marketing techniques within the context of their own state, focusing on relevancy, and license sales, and reporting. Some of these techniques include email marketing campaigns containing promotional items and updates, geotargeted advertisements encouraging local participation, search engine marketing, and social media advertisements. These techniques not only allow for the further retention of current outdoor participants, but also provide a unique opportunity to educate, engage, and inspire audiences that agencies otherwise may not have been able to reach. These efforts are predicted to aid in the overall relevancy and outreach efforts of fish and wildlife agencies across the nation.

Mentorship

When polled about barriers to hunting, participants often report that they “have no one to hunt with.” This has prompted states to focus on the mentorship, in various capacities. Some states, including Arizona, are exploring the role of social support in recruiting and retaining mentors by gathering and training mentors in informal settings within large groups, allowing for social support amongst mentors to evolve naturally. Other states, such as Nebraska, are investigating the motivations behind mentorship, and experimenting with the role that physical incentives such as outdoor prizes and gear may play in mentor recruitment. As R3 partners nationwide work to remove barriers to outdoor participation, the role of mentors, and mentor recruitment will continue to be investigated.

Underrepresented Groups (Hispanic Outreach, BOW/WITO)

The hunting community is largely made up of white males in their 50s. As this generation ages out of hunting and fishing participation, it is important that other, often underrepresented groups, are recruited to take their place. Diversifying the hunting and angling community serves to increase its cultural, social, and political relevancy and resilience as well as increase funding for fish and wildlife agencies.

Hispanic Outreach: Aside from English, Spanish is the most commonly spoken language in the United States. The Hispanic community has a deep history of hunting, and strong familial ties that would suggest group participation is likely. Unfortunately, very few state agencies provide regulations, online resources, or signage in Spanish. Not only does this deter participation, but it has the potential to create confusion, and cause unintentional violations by those who do choose to participate. It is a priority of the R3 movement to provide materials that will allow Spanish speakers the opportunity to learn, participate, and recruit new members of their communities to hunting and angling. The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism has begun translating full versions of our hunting and fishing regulations to Spanish and will soon expand these efforts to include signage, additional printed material, and online content.

BOW/WITO: At one time, women were the fastest growing group in outdoor recreation, however, women have been documented to have one of the highest dropout rates of any group. This finding has indicated to the R3 community that a great need exists to further engage and support women in the field. Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) and Women in the Outdoors (WITO) programs aim to curb this dropout rate, providing women with the social and technical support necessary to move them along the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model.

In 2019, Nebraska Game and Parks and Iowa DNR co-hosted a BOW/WITO cross-state huddle in Nebraska, inviting BOW and WITO coordinators and staff from across the nation to come together to brainstorm, improve, and map programs on the ORAM to evaluate the overall effectiveness and reach of their programming. This collaboration allowed for a direct comparison of programs offered, survey methods deployed, and post event engagement strategies utilized. The event also strengthened the network of BOW/WITO coordinators nationwide. KDWP looks forward to partnering with Iowa DNR staff to co-host the next event in Iowa.

Collaboration

Collaboration is the backbone of R3. The next opportunity for largescale collaboration will occur at the 2020 R3 Symposium in Broken Arrow, OK August 25-27 hosted by the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports, and The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife and Conservation. The event will host R3 partners from agency, industry, outfitter, NGO, and other backgrounds, and will continue discussion on the above topics, and build additional momentum with actionable outcomes. Work done by the National R3 Implementation Workgroup, made up of members from across the nation, will be highlighted, and opportunities to network and develop plans to address R3 efforts on both a state and national level will be abundant.

Conclusion

There is an incredible amount of work being done on the state and national level to address declines in hunting and angling participation. This briefing serves to highlight some of those efforts; however, it is not an all-encompassing document. Interested individuals are encouraged to join the online R3 Community page hosted by the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports at nationalr3plan.mn.co and speak with their state R3 representatives

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Commissioner's Committee Topic #1
National R3
Summer WAFWA – July 2020

Introduction

Nebraska continues to be a National leader in hunter, angler and shooting sports recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3). From local programs to larger National partner supported efforts, Nebraska continues to forge ahead with aggressive and innovative efforts to impact this important area of conservation.

