

# Midwest R3 Newsletter

June 2019



## WELCOME

Hello and welcome to the first issue of the Midwest R3 Newsletter! The purpose of this quarterly newsletter is to provide the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) Directors, state fish and wildlife agencies, and state partners updated information regarding new R3 ideas, projects, and strategies on a more frequent basis. Through timely updates and information sharing we hope to strengthen our regional R3 framework by increasing awareness of successful and unsuccessful strategies and enabling collaborative interests among states and state partners. Information included in each edition of the newsletter will highlight novel R3 efforts and area-specific achievements for the quarter. Please email any R3 highlights, achievements, and illustrations to [hunter.nikolaj@wisconsin.gov](mailto:hunter.nikolaj@wisconsin.gov) for future newsletter issues.

## HIGHLIGHTS

This year, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission began a new angler/hunter mentor communication campaign to engage their customer base, help them understand the need for introducing a new person to hunting or fishing, and excite them about the many benefits of mentoring. The campaign began in the spring of 2019, focusing on expanding fishing mentoring opportunities. The communication effort asks anglers to go to <http://outdoornebraska.gov/takeemfishing/> and take a pledge to take someone fishing. An online reporting form was created to allow anglers to download images of their mentoring and provide information. In doing so, mentors are entered into drawings for prizes provided by partners across the Country including: Cabela's/Bass Pro and Scheels gift cards, fishing equipment, and even a new bass boat. Entries have been strong in the first month of the campaign with over 1,000 anglers participating so far. The hunting component will be of similar design and will roll out in September.

The goal of this new communication effort is to expand the capacity for mentoring in Nebraska and enlist the support of current hunters and anglers in the R3 movement by helping them learn about the issues existing in hunting and fishing today, as well as showing them how important their efforts are in providing solutions and how beneficial these efforts can be to them personally.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has conducted two data dashboards (2015 and 2016) for hunting. As a part of the initial dashboard, tapestry data was received (demographics and socioeconomic characteristics) and appended to all of their customer records, allowing them to gain additional insight into their current hunting base. Iowa recently submitted a request for proposal and secured Southwick Associates to complete an annual hunting data dashboard and also incorporate a data dive tool to complete further analysis of their hunter base over the next three years. The dashboard will be updated annually at the end of each license year.

Iowa plans to use this information to establish baseline metrics for targeted efforts and then utilize the annual update to determine if their efforts had any impact. The information will also be used to determine and prioritize needs so they can strategically deploy programming and outreach efforts across the state.

The Missouri Department of Conservation is now using an event management system for all agency events which integrates with their licensing system. The system enables them to track participants who attend their events, evaluate their programs, and conduct program surveys to class participants on the effectiveness of R3 programming efforts. They are currently developing program evaluation and customer tracking tools through an online registration system that is linked to license data, which will help identify pathways to creating new hunters and anglers.

## COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism formed a Kansas R3 Committee with approximately 30 different organizations, industry members, NGO partners, independent groups, and non-profits to facilitate communication and help inform the writing of the Kansas R3 action plan. The first meeting occurred on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Nebraska National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) R3 Coordinator, Iowa DNR, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fishers (DGIF), and Pheasants Forever (PF) have developed standard evaluation questions that each organization would ask before and after their hunting and shooting sports programs.

Michigan DNR hosts bi-weekly R3 Coordinator meetings with participation by staff from the DNR, NWTF, PF, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA), Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BHA), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Wisconsin DNR is refining and expanding hunter mentor training in partnership with PF and the NWTF and partnering with these organizations to put on Fishing for Dinner and Hunt for Food classes.

## WHAT'S NEW?

Indiana DNR released "Learn to" workshop curriculum for fishing and hunting workshops, with curriculum for trapping and shooting under development.

Iowa DNR developed and evaluated a "Let's Go/Fish Local" Community-Based Fishing Initiative.

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism produced a Kansas R3 factsheet to form baseline understanding of the R3 program, challenges, and goals.

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources developed a marketing plan for 2019 in January which outlines R3 marketing strategies and improvements.

Michigan DNR launched a marketing campaign in March 2019 to increase license sales to nonresident customers through research-driven, targeted marketing.

Minnesota DNR developed and codified requirements,

expectations, and benefits of participating in Minnesota Mentor Network in conjunction with previous mentor trainings and contributions from PF.

Missouri Department of Conservation completed their R3 plan and are working on presenting to partners to integrate their efforts into the plan.

Wisconsin DNR's Angler R3 program produced a *Fishing for Dinner* instructor training manual and began field testing it at workshops in January as part of their instructor recruitment strategy. They also launched an Angler R3 grant program, attracting a broad spectrum of NGOs as grant applicants.

Wisconsin NWTF and PF R3 Coordinators developed mentor training materials and co-hosted the first combined Hunter Mentor and Train the Trainer training event.

## HIRES

NWTF hired Lindsey Evans as the Indiana R3 Coordinator.

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism hired Tanna Fanshier as their R3 Program Coordinator.

Minnesota DNR hired a Latinx Fishing and Hunting Skills Outreach Liaison, SE Asian (Karen Community) Outreach Liaison, and an Angling Skills Trainer – with a volunteer Mentor Coordinator to be hired in June 2019.

## REGIONAL MEETINGS

The annual Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) Hunter Education Meeting took place from April 9-12<sup>th</sup> in Defiance, MO with representatives present from all 8 USFWS Region 3 States in attendance. Fabian Romero of the USFWS provided an update of USFWS national and regional R3 efforts and general guidance on eligible uses of Pittman-Robertson funds for R3 related activities.

Discussion continued between state R3 representatives regarding a Multi-state Regional R3 project. There was consensus by all states to move forward with the project. Megan Wisecup, Jeff Rawlinson, Keith Warnke – or a combination of these state R3 Coordinators – will present this idea at the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) June meeting. Iowa, Nebraska, and Wisconsin plan to work together to write a draft grant to be reviewed by WSFR.



The National R3 community has made significant progress to address the implementation of the National Hunting and Shooting Sports Action Plan (National Plan), and to advance hunting and shooting sports R3 efforts. In late 2018, the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports (Council) convened at the National R3 Implementation workgroup (IWG) to review the current adoption of R3 best practices and to identify factors that might be halting further implementation of the National Plan and hunting and shooting sports R3 efforts. Together, this workgroup of 24 R3 experts representing 10 states (including Iowa, Nebraska, and Wisconsin) and 14 organizations have dedicated more than 1,500 hours of work over the course of the initial five months. The IWG has documented 10 key R3

implementation priority areas with more than 74 different needs that the collective R3 community should address to achieve the ultimate goal of creating more hunting and target shooting participants.

Members of the IWG met during the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference and will be meeting again in Iowa on July 22 and 23rd to continue work on this very critical national effort.

A joint WAFWA/MWAFWA meeting was held in Tucson, AZ on January 6-7<sup>th</sup> and focused on National R3 efforts.



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