

# AFWA President's Task Force on Angler R3

*A Report of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies*

**March 2018**



# Recommendations from the President's Task Force on Angler Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation

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## Forward

The 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation (National Survey) contained both encouraging and discouraging results. Although angling participation has experienced an 8% increase since 2011, without an influx of new anglers over the next 20 years, fishing license sales can be expected to decrease. Growing participation in sport fishing, is critical to the future of conservation funding because the current aging population of anglers are dropping out of the sport at a faster rate than the number of youth entering it.

State agencies, our federal partners and industry must work together on recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) initiatives with an emphasis on youth and families. The 2017 Special Report on Fishing (Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) & Outdoor Foundation) emphasized that it is critical to engage potential anglers in meaningful fishing opportunities at an early age. Almost 83% of current adult participants were introduced to the sport of fishing during childhood. After the age of 12, it was much less likely for a person to try fishing. Based upon this information, RBFF's primary target audience includes multicultural families with children between the ages of 6 and 17. Spending time with family is a top priority for this group, and they want to try new things. Along with their grandparents, they represent more than 61 million people who enjoy some type of outdoor activity such as camping, hiking, canoeing or kayaking.

Attracting new customers is no longer simply about providing abundant and healthy fishery resources. It will require a commitment of agency resources and hard work to attract and engage a new population of anglers. States must fully understand population demographics, motivations, and barriers to fishing if we are to grow participation in this sport. In my home state of Pennsylvania, concern with these trends and long-term economic sustainability was the primary reason my agency contracted with Penn State University to analyze our business operations and formulate a plan that would provide the foundation for developing a business strategy (Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Business Analysis). Penn State examined opportunities for expense reduction as well as revenue growth. The marketing function within the agency was identified as a key area that needs more emphasis, since it should be recognized as the main driver of increased revenues.

Although the Task Force recognizes that there is no "one size fits all" solution for state fish and wildlife agencies, we encourage state directors to fully integrate R3 initiatives throughout their agencies and implement the recommendations contained in this report where possible. The keys to growing participation in the sport of fishing is in managing and improving the fisheries resources that we have and effectively designing and implementing an R3 program. This report will help guide that effort. In addition, partners such as, RBFF, the American Sportfishing Association (ASA), the sportfishing industry, our federal partners and fishing equipment manufacturers all stand ready to work with us to grow participation in our great sport and achieve the national goal of 60 million anglers in 60 months.

Finally, a Bravo Zulu to the R3 Task Force members for their input in developing this report.

Tight Lines,

John Arway, Executive Director, PA Fish and Boat Commission  
Chair, President's Task Force on Angler R3

## Executive Summary

The recommendations contained in this report will enable state fish and wildlife agencies to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their R3 efforts.

Though fishing participation is up 8.2% over the last five years, and is enjoying its highest participation numbers since 1991, there is still cause for concern. More than 45% of angling participants are approaching 50 years of age. During the next 25 years, these anglers will begin to age out of the sport. Without a significant commitment to recruitment, retention, and reactivation, state fish and wildlife agencies can expect a serious decline in angler participation.

The path to implementing effective R3 efforts will not be easy, as agency staffing and budget challenges are difficult to overcome. A reallocation of agency resources (both staff and funding) to R3 efforts will be essential if states are to implement strategic programs/outreach initiatives to recruit, retain and reactivate anglers. Currently, most aquatic education/angler R3 programs appear to be modestly funded, with 25 state agencies reporting overall aquatic education budgets of less than \$250,000.

Successful R3 efforts must have commitment from leadership, be strategic, developed based upon the best available information, and integrated throughout the agency workforce. Setting clear goals, objectives and outcomes derived from organizational objectives is an essential aspect of developing a successful R3 plan. In addition, evaluation of R3 activities is a critical element of a successful R3 program. If the program is not achieving the identified goals, the program should be modified or eliminated and agency efforts focused on a different R3 program.

Resources to help state agencies develop a comprehensive R3 strategy include:

- The Recommendations and Strategic Tools for Effective Angler Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation Efforts (Angler R3 Recommendations), from the Aquatic Resources Education Association and the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation;
- National Hunting and Shooting Sports Action Plan (National Action Plan) from the Wildlife Management Institute and the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports;
- Hunting, Fishing, Sport Shooting, and Archery Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation – A Practitioner’s Guide (R3 Handbook), from the National Shooting Sports Foundation and Responsive Management.

*“R3 is not another program, but instead a strategic effort to recalibrate existing programs and establish new ones, with a common objective to find ways to increase participation in angling, boating, and hunting, shooting sports and wildlife viewing. R3 efforts, to truly be integrated, should always ask ‘What’s next?’”*

Darin Moore, Director of Planning & Finance, VA Dept. Game & Inland Fisheries

## President's Task Force on Angler R3

CHARGE: Develop an assessment method to evaluate existing state engagement and capacity for delivering recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) programs for angling and to make recommendations for enhanced state agency leadership for R3 in the future.

### Task Force Recommendations

- 1. Commit to developing an angler R3 plan which identifies desired outcomes and objectives.**
- 2. Commit to reallocation of sufficient agency resources (staff and funding) to ensure that initiatives to recruit, retain and reactivate anglers can be successful.**
- 3. Commit to establishing a full-time Angler R3 Manager.**
- 4. Commit to Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Develop a complete system/database (electronic or other mechanism) to track and communicate with all agency customers.**
- 5. Commit to establishing a repository/clearinghouse where state agencies can share angler R3 efforts to include programs that were a success, as well as those that did not achieve the desired results, so that successful R3 efforts can be replicated.**

*"Anglers and recreational boaters help bolster many local economies in the pursuit of these American pastimes. We want to make sure to encourage more people to cast out their lines and get their boats out on the water. Partnerships like this are vital as we work to increase access to public lands and waters and pass on these traditions to future generations. "*

Ryan Zinke, Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior

(10/30/2017) at MOU signing to promote the goal of reaching 60 million annual recreational fishing participants by the end of the next 60 months.