National Efforts

Nebraska has played a major role in providing leadership to the National R3 direction including such efforts as:

- Part of the National R3 Plan Development and Implementation Team
 - Through this effort, Nebraska is leading an Integrated Workgroup Committee focused on developing an online tool that will help states and partners to better develop and evaluate organized mentoring programs
- Member of the National R3 Summit Development Team
 - Nebraska helped develop and host the 2019 National R3 Summit which was the first of its kind bringing all facets of the R3 community together and is a part of the planning team for the 2020 Summit
- Nebraska holds a Vice Chair position on the MAFWA R3 Committee as well as active representation on the WAFWA R3 Committee
 - Nebraska helped successfully change the committees to more effective workgroups poised to tackle larger regional R3 issues
 - Helped start the R3 Warriors conference call bringing R3 leaders from across the Country together monthly
 - Helped implement the MAFWA R3 Newsletter to keep Directors and staff engaged in R3 efforts
 - Helped develop the “Making Mentoring Work” multi-state grant in 2019 as well as the “Collegiate Outreach” multi-state grant which are still being implemented
 - Currently Nebraska is co-coordinating several multi-state grants for the MAFWA R3 Committee including:
 - Development of a Mentor Communication Strategy
 - Development of a Small Game Marketing Strategy to New and Underserved Audiences
 - Development of a National Evaluation Strategy
 - The regional committees are discussing hiring a regional position to help states with the coordination of these larger efforts

State Efforts

Nebraska has many state efforts that serve to support R3 of hunter, angler and shooting sports enthusiasts. A highlight of a few of these programs includes:

- Data Mining effort with the University of Nebraska – Lincoln which has resulted in a data dashboard tool to help analyze permit data to make better more informed decisions
- Nebraska R3 Task Force – an effort to bring partners together to better support R3 efforts
 - Meets quarterly and holds representation from all major partners as well as some community leaders
 - Hosted a state Summit in 2019 where over 110 new and existing partners met
- Mentoring – several programs designed to introduce first time hunters to the field reaching nearly 1,000 youth annually
 - Next Steps – a new partnership program with Pheasants Forever that will provide youth mentor hunt participants with continued support throughout the year
- Outreach to Women – Nebraska continues to increase the reach of the Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program by expanding the advanced programs giving women continued support
- Distance Learning – Newly developed “Let’s Go Hunting” web page Designed to provide species specific hunting information for self-study
- Trip Planners – recently designed to help new hunters plan a species specific hunting trip in Nebraska addressing key how to items as well as regional support for planning
- Shooting Sports
 - National Archery in the Schools reaching ~35,000 youth annually
 - Nebraska High School Trap Shooting Program reaching ~2,800 youth annually
- Ranges
 - Working off of a Shooting Range Plan developed in 2012, Nebraska is designing more hunter rifles sight-in ranges as well as a new Wild West Shooting Park at the Buffalo Bill Ranch in North Platte, Nebraska
 - Nebraska operates several shooting skills education parks that reaches thousands of new shooters and families in our state parks designed for shooting education
 - Outdoor Education Center in the capital city (Lincoln) which provides indoor/outdoor shooting sports and hunting education to several thousand annually
- Collegiate Hunters Program – provides hunting equipment for college kids at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln and is expanding to the University of Nebraska – Omaha
- Hunter Education – Nebraska has made changes to its hunter education program making it easier and more convenient to certify, resulting in increased numbers completing the course
- Take ‘Em Hunting – a new mentor communication strategy targeting existing hunters in Nebraska and encouraging them to take someone new
 - Resulted in over 2,900 mentoring opportunities in the first year
 - Over 50% were first time hunters
- Permit Modifications – Nebraska has modified some permit prices (\$8 youth deer permits) and evaluating others to make it easier for new hunters to participate
- Marketing – several marketing efforts highlighting hunting in Nebraska
 - Turkey and Deer Hunting Campaigns
 - Radio shows communicating outdoor messages to the public



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Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Nevada Department of Wildlife Commissioner's Committee Meeting Issue Topics

1. R3 discussion about what is happening on a national level for R3 and specifically what is being done to support hunting on a national scale.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) has been campaigning on multiple platforms to promote big game hunting applications for the 2020 big game hunting season. The campaign has included: social media posts, podcasts, recorded zoom videos, out-of-state marketing, email, text, promotion through influencers such as Epic Outdoors, Go Hunt (i.e. Deputy Director podcast interview on why to hunt in Nevada). An additional strategy for recruitment was the extension of the draw period. The extension gave out of state hunters additional opportunities to draw when their results came back as unsuccessful in another state.

