

# 2013 MAFWA Angler and Hunter Recruitment and Retention Technical Working Committee

## Annual Report

Due to restricted travel budgets communication amongst the group was restricted to MAFWA RR lists serve and phone conversations.

**Participants:** 2 (KY), 1 (MI), 1 (SD), 1 (WI), 1 (OH), 2 (IA), 1 (MN)

### Executive Summary:

As we complete year three of the MAFWA Angler and Hunter Recruitment and Retention Committee one clear shift in direction has been the allocation of more resources into recruiting **adult** hunters and anglers. Several states have piloted and are now offering multiple adult “how to” hunting and fishing classes in their respective states. Wisconsin has been the clear leader in this effort with their “Hunting for Sustainability” course and has been serving as the pioneer of these programs for MAFWA states. See Appendix 1 and 2 for Course description and curriculum. We continue to explore new tactics for hunter and angler recruitment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and two things seem certain. First, it will be hunters leading the effort, and second, we need to broaden and shift resources to adults and families who do not already hunt or fish. Wisconsin created “The Hunter Challenge” web page <http://dnr.wi.gov/education/outdoorSkills/hunterChallenge/index.html> Check out the Hunter Challenge 2012 at the DNR website (search keyword “challenge” at dnr.wi.gov). There are maps that provide hunter numbers in three key age groups by county of residence. This will help you track progress in recruiting hunters in your community. This web page also includes new ideas for recruitment, goals for 2012 and a look at last year’s results. Kentucky created “Take Someone Hunting” <http://fw.ky.gov/navigation.aspx?cid=932&navpath=C741> and “Take Someone Fishing” how to page’s <http://fw.ky.gov/navigation.aspx?cid=998&navpath=C109> These on line, mobile compatible, pages allow for quick access of vital information to help novices get started hunting and angling. Iowa has built the web page titled, “Hookin’ to Crookin’” to help recruit novice anglers <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Fishing/FishingTipsHowTos/FromHookintoCookin.aspx> South Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio and Minnesota are also shifting more resources to adult and family hunting and angling recruitment programs.

What are the primary challenges we face in this effort?

1. Identifying where non-hunting and non-angling prospects congregate, socialize and interact especially in the online space, so we may connect with them.
2. Constructing communication that these prospects find appealing and can relate too. Verbal cues include “responsibility”, “sustainability” and “harmony with nature”.
3. We, the MAFWA R&R Committee members, recognize that there exist social sub-cultures who desire organic, free-ranging, locally-grown meat and it is our goal to engage and become a part of their community. “Slow food club” people (“green” people who dwell in college dorms and apartments) will hunt and fish to obtain organic, healthy meat that has not traveled thousands of miles and been exposed to hormones if we (the hunting community) provide a pathway that is unique from our traditional recruitment programs. They will support state fish and wildlife

agencies because they live by the mantra “I must support an organization that shares my values.”

This committee will host a web conference call this June to keep this vital effort moving forward.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brian V. Blank  
Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources

## Hunting for Sustainability: Wild, free range protein

Sustainable has become a buzz-term lately. Sustainable, conservation, and hunting naturally fit hand in hand. The first principle of conservation is providing sustainable wildlife populations for everyone in perpetuity. There are several other key principles guiding North American wildlife conservation:

- Wildlife in North America are publicly owned;
- Wildlife policies are established from a basis of science;
- Hunting and angling opportunities should be available for everyone;
- Management, research, and policy development and implementation are funded primarily by hunters and anglers.

Hunting is critical to conservation in these ways: First, the revenue from hunting license sales and excise taxes on hunting equipment amounts to more than \$100 million in Wisconsin each year (more than 90% of the wildlife conservation budget). These funds are earmarked solely for conservation spending and are used to purchase, manage, and restore tens of thousands of acres annually in Wisconsin. In short, a large portion of conservation funding comes from hunters and anglers.

Second, regulated hunting has been an effective, low-cost method for maintaining wildlife populations at levels that are socially acceptable and within habitat carrying capacity.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, hunting promotes a deep physical and spiritual connection with the natural world. It is an activity that shapes a culture and lifestyle around the importance of learning the intricate details of how nature works and how wildlife interact with their environment. Hunting gives humans a participatory link with nature and conservation.

Because conservation is largely dependent on revenues from hunters and anglers, and hunting is a lifestyle of intricate connections with the natural environment, a growing decline in hunter numbers has resulted in concerns regarding the future of both hunting and the nature of wildlife conservation itself.

Sustainable use of a renewable resource for obtaining a large source of protein is a perfect fit for an increasingly conservation oriented world. Today's young adults have demonstrated strong interest in lower impact living, food co-ops, farmer's markets, and slow food. Hunting is a natural part of this movement. However, many of this generation did not follow the "natural path" into hunting and are not now hunters.

Wisconsin DNR has two programs that facilitate starting hunting as an adult: the Learn to Hunt and Mentored hunting programs. Through experienced hunters and these opportunities, students/participants will be able to experience moral, ethical, sustainable hunting (way beyond just legal hunting) and will have the opportunity to try it out themselves if they choose.

This course will expose students/participants to conservation mechanisms in North America, provide opportunities to experience hunting from the conservationist's point of view, learn from hunters who gather their protein in perhaps the most sustainable and conservation sensitive manner possible, and have the opportunity to try hunting with a top quality mentor.

# Hunting for Sustainability: Wild, free range protein

- Week 1:
- Introduction
  - Outline and Syllabus
  - Why hunt?
  - History of Conservation and hunting
    - Presentation from the Maywood center
  - Hunter demographics and future in WI
  - Ethical hunting
    - Something out of the HE manual, also the Eco-Redneck
  - Leopold land ethic
    - Beyond hunting ethically to the depths of what a hunter is or should be.
    - How all hunters need to have the Leopold land ethic
    - The deep spiritual connection that develops from hunting with a Land ethic
    - Connecting with nature and the environment
  - Stages of a hunter – Norton book
- Week 2:
- Hunting for sustainability – “green” eating
    - How far did your meal travel?
    - Hunting and the food cooperative
    - Knowing where your food comes from
  - Wildlife management
    - The basics: food, cover, water.
  - Public Land
    - How to find it, how to use it
    - Types – Federal, state, county, tax programs, etc
    - Access to information
    - Scouting with the computer

- Week 3:       Hunting skills and equipment
- Marksmanship and where to shoot
  - Deer, pheasant, turkey with accompanying literature
  - Tactics, what to look for, saddles and points, etc
  - Understanding and reading habitat
  - Understanding biology to increase success
  - Firearms, bows, stands, safety
  - Laws and regulations
  - With accompanying literature – regs pamphlets
- Week 4:       Processing, cooking, and eating
- Hunter ed and firearm safety
  - Learn to Hunt training and planning
  - Wrap up