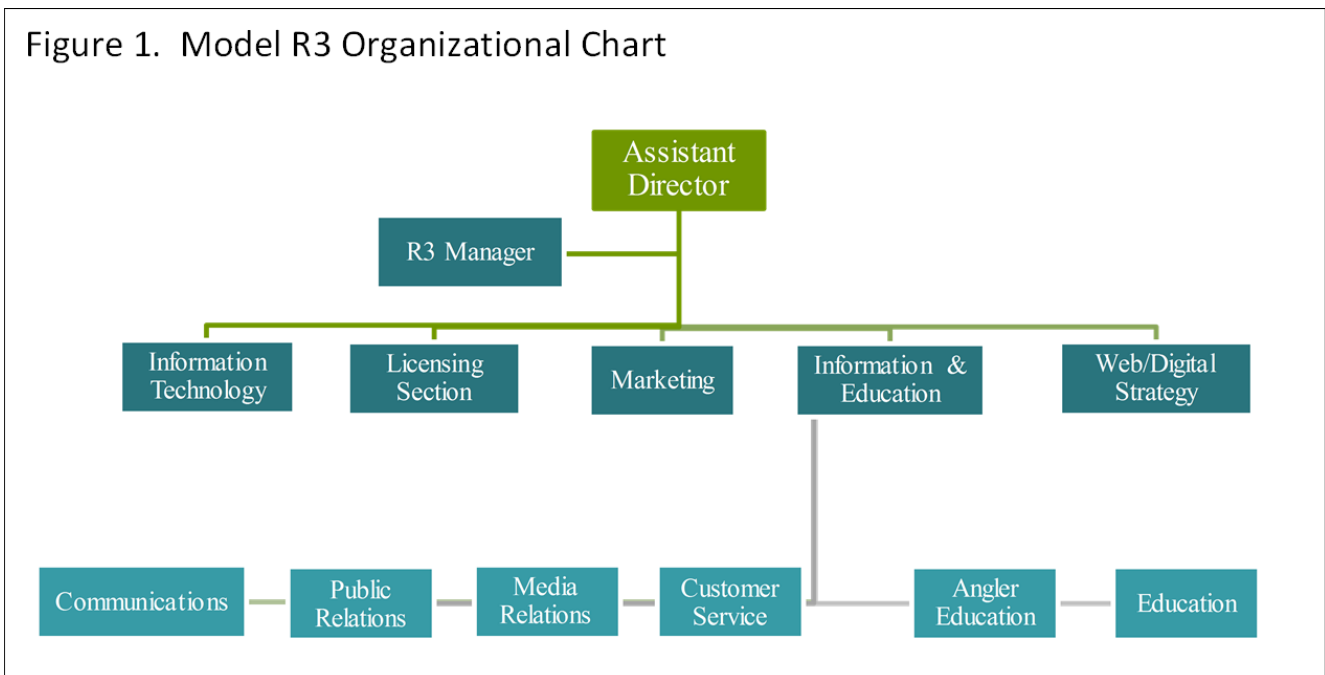
## Introduction

Many state directors have asked the question “What does a model R3 program look like?” Given the diversity of structure and responsibilities within each state fish and wildlife agency, there is no “one size fits all” in developing a comprehensive R3 program. However, a model program can be developed by implementing Task Force Recommendations 1 through 4.

A model program begins with a commitment of agency staff and funding to ensure that initiatives to recruit, retain, and reactivate anglers can be successful (see Figure 1). As few organizations are receiving more funding or hiring additional staff, accomplishing this objective will require a shift in agency priorities. The program must be integrated throughout the entire agency and draw on the disciplines of customer engagement, marketing, program evaluation, partnership building, communication, research and technology. A model program must also have a full-time Angler R3 Manager. This individual will oversee the agency’s R3 efforts, guide the development and implementation of the agencies Angler R3 plan, and remain focused 24/7 on helping the agency grow participation in angling.

The Northeast Conservation Information and Education Association (NCIEA), at the request of the Directors of the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, developed a model agency Information and Education Program (Conservation Information and Education: A Model Program; 2000). In this report, NCIEA identified the key functions of a model program that would meet the goals of fish and wildlife agencies and address the issues of agency reputation and credibility. The final report recommended that 15% of the agency’s budget resources should be committed to its information, education and marketing programs. In addition, McMurtry (Marketing for Dummies, 2017) suggests 2 to 3% of total projected sales as an appropriate budget for an organization’s marketing effort.

Figure 1. Model R3 Organizational Chart



## Recommendation 1

*Commit to developing an angler R3 plan which identifies desired outcomes and objectives.*

The Angler R3 Recommendations recognized that many states implementing angler R3 efforts have not developed an R3 plan that aligns the agency's expertise, capacity, and resources with a particular audience (or audiences) in need of an R3 intervention. For most of these agencies, their angler R3 efforts were developed without first identifying the highest priority target audiences within their scope of influence, and then designing strategies to address those audiences' barriers to fishing participation.

The importance of developing an angler R3 plan cannot be overemphasized. A well-developed plan will guide R3 decisions as well as changes in tactics necessary to move forward. Envisioning the future, setting goals and objectives, and formulating strategies to achieve those goals will enable state agencies to improve the effectiveness of angler R3 efforts. It is critical to conduct a programmatic assessment of the agency's current angler R3 effort-types using the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model (ORAM) (Appendix A) to:

- Determine the scope of current R3 efforts (recruitment, retention, and/or reactivation);
- Identify gaps in the state's or organization's R3 efforts to address all stages of the ORAM pathway. This tactic will be very helpful to identify areas where the state has not been adequately focusing R3 efforts;
- Highlight opportunities to link R3 efforts (e.g., link a recruitment effort to a retention effort) to provide next steps for participants and increase the impact of multiple efforts.