Customer support staff were on phones, email, and social media to answer hunting application questions from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, seven days a week for a seven-week period. This was a huge effort and gained NDOW huge kudos with the hunting community. Hunters were able to answer simple questions for NDOW on social media platforms and giving praise to the department at the same time. This effort gained respect and admiration from all hunters both resident and nonresident that needed support and received it in a timely manner.

After the completion of a Big Game Main Draw, we saw increases in nonresident license sales of 84 percent in the 11-15 year-old age group, a 26 percent increase in the 21-25 year-old age group and a 15 percent increase in the 31-40 year old age group.

All ages of hunter education students were allowed to take online certification classes for free. This replaced the physical location classes that were cancelled due to COVID-19. This option was open to students who were signed up for a cancelled class as well as open to prospective hunters. This option allowed the Department to avoid losing a year of recruiting hunters due to the COVID-19 shutdown.

Creating hunting content via interactive webinars posted to Facebook and YouTube kept people engaged while at home considering stay-at-home restrictions due to COVID-19. The promotion of these webinars is being advertised across all social media platforms to attract a diverse audience.

The Department has been drafting plans for targeted marketing, outreach campaigns, and education programs to be more welcoming and inclusive of underrepresented groups. One example of this effort has included: collecting information via focus groups, review of license sales

data, one-on-one interviews, review of other state efforts, research articles, podcasts and other forms of media to develop an effective R3 strategy tailored for women.

The Department has been shifting messaging as well as content curation and promotions to focus more hunting content on wild harvested food, sustainability, and self-reliance. This has been conducted on multiple fronts including social media platforms, and the NDOW publications.

The Department has been planning and developing a new user-friendly and well-positioned website in hopes that it will be the primary hunting resource for prospective hunters, new hunters, and avid hunters.



Topic #1 – Discussion about what is happening on a national level for R3

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) will be hosting the 2020 Association for Conservation Information, Inc. (ACI) annual conference. ACI is a non-profit organization of natural resource communicators, made up of professionals representing state, federal and Canadian wildlife conservation, parks and natural resource agencies as well as private conservation organizations. The theme for the 2020 conference is the R3 Revolution. Conservation communicators from across the country and Canada will gather to explore new ways to help the national recruitment, retention and reactivation movement by successfully increasing hunting, angling, shooting sports and outdoor recreation participation. The conference will be held in Santa Fe, New Mexico on Nov. 8 through 11.

Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
Agency Director: J.D. Strong



Issue Topic #1 — R3. Discussion about what is happening on a national level for R3 and specifically what is being done to support hunting on a national scale.

Several Department employees are actively involved in organizations promoting R3 on the national level. Some of the national nongovernmental organizations the Department participates with on R3 include the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports, Archery Trade Association, National Rifle Association, Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, and the National Hunting and Shooting Sports Action Plan's implementation working group.

Oklahoma is looking forward to hosting the National R3 Symposium, originally set in spring but delayed until Aug. 25-27 due to COVID-19. This symposium will be the second nationwide event to address comprehensive R3 efforts. Hundreds are expected to gather in Broken Arrow, Okla., for the symposium.

The Department also joined with NWTF to create a hunter R3 coordinator position. This full-time position is funded by NWTF along with federal matching funds, and offices with ODWC to work exclusively on joint R3 hunting programs. A "Learn to Hunt" mentoring program is set to debut in July.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
WAFWA Summer Report – July 2020
National Level R3 Efforts

Question: What is happening on a National level for R3 and specifically what is being done to support hunting on a national level?

A number of organizations are working at the national, regional, and state level on R3 efforts. Several of them focus primarily on hunting. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) collaborates with a number of these organizations in support of state R3 efforts. Examples include:

- Participation in the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies R3 committee. ODFW Director Curt Melcher chairs the WAFWA R3 committee which meets in conjunction with the summer and mid-winter WAFWA meetings. The mid-winter meeting includes an R3 workshop, attended by representatives of several states, organizations and others interested in recruiting, retaining and reactivating hunters and anglers. Prominent national organizations participating in these workshops include Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF), Council for the Advancement of Hunting and the Shooting Sports, Archery Trade Association, National Shooting Sports Foundation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Pheasants Forever, National Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited, and many other organizations. ODFW staff are committee members and have served in a variety of leadership roles for the committee.
- Council for the Advancement of Hunting and Shooting Sports. ODFW staff served in advisory roles in the development of guidelines for R3 related activities.
- Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation. RBFF supports a national effort to increase participation in fishing and boating. RBFF holds a number of webinars and workshops to support state R3 efforts, including the State Marketing Workshop where state representatives share success stories. RBFF also provides grants for R3 pilot projects. ODFW received funding for two projects. One project connected passionate anglers with ODFW. These Fishing Ambassadors helped bridge the gap between ODFW's social media followers and the ambassador's local communities. A second grant funded training for fisheries biologists on the importance of R3 efforts to the agency mission. The training also focused on how to apply R3 considerations in resource management decisions. ODFW staff previously served as a state agency representative on the RBFF Board of Directors.
- Ducks Unlimited. ODFW collaborated with Ducks Unlimited and Oregon State University on a College Duck Hunting Workshop. This R3 research project, done in conjunction with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, introduced 15 college students to duck hunting. The workshop provided hands on lessons for these new hunters on shooting, decoys, identification, field dressing and preparing ducks and wetland conservation policies. Following the event, students were mentored by Duck Unlimited hunters. Oregon State conducted pre and post evaluation of the student's interest in continuing to hunt.
- National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP). NASP is an in-school program that introduces youth to archery. ODFW took over management of the program in Oregon in 2016. Prior to that, the program was operated by a volunteer organization and there were 4 Oregon schools certified and 16 certified instructors. This year, there are 62 certified schools and 122 active and certified instructors. With the help of a number of partner organizations, ODFW has held statewide and regional tournaments. The most recent tournament included support from Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, USA Archery, Scholastic 3D Archery and the Oregon Hunters Association.

1. R3. Discussion about what is happening on a National level for R3 and specifically what is being done to support hunting on a national scale.

- **Passing of H.R. 877, Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act,**

- Enables Pittman-Robertson dollars to be used for R3 marketing strategies for the first time.
- Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) has offered a new R3-specific Multi-State Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP) opportunity, enabling for whole regions to apply for PR grants specific to marketing and additional initiatives that were previously ineligible for these funds.
 - Top R3 priorities for multi-state projects from within the AFWA Regions include:
 - **Mentorship:** A proposal to map all state mentorship progress and provide additional resources for states who are just beginning to develop their mentorship programs.
 - **Evaluation:** Provide resources on how to properly evaluate R3 programs and use the feedback for continual improvement
 - **Marketing:** Utilizing newly available funds to include many states in cohesive, collaborative, lapsed hunter marketing campaigns.
 - **Data sharing:** Creating a clearing house to enable R3 partners to share their resources as well as platforms for agencies and partners to share data on effective outreach and participant trends.

- **Central Flyway Adopts the 2-Tiered waterfowl regulatory package (AKA "3-splash")**

- Has potential to increase participation in duck hunting by providing two options for all hunters to choose from. Duck hunters would register themselves under one of two different regulatory options
 - **Tier 1:** The current regulatory package: would maximize harvest potential with current species-specific regulations (i.e, current daily bag limits with all species-specific daily bag restrictions).
 - **Tier 2:** A new "3-splash" regulatory package: available only to those who desire it. Simplified regulations (i.e., 3-splash daily bag limit). Would remove potential legal ramifications of a novice/mentee harvesting the wrong species of duck due to inexperience with duck identification.