There are many components to consider as part of a state angler R3 plan development. A good plan will identify desired outcomes, objectives, angler R3 priorities, establish agency license/participation goals; incorporate a budget, marketing strategy, evaluation component, and action items using the ORAM as a guide. RBFF's Angler R3 Plan Development – A Guiding Document for State Agencies (Appendix B) is a good resource to help state agencies in developing an angler R3 plan.

An essential component of an angler R3 plan is a good marketing strategy. This approach will assist the agency in meeting both the goals of the organization, the needs of their constituents and ensure success of their R3 strategy. Marketing is much more than advertisements and

*“The commitment to develop an R3 strategy is a long-term investment by VA DGIF. Not only will it directly support our new mission statement and in particular our focus on connecting people to Virginia's wildlife and natural resources, it will play an integral role in developing sustainable wildlife management efforts that will be viewed as relevant to the next generation conservationists.”*

Bob Duncan, Executive Director  
VA Dept. Game & Inland Fisheries



promotion. It involves understanding constituents' needs and developing programs to meet those needs.

- ✓ **Task Force Finding** - A good R3 plan will provide a balance of recruitment, retention, and reactivation efforts, as well as leverage partnerships to assist in effort implementation. It is essential that the R3 strategy cover all aspects of the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model – Awareness; Interest; Trial; Adoption; Continuation.
- ✓ **Task Force Finding** - R3 plans should reinforce the agency's overarching strategic plan and obtain support from the agency's commission and R3 partners.
- ✓ **Task Force Finding** - The National Survey of angler participation and expenditures provides a valuable tool for states to assess the outcomes of angler R3 efforts. Therefore, it is essential that we strive for the best precision and accuracy in this survey.
- ✓ **Task Force Finding** - Assessing each angler R3 program against desired outcomes is an essential component of agency R3 efforts. However, in evaluating these programs it is important to ensure that they are given sufficient time to generate desired results, especially considering many R3 efforts are long-term endeavors.
- ✓ **Task Force Finding** - Successful programs should be strengthened while those that do not achieve desired outcomes should be modified or eliminated.
- ✓ **Task Force Finding** - States that utilized RBFF's Retention and Reactivation Toolkits have generated a significant return on investment ([www.takemefishing.org/r3](http://www.takemefishing.org/r3): AL, GA, NY & WY). These retention and reactivation efforts can have the greatest impact on angler participation at the lowest cost.
- ✓ **Task Force Finding** - State agencies should develop and implement a quality marketing plan that supports the R3 programs.

## Recommendation 2

*Commit to reallocation of sufficient agency resources (staff and funding) to ensure that initiatives to recruit, retain and reactivate anglers can be successful.*

Budget constraints and minimal staff support are a serious challenge faced by most state fish and wildlife agencies towards implementing an R3 strategy. The R3 Handbook recognizes this obstacle and suggests that "R3 programs and initiatives must therefore be implemented in such a way as to guarantee efficient use of limited resources and, in so doing, maximize the

*"Even if a director must reallocate staff and money from a traditional area to implement R3, it is the single most important thing you can do to grow outdoor participation and bolster agency support."*

Virgil Moore, AFWA President  
Director, Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game



likelihood of a return on investment. More important than the specifics of R3 planning and resource allocation, however, is recognition of a basic principle that must undergird all program design: the idea that scientific principles – the same parameters used to guide the management of fish and wildlife populations and their habitat—also be applied to the management and coordination of R3 efforts.”

The Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) Angler R3 Effort Survey (Angler R3 Survey), prepared by the Wildlife Management Institute and Bob Byrne Consulting, assessed state fish and wildlife agencies angler recruitment, retention, and reactivation efforts. The survey, completed by representatives from all 50 state fish and wildlife agencies and the District of Columbia, was designed to assess all angler recruitment, retention, and reactivation efforts being conducted by state fish and wildlife agencies and partners and to document the amount of resources being directed to angler R3 efforts.

Most agencies represented in the Angler R3 Survey did not track their aquatic education/angler R3 budgets in a manner that permitted respondents to provide reliable estimates of their angler R3 budget allocations. It appears that angler R3 budgets within agencies are usually embedded within general aquatic education funds, and very few agencies segment that general budget by angler R3 efforts and programs designed to create more anglers versus those designed to educate participants about aquatic conservation.

As a result, the information provided in the Angler R3 Survey should be best viewed as a general overview of R3 funding. Overall, most aquatic education/angler R3 programs within agencies appear to be modestly funded. Sixteen agencies reported budgets of less than \$100,000, and an additional nine agencies reported budgets of \$100,000-\$250,000. However, 19 agencies reported having more robust budgets more than \$250,000; three of these agencies reported budgets of more than \$1,000,000.

The Angler R3 Survey further revealed there has been no shortage of state efforts to grow participation in fishing. However, recruitment efforts clearly dominate agency R3 activities, with considerably less effort committed to angler retention and reactivation. Most of the existing recruitment programs focus heavily on the initial stages of angling and offer little in terms of additional trial or other opportunities. States reported that a total of 22,757 individual angler R3 efforts were conducted in 2016 by state agencies and their partners. However, only 8% of the total angler R3 efforts are being evaluated for ultimate outcomes.

Finally, the Angler R3 Survey also documented at that time that ten agencies had staff positions specifically dedicated to angler R3 efforts. In addition, sixteen states had created an agency R3 coordination team and 19 states had reported having combined angler and hunter R3 teams. Although 80% of state agencies do not currently have staff dedicated solely to angler R3 efforts, progress is being made as many agencies have expressed interest in incorporating a comprehensive strategic approach to implementing angler R3 in their state.

- ✓ **Task Force Finding** – Staff constraints are always a serious challenge for state agencies. A comprehensive review of existing programs may reveal efficiencies that can enhance R3 efforts. As staff retire, a thorough position assessment should be conducted and if feasible reassigned to an R3 venue within the agency.

- ✓ **Task Force Finding** - The need for dedicated R3 staff, a broad-based intra-agency coordination committee, and increased communications and cooperation between angling, hunting and shooting sports are an integral component of creating a successful R3 program.

### Recommendation 3

#### *Commit to establishing a full-time Angler R3 Manager.*

R3 is agency-wide and everyone has a role. State angler R3 efforts must have a leader such as an Angler R3 Manager (See Appendix C – Angler R3 Position Description Template) to oversee the agency’s angler R3 efforts and lead the agency’s angler R3 planning efforts. The Angler R3 Manager provides effective guidance and program management to both internal and external stakeholders regarding the recruitment, retention, and reactivation of anglers. This individual provides expertise and collaborates with agency staff and external partners to develop and advance state angler R3 strategies, ensures agency staff and partner buy-in to R3 programs, and builds capacity for implementing best practices for successful R3 outcomes.

*“It is essential to have an angler R3 manager oversee the development and implementation of the agency’s R3 plan, however R3 isn’t any one person’s responsibility, it must be woven into the job description and work plan of every employee in our agency if we are to affect meaningful change”.*

Paul Johansen  
Chief, Wildlife Resources Section  
West Virginia DNR

The Angler R3 Manager should lead a cross-divisional team to develop a state R3 plan that identifies strategic goals, objectives, and programs for R3 that are consistent with the agency’s strategic plan and national goals. The Angler R3 Manager will be responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with community and business partners to enhance program offerings and meet agency goals.

As many as 23 states have hired angler and/or hunter R3 coordinators/managers, but it is important to recognize that the skillsets required for this person to be successful are very different than that of the traditional biologist conducting research, and that hiring an R3 coordinator is only the first step to developing an R3 program that utilizes best practices. R3 must be integrated throughout the entire agency, which represents an organizational shift for many states, but one that is critical if outdoor participation is to grow.

- ✓ **Task Force Finding** – The Angler R3 Manager should be a part of the agency’s top-level management team, or at the very least report to an assistant director who has influence with process decisions. The benefits of this reporting system include: an increased focus on R3 as an agency priority, consistency of R3 effort throughout agency units, and enhanced staff and partner support for R3.

## Recommendation 4

***Commit to Customer Relationship Management (CRM). Develop a complete system/database (electronic or other mechanism) to track and communicate with all agency customers.***

Customer relationship management is a term that refers to practices, strategies, and technologies that a state can use to manage and analyze customer interactions and data throughout the customer lifecycle. These management practices will improve business relationships with customers, assist in angler retention, and ultimately drive license sales.

Although the focus is often on license sales, data should be compiled on customers across different channels and points of contact with each customer. Examples could include the agency's website, attendance at events, telephone, email, direct mail, marketing materials, and social media. A unique customer ID# should be established for each individual and readily available to all employees who are involved in any related R3 efforts. It would be valuable to design or reconfigure the agency license database to incorporate the ability to track individual license purchasers through time (from pre- to post-license purchases). This information can be used to facilitate the customer's pathway to long-term angling, for example, sending license renewal reminders, advertising fisheries resource updates, announcing skills training resources (events, self-learning tools), and discovering customer needs and barriers to participation.

When the state agency successfully drives a potential angler through the ORAM process from "angling awareness" to "license purchase," the process should not end with the purchase of a license. It is important to maintain contact with this customer and keep them engaged in angling (retention). The goal should be to create a loyal angling supporter that will be the agency's best angling advocate.

Data dashboards are an example of a CRM tool that provides a visual representation of key license and permit sales trends plus participation shifts within key demographic categories. These dashboards provide an overview of metrics such as participation, recruitment and license renewal rates, broken down across categories such as age, residency and gender. Knowing license-buying trends among different customer groups, as well as understanding if marketing efforts are succeeding, is important if agencies are to make smart strategic and program planning decisions. Data dashboards enable state agency staff to easily investigate trends and patterns in participation and enable state agencies to focus their limited R3 resources on areas where adjustments and changes are needed.

*"Today's customers expect a swift response, personalized feedback, interaction with a live person, and want to make informed decisions. We must engage customers through a variety of methods, use strategic messaging and remind customers of the fun associated with fishing and boating."*

Tony Wasley, Director  
Nevada Department of Wildlife

Timely, accurate participation data and trends will help state agencies:

- Better market and sell licenses by knowing who's buying what, providing angler and hunter demographics, sales by license type, and more
  - Improve R3 strategies and tactics based on consistent, reliable metrics
  - Track individuals' license-buying and churn patterns
  - Connect R3 program participants to license databases
  - Increase agency buy-in for R3 and marketing efforts by using reliable evaluation data
- ✓ **Task Force Finding** - The license purchasing process needs to be simple and intuitive. Reducing barriers is critical for customers who are looking for a quick route to purchase. Time to purchase is a key factor with electronic customers.
- ✓ **Task Force Finding** - State agencies not using data dashboards should employ this tool, not only to help boost internal understanding and buy-in for the agency's strategic initiatives, but to collectively track trends across all states. This allows for smarter, more effective and ultimately increased investments in future recruitment, retention and reactivation efforts.
- ✓ **Task Force Finding** - States that are not collecting emails or cell phone numbers need to develop a strategy to build this database. Emails and text messaging both can be cost effective tools in implementing R3 efforts.

## Recommendation 5

*Commit to establishing a repository/clearinghouse where state agencies can share angler R3 efforts to include programs that were a success, as well as those that did not achieve the desired results, so that successful R3 efforts can be replicated.*

The R3 Handbook suggests as an action item that "A national "umbrella" program that serves hunting, fishing, sport shooting and archery may have utility, as coordination of programs minimizes wasteful duplication of efforts and ensures that gaps are not left unaddressed."

The angling and boating elements of [RBFF's website](#) already provides a solid foundation for a national R3 angling and boating clearinghouse. This site contains a Resource Center with a wealth of information on topics such as angling and boating research trends,

*"As a supporter of RBFF's 60 in 60 Campaign, Florida has successfully used many of the methods from their Angler Retention and Reactivation Toolkits to help increase Florida's total number of licensed anglers. We are fully committed to implementing Florida's R3 Fishing Plan and growing angler participation in Florida."*

Eric Sutton, Executive Director  
Florida Fish and Wildlife  
Conservation Commission

R3 resources, R3 toolkits, and state R3 program case studies and examples.