- **USFWS alignment of federal regulations on refuges to more closely mirror state regulations for ease of use**

- Simplifying federal regulations as well as aligning them with state regulations removes a tremendous regulatory burden on hunters and potentially increases participation in hunting on refuges.
- **Southwick Associates National Data Dashboards**
 - Every state tracks data separately and uses differing metrics, resulting in a patchwork quilt of data instead of a clear, cohesive picture.
 - To remedy this, Southwick has created a national data dashboard for all states to contribute their licensing information from the past 10 years to. This allows the entire field of conservation to capture an accurate picture of trends and responses to R3 initiatives on a national scale.
- **State R3 Plans with national support**
 - National organizations like Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF), Wildlife Management Institute (WMI), and Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports (CAHSS) are working collaboratively to not only provide R3 grant opportunities to states, but also provide guidance in development of state R3 plans that reflect the national R3 best practices.
- **National R3 Summits 2018, 2020**
 - While the R3 community traditionally does its work within the AFWA regions, the National R3 Summits have provided the entire community an opportunity to join together, share data, collaborate on multi-state R3 programs, mark achievements, and troubleshoot barriers within the R3 field.
- **Ground-breaking research on our current and potential customer base**
 - **America's Wildlife Values:** points to shifting values that our public has regarding wildlife and wildlife management and has far-reaching implications for future inclusion of customers with a broader value set than has historically been included in traditional marketing and outreach efforts.
 - **Roadmap to Relevancy:** In response to an increasingly challenging ecological landscape as well as a population that is increasingly more diverse and urban, fish and wildlife agencies “must find ways to engage and serve broader constituencies and expand the financial and political support necessary to ensure the future of North America’s conservation legacy.” *Roadmap to Relevancy Fact Sheet, January 2020.*

South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks



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Topic 1. Texas R3 Efforts

Discussion about what is happening on a national level for R3 and specifically what is being done to support hunting on a national scale.

*Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
Summer Meeting – July 2020*

Texas is a big state with a rich outdoor heritage. Past generations have been heavily invested in hunting and fishing activities both for recreation and subsistence. As the state's population has grown and demographics have significantly changed, so has the diversity of the department's customers as well as their preferences in outdoor recreational activities. To adequately serve the range of our customer preferences and deliver services effectively, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) must recognize and accommodate the increasing diversity among its constituents.

Recognizing the many values and benefits that outdoor recreation provides Texans, TPWD has developed a Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) Strategic Plan to guide future efforts and program development. The plan, which is scheduled to be rolled out in 2020, prescribes the goals, objectives, and actions that must be implemented to increase participation in fishing, boating, hunting, and shooting sports.

The Texas R3 Plan represents a cross-divisional effort with staff from Wildlife, Hunter Education, Inland Fisheries, Coastal Fisheries, Licensing and Marketing. After analyzing many of our closely held recruitment and retention programs, TPWD discovered some important things about its R3 efforts. Below are a few major themes considered in developing the document:

- TPWD and partners in the outdoor community are already doing a lot of good R3 work across Texas; however, improved communication and coordination, with our internal and external partners, would be very beneficial and maximize recruitment, retention, and reactivation efforts to further program development.
- An improved evaluation process of existing R3 programs, as well as the addition of long-term tracking of participation, would provide analytical data which could be used to ensure current programs are fulfilling the desired outcomes. An improved process would allow an enhanced evaluation of programs, and monitoring of participants, to determine if they continue to buy a license and remain active. This information would provide the necessary data to determine if changes are needed in order to achieve the desired goals and objectives.
- TPWD has historically focused mentored and other recruitment activities almost exclusively on youth. There is a recognized need to broaden the approach to include new and diverse audiences such as, adult onset hunters and anglers, women and other underrepresented populations, and people with

disabilities. Novice adult hunters and anglers are an important group as they have an interest in the outdoors and the resources to buy a license and participate immediately. In addition, these adult mentored opportunities lend themselves to a diverse audience of non-traditional hunters and anglers where the common criticism of youth hunting and angling programs has been that they target (intentionally or not) a demographic of youth that would have likely fished or hunted anyway.