Many of these case studies were funded through RBFF's State R3 Program Grants. Currently, RBFF budgets up to \$150,000 to help fund state programs that are sustainable and replicable angler and boater recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) initiatives and plans that focus on increasing fishing license sales and boat registrations. State agencies receiving funding create a case study, with RBFF staff assistance, and provide insights and learnings about a variety of R3 strategies that are shared with other state agencies.

The R3 Handbook also recognizes the importance of networking and the extensive discussions that networking engenders among R3 stakeholders. As with a national repository, the open communications, exchange of ideas and learning through others "experiences" while interacting face to face at conferences was considered invaluable. Workshops where many R3 stakeholders can interact and learn from one another, such as occur at regional AFWA R3 Committee meetings and the RBFF State Marketing Workshop, provide an excellent venue for greater collaboration amongst R3 coordinators. All four regions of AFWA have established a regional R3 Committee to serve as the region's principal forum for discussing, gathering information and/or identifying actions relative to all aspects of R3 issues.

To provide continuing education and opportunities for networking amongst R3 practitioners, RBFF, the Council to Advance Hunting & the Shooting Sports and the Wildlife Management Institute have partnered with the USFWS National Conservation Training Center and the AFWA Management Assistance Team to offer training for state and federal R3 coordinators and practitioners. The R3 Training is scheduled for June 11-14, 2018. This R3 Training will include four focal areas: 1. Developing R3 planning 2. Evaluation and program assessment 3. Customer engagement/marketing and 4. Partner engagement and coordination.

- ✓ **Task Force Finding** - States need to establish an inventory of their R3 efforts, including efforts that have worked and programs that have not. The exchange of this information with anglers, the conservation community and other states will enhance their R3 efficiencies.
- ✓ **Task Force Finding** - RBFF maintains a website that contains examples of state R3 programs and case studies. Placing state R3 inventories in this one location will establish a national repository of R3 angling and boating efforts available all states, conservation organizations, and industry groups to replicate.
- ✓ **Task Force Finding** – Workshops, meetings and conferences, such as Regional R3 meetings, RBFF's annual State Marketing Workshop, NCTC R3 Continuing Education Training and the National R3 Symposium, provide valuable training/networking opportunities for R3 practitioners. State directors need to support staff attendance at these meetings.

## Summary

More than 75 years ago state fish and wildlife agencies launched a massive effort to restore the nation's fish and wildlife. Utilizing well educated trained professionals many wildlife species were brought back from the edge of extinction. Though wildlife management challenges still exist today, a new and even more daunting challenge looms on the horizon – the issue of relevancy and declining interest in outdoor participation. More than 45% of angling participants are approaching 50 years of age. During the next 25 years, these anglers will begin to age out of the sport. Without a significant commitment to recruitment, retention, and reactivation, state fish and wildlife agencies can expect a serious decline in angler participation.

*“We need to wake up every day and think about R3 related strategies if we are going to succeed with the objective of increasing participation in angling and boating.”*

Carter Smith, Executive Director  
Texas Parks and Wildlife

Just like the response to wildlife challenges of 75 years ago, the time has come to mount a similar effort to recruit and retain new outdoor participants. However, this cannot be accomplished through the efforts of one person. It will require a significant effort by state agencies creating new partnerships and utilizing trained professionals with a different skill set than that of traditional fish and wildlife biologists. Success will require employing professionals with an expertise in communications, marketing, education and social sciences to develop R3 programs that will result in meaningful change.

A path to implementing effective R3 efforts will not be easy, as agency staffing and budget challenges are difficult to overcome. Perhaps a hard look at agency organization, priorities and an assessment of all programs is a good starting point to identifying staff and funding that could be re-addressed to effective R3 efforts.

It is important to develop a strategic R3 plan that aligns the organization's expertise, capacity, and resources to guide agency efforts and leverage partnerships on angler recruitment, retention, and reactivation. These efforts need to transport the participant through recruitment to retention and ultimately life-long advocacy. However, research has documented a very high churn rate among anglers, which results in a relatively low retention rate for existing anglers. Therefore, the most effective strategies to increase angler participation (and increase fishing license purchases) are those that reduce angler churn rates. This will require organizations to devote or re-direct resources to angler retention and/or reactivation efforts, and to establish partnerships with other organizations to help sustain recruitment efforts.

The traditional path to fishing occurs at a very young age and the angler is typically first introduced to the sport by a family member or relative. Research indicates that most anglers took their first fishing trip prior to the age of ten, almost all by the age of 18, and after that, it is very difficult to create a new angler. Because of this research, RBFF's primary target audience

includes multicultural families with children between the ages of 6 and 17. Spending time with family is a top priority for this group, and they want to try new things. Along with their grandparents, they represent more than 61 million people who enjoy some type of outdoor activity such as camping, hiking, canoeing or kayaking. States should also consider this group as a focal area.

It comes as no surprise that people have less free time, and as such, we, as providers of outdoor recreation, must compete for that time. Angling, boating, hunting, shooting sports, and watchable wildlife are all in competition for people's recreational time and other outdoor interests. This Task Force Report has five key recommendations and provides a structure for a prototype angler R3 program that can ensure the growth of participation in fishing. For this effort to succeed, it is critical that agency administrators develop and communicate the agency's role and R3 direction. It is also imperative that as the angler R3 plan/direction is developed, it is formulated within the overall agency strategic plan.



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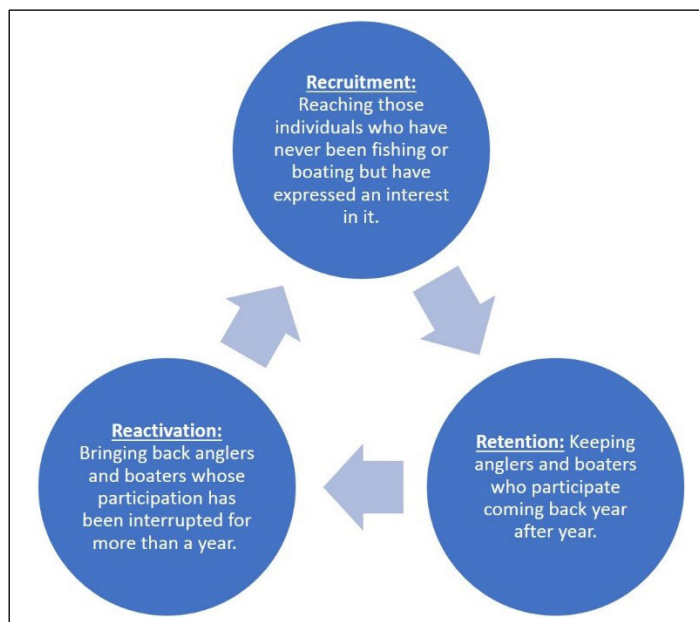
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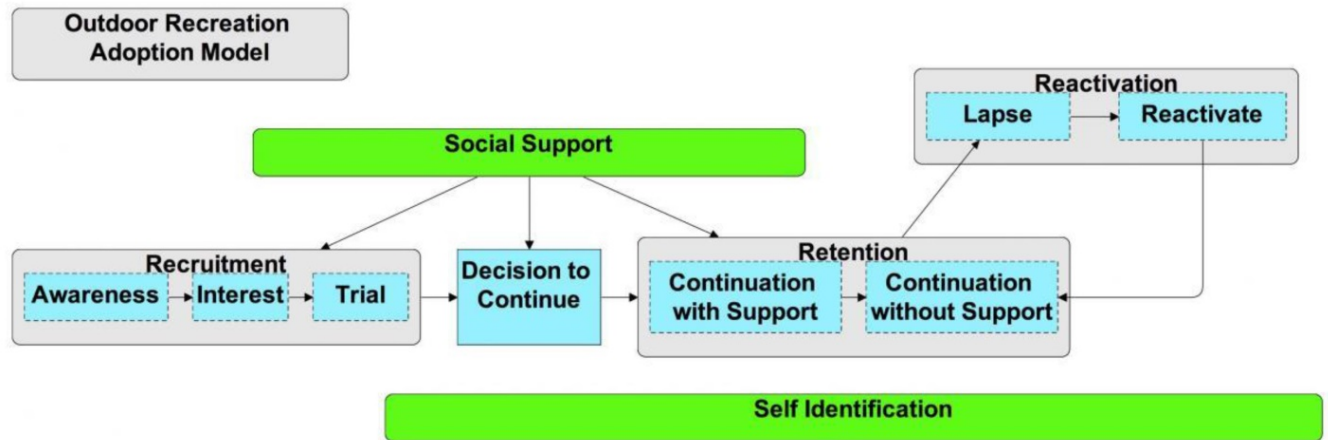
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## Appendix A

### Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model (ORAM)



## Appendix B

### Angler R3 Plan Development – A Guiding Document for State Agencies



**To: State Fish & Wildlife Agencies**

**From: Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF)**

RBFF, in partnership with the Aquatic Resources Education Association (AREA), released the [Recommendations and Strategic Tools for Effective Angler Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation \(R3\) Efforts](#) (Angler R3 Recommendations) to enable state agencies, nongovernment organizations and industry to improve the effectiveness of angler R3 efforts nationally.

As part of the Angler R3 Recommendations, it is recommended that state agencies develop a strategic plan for their angler R3 efforts. There are many components to consider as part of your state angler R3 plan development, from identifying angler R3 priorities to including marketing and outreach components to developing appropriate budgets and timeframes.

The following document was developed as a resource to help state agencies in developing an angler R3 plan for their state. Also included are an Angler R3 Effort Worksheet and a Resources List to help in the angler R3 planning process.

#### **Background/National Trends**

RBFF's mission is to increase participation in fishing and boating, thereby protecting and restoring the nation's aquatic natural resources. As part of its mission, RBFF collaborates with stakeholders and state partners to develop, implement and evaluate effective recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) efforts.

Our industry is facing an incredible challenge. Current participation trends show younger, more diverse audiences are reluctant to take up fishing and boating, all while older white males are aging out of the sport. To address this challenge head-on, RBFF embarked on a grand effort to engage the community in growing participation from 46 million participants in 2016 to **60 million anglers in 60 months**, by December 2021.

RBFF focuses on consumer engagement/recruitment through its consumer-brand campaigns, Take Me Fishing™ and Vamos A Pescar™; while also offering a variety of tools to help state agencies with their retention and reactivation efforts. State agencies have the advantage of gathering and maintaining valuable customer license data, to be able to communicate and market to anglers.

#### **Additional Considerations**

Many state agencies have found success in having an R3 coordinator for their agency as part of their state R3 planning process. As part of your R3 plan development, consider hiring an R3 coordinator or designating a lead for coordinating your agency's R3 efforts and overseeing your agency's R3 plan.

Additionally, you might consider establishing an R3 coordinating committee composed of agencies and/or organizations that address R3 issues as part of your R3 planning and coordination. We recommend considering a committee with representation from a broad cross-section within the agency (administration, IT, law enforcement, education, outreach, and wildlife and fisheries programs, etc.) and/or key R3 partners.

## Angler R3 Plan Development – Guiding Document for State Agencies

This document was developed as a resource to help state agencies in developing an angler R3 plan for their state.

### Situation Analysis + Key Insights

In addition to national trends, consider what is happening at the state-level in terms of population, participation trends, demographics, etc.

Develop a snapshot of your agency's current situation. Consider the cooperative environment (groups or individuals who have a vested interest in your objectives and mission), competitive environment (anyone/group competing with you for resources/sales), economic environment (high inflation, unemployment rate, changes in technology), social environment (current norms/attitudes, changes in values, business practices), political environment (attitudes and reactions of the general public), and legal environment (federal, state and local legislation).

Another way to look at this is to list your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis).

- What is your competitive advantage? What products or experiences do you offer?
  - Is there opportunity to reach an untapped market?
  - What is your current churn/customer loyalty?
  - How would you rank your customer service ability?
- As part of your situation analysis, assess and map your agency's angler R3 efforts using the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model (ORAM). Determine the scope of current R3 efforts and how they address identified threats to participation. See p.5-6 and Appendix B in the Angler R3 Recommendations.

### Goals & Objectives

Determine your agency's R3 goal(s) and objectives. Objectives should be derived from organizational objectives/mission, and should be stated as standards of performance or tasks to be achieved by certain dates. Overall, develop SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time specific) objectives and goals (long or short-term). Examples: Increase fishing license sales by 10% by December 31, 2021; Increase quantity of emails in database by 15% by December 31, 2018; Increase total visitors to license webpage by 10% by June 30, 2018.

- What is your agency's R3 goal(s) and what do you intend to accomplish?
  - How does your R3 goal(s) support your agency mission?
  - Do your R3 efforts support each of the stages in the ORAM? Are there gaps?
  - How do/will your R3 efforts help achieve your R3 goal(s)?
  - What are the metrics for assessing your R3 efforts?
- Incorporate ongoing evaluation to optimize campaign/program tactics and components, and make adjustments accordingly. Refer to the Resources List for evaluation resources.

### Target Audience

Develop a simple, one-paragraph profile of your customers/target audience(s).

- What is the general interest of your target audience(s)? What is the size of your target audience(s)?
- What does your target audience(s) need? What must be done to satisfy those needs?

Describe in terms of demographics, age, income, lifestyle, other interests within your agency/crossover (i.e. state parks, ATV, hunting, boating). Present and rank potential target audiences in terms of profitability, loyalty, lifetime value, etc.

## **Communication Plan + Key Messaging**

Develop effective communication efforts to notify customers and participants of potential opportunities to participate in activities. The media mix and messages to reach your audience(s) are vital to execute a successful marketing plan. Consider separate messaging for various target audience segments, depending on factors such as purchase patterns.

Tactics: How will you reach your target audience(s)? Some potential tactics/media mix include: TV, digital video, internet/paid search, print advertising, outdoor billboards, radio, email/direct mail campaign, and social media. Tactics you select must reach your target audience(s) when and where they'll be most receptive to your message.

## **Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System/Database Considerations**

Design or reconfigure license purchase databases to incorporate the ability to track individual license purchasers through time (from pre- to post-license purchases). Collect detailed contact information (phone number, email, mailing address) that can be used to implement targeted communications and marketing strategies to selected audiences.

Customer information can be used to facilitate the customer's pathway to long-term angling. For example, sending license renewal reminders; advertising fisheries resource updates; announcing skills training resources (events, self-learning tools); and discovering customer needs and barriers to participation.

## **Budget/Resources**

Assess staff allocated to angler R3, their expertise and their program budgets so that internal and external angler R3 efforts are effectively coordinated to target identified threats to angler participation.

## **Build & Implement Your R3 Plan**

Consider the following steps to help guide your overall R3 plan development.

- Assess staff and resources allocated to R3 efforts to determine existing R3 capacity
- Identify R3 priorities and threats to target
- Determine timelines for R3 efforts – short-term vs. long-term
- Determine what's working and what's not
- Identify R3 opportunities for future successes
- Dedicate resources (staff, budget) to provide a balance of R3 efforts
- Consider reallocation needs and how best to allocate resources to support R3 priorities
- Identify and leverage partnerships to assist in implementation of R3 efforts

Evaluate each step of your plan to ensure results can be measured against all objectives. If deviations exist between actual and planned results, adjustments should be made towards achieving objectives.

Remember these eight P's when creating your marketing plan:

- *People* – What is the target market; size and growth potential?
- *Profit* – Expected revenue/profit from implementing the plan? How will achievements be evaluated?
- *Personnel* – What personnel or committee will be involved in implementing the plan? Internal and external teams?
- *Product* – What products are offered? What variations could be offered based on purchase patterns, customer insights?
- *Price* – What price(s) are products sold for? Any ability to modify the prices of products?
- *Promotion* – How will information about product's offerings be communicated?
- *Place* – How, when, where are products sold? Incentives to locations who sell products?
- *Period* – How long of a period will the plan be in effect? Timing of when the plan should be implemented and schedule of executing and evaluating plan activities?



## Worksheet for Each Angler R3 Effort

Once you have mapped your angler R3 efforts on the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model (ORAM), the following Worksheet is designed to help assess **each of your existing angler R3 efforts**. Definitions for Angler R3 Effort-types can be found on p.17-22 in the [Recommendations and Strategic Tools for Effective Angler Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation \(R3\) Efforts](#).

Name of Angler R3 Effort:

1. What is the objective(s)?

- What do you want people to do as a result of this R3 effort?
- Is the objective measurable?
- What does success look like?

2. What threat(s) is the R3 effort addressing?

3. What is the timeline for the R3 effort?

4. Who is the target audience?

- What do you know about them?
- Why is this group important?
- Are you reaching the target audience?

5. How are you communicating to the target audience about the R3 effort?

- Communications/outreach/marketing efforts
  - Marketing plan: specific vehicles/tactics
  - Communications plan: specific vehicles/tactics

6. How is the R3 effort being implemented?

- Strategies/tactics



7. How is the R3 effort being evaluated?

- What are the metrics for assessment?
- Results chain for the R3 effort
- What are the outputs?
- What are the outcomes?

8. How are you communicating with the target audience after the R3 effort?

9. How is/could the R3 effort connect with a next step in the ORAM?

10. What is the type of support needed?

- Funding
- Staffing
- Technology
- Other resources

11. Needs assessment

- What do you currently have or what do you need?
- Are there efficiencies in coordinating efforts between divisions?

12. Are there partners that can assist with needs?

- What are the strengths of your partner(s)?
- What does your R3 program have to offer?
- Benefits of a partnership



## Resources List

Following is a list of resources to help you throughout your angler R3 planning process. Resources to help provide additional guidance and information.

- [Recommendations and Strategic Tools for Effective Angler Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation \(R3\) Efforts](#)
  - List of Angler R3 Threats
  - Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model (ORAM)
- [Highlights of Angler Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation \(R3\) Literature](#)
- Toolkits:
  - [Direct Mail & Email Marketing Toolkit to Reactivate Lapsed Anglers](#)
  - [First-Time Buyers Retention Email Campaign Toolkit](#)
  - [RBFF 60 in 60 Digital Toolkit](#) – Includes state 60 in 60 license sales goals
- [Best Practices Workbook for Boating, Fishing and Aquatic Resources Stewardship Education](#)
  - [Best Practices Guide to Program Evaluation](#)
- [RBFF Research](#)
- Demographics Links:
  - [American FactFinder, US Census Bureau](#) – Find popular facts and frequently requested data about your community
  - [Pew Research Center](#) – Hispanic trends

## Appendix C

### Angler R3 Coordinator/Manager Position Description Template

## Angler R3 Coordinator/Manager Position Description Template

### Job Summary

The Angler R3 Coordinator/Manager provides effective guidance and program management to both internal and external stakeholders with regard to the recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) of anglers. The Angler R3 Coordinator/Manager provides expertise and collaborates with agency staff and external partners to develop and advance state angler R3 strategies and build capacity for implementing best practices for successful R3 outcomes. The Angler R3 Coordinator/Manager will lead an intra-agency, cross-divisional team to develop a state R3 strategic plan that identifies strategic goals, objectives and programs for R3 that are consistent with national goals. The Angler R3 Coordinator/Manager will be responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with community and business partners to enhance program offerings and meet agency goals.

### Duties and Responsibilities

- Coordinate the development and implementation of a state R3 plan for the recruitment, retention and reactivation of anglers, to include collaboration with program staff in developing, implementing and evaluating effective programs.
- Work with agency communications and marketing staff in developing relevant and engaging content and delivering effective outreach and customer engagement strategies.
- Work with agency IT staff in developing and managing effective customer relationship management systems to evaluate and track angler participation.
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with agency staff, external organizations and agency partners from the outdoor recreational community, as well as the general public.
- Manage the agency R3 team, as well as stakeholder committees, working groups and planning teams as needed.
- Develop and administer evaluation strategies and program tracking to assess effectiveness of R3 strategies.
- Assess resources and develop strategies and budget needed for effective implementation of agency R3 initiatives.

### Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in communications, marketing, education, management, social sciences or a related field.
- 3-5 years of experience planning, developing, implementing and evaluating programs, products or services to facilitate business need.
- Working knowledge of basic marketing principles and customer engagement strategies.
- Knowledge of program design process, needs assessment, program analysis and evaluation methodology.
- Knowledge of natural resources and outdoor recreation topics and issues a plus.
- Knowledge of program management best practices to include budget development and management. Knowledge of governmental budget and legislative processes a plus.
- Experience in building successful working relationships with local entities and organized groups.
- Team building and leadership skills necessary to bring together diverse interests to accomplish common objectives.
- Experience facilitating diverse groups of stakeholders.

- Demonstrated ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing. Effective interpersonal, presentation and public speaking skills.
- Ability to work independently as well as in small groups to achieve program and agency goals.
- Solid project management skills. Proven ability to manage multiple projects concurrently.
- Knowledge of various social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- Skilled in use of software programs to include Microsoft Office products.
- Knowledge and experience participating in outdoor recreational activities such as fishing. Knowledge of fishing programs and activities for families and children a plus.

### **Preferred Qualifications**

- Experience in planning, implementing and measuring the success of R3 programs or public or educational outreach programs at a regional, statewide or national level.
- Demonstrated strategic planning and budget development expertise.

## **RBFF R3 Resources** <https://www.takemefishing.org/r3/>

### **State R3 Program Examples/One-Pagers:**

1. [GA's First-Time Buyer Retention Program](#)
2. [GA's Email Reactivation Marketing Campaigns](#)
3. [NY Email Retention and Reactivation Marketing Campaigns](#)
4. [IA "Gone Fishing" Digital Media Campaign and Tourism Partnership](#)
5. [NE Fishing Recruitment Program On-Site Permit Sales and Participant Marketing and Tracking](#)
6. [GA Boat Registration Interactive Voice Response System to Retain Boaters](#)
7. [NE Auto-Trigger Customer Care Emails](#)
8. [VT "Reel Fun Vermont" Campaign](#)

### **General R3 Resources:**

1. [Recommendations and Strategic Tools for Effective Angler Recruitment, retention, and reactivation \(R3\) Efforts](#)  
Prepared by the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) and Bob Byrne Consulting, this document is a work product of the partnership between the Aquatic Resources Education Association (AREA) and RBFF. Developed with the support and contributions of the Angler R3 State Agency Working Group, this document provides recommendations and strategic tools to enable state agencies, nongovernment organizations and industry to improve the effectiveness of angler recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) efforts nationally.
2. [Highlights of Angler Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation \(R3\) Literature](#)  
Prepared by Bob Byrne Consulting for RBFF and the Aquatic Resources Education Association (AREA), this review summarizes recent literature on angler recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3), including angler numbers, behaviors, churn rates, trends, motivations, barriers, potential marketing strategies and other issues that may affect R3 efforts. This literature review is part of a larger RBFF-AREA partnership project, with the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI), to develop angler R3 guidelines to provide a framework for industrywide angler R3 programs.
3. [Direct Mail & Email Marketing Toolkit to Reactivate Lapsed