To make meaningful progress towards recruiting, retaining, and reactivating hunters, anglers, sport shooters, and boaters, will require a department-wide effort in collaboration with our conservation partners. TPWD is hopeful that through our work in Texas, and through our coordination with state/federal/NGO partners in venues like the WAFWA R3 Committee, we will be able to create lifelong participants in hunting, fishing, boating, and shooting sports, while simultaneously creating more interest in conserving wild things and wild places in Texas and beyond.



Briefing Paper – Commissioners’ Committee
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
July 2020

Subject: Recruiting, retaining and reactivating hunters through local and national R3 efforts

Background: Declining national trends in hunting participation have spurred states to work on improving hunting recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) efforts. While Utah’s hunting numbers haven’t been as alarming as the national decline, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources is taking proactive measures to improve R3 in the state. Utah is among the top states in population growth, and it recognizes the importance of increasing hunter numbers. Since the drop in national participation came to light, the Division has created new and streamlined ways to improve R3 in multiple areas, including personnel, programs, marketing, licensing, hunting opportunities and public engagement.

Current status: The Division has a multi-pronged approach to increasing hunter participation. Some efforts have been in place for years, while others are newer and based on input and results from other state agencies and partners. (The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) and the online R3 community have been key partners in this effort.) Specifically, the Division has improved hunter participation by:

- Hiring a full-time digital marketing specialist to improve email marketing efforts and to assess and implement successful national efforts.
- Using the GovDelivery platform to send relevant, timely emails to our customers so they stay informed about upcoming events, deadlines and license renewals.
- Working on a marketing plan that will address much of the R3 effort.
- Running the Wildlife Recreation program (established in 2013) to educate the public on a number of beginner and advanced recreation topics, including hunting and shooting.
- Employing a full-time social science and stakeholder-engagement coordinator who oversees R3 efforts.
- Holding youth and beginner pheasant hunting events that are designed to recruit new hunters.
- Offering multiple programs and incentives to give new or established hunters increased opportunities (e.g., Mentored Hunting Program, youth-only tags, Trial Hunter Program, Dedicated Hunter Program, etc.).
- Remaining actively involved in the R3 online community (established by the NSSF), which connects state agencies and shares strategic advice to improve participation.

The Division’s position: The Division is seeing promising results from the efforts mentioned above. While R3 is a dynamic, interconnected system — which makes it difficult to isolate a single program or process that’s responsible for increased license sales — the individual efforts are all producing immediate positive results. For example, in 2019:

- The Wildlife Recreation program held roughly 40 events and reached more than 2,000 participants.
- The Utah Hunter Mentoring Program had more than 1,000 youth sign up.
- Utah’s Trial Hunting Program had more than 2,000 participants.

The Division also follows up with participants to obtain their feedback about the processes and programs for future improvement. Exact numbers and impacts — as well as any other program specifics — are available upon request. Through these efforts and those of other state agencies, we can ensure continued nationwide participation in hunting for future generations.

Key dates: Not applicable

Key publics: Key publics include the past, present and future hunters of Utah.



**State Report for Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Mid-Summer Meeting, December 2019 – June 2020
Director Brian Nesvik**

Issue Topics Report

Issue Topic #1

R3. Discussion about what is happening on a National level for R3 and specifically what is being done to support hunting on a national scale.

Wyoming is using the National R3 hunter recruitment and adoption model to pilot two programs with national partners; optimistically, these programs are replicable and scalable with limited resources and can serve as a model for other states. [#WYHUNTFISH](#) develops sustainable, effective, locally-based hunting and/or angling mentoring programs unique to each community, and the First Hunt Foundation is key to this program. A Beyond B.O.W. - Hunting camp simultaneously held with a #WYHUNTFISH mentoring camp is in its second year, and is a partnership with the Safari Club International Foundation and the First Hunt Foundation.

Two ongoing efforts include Wyoming's online Hunt Planner which provides access to a large amount of data for individuals planning their hunts regardless of residency, and monthly Hunting Update emails to hunters in our license system with reminders and educational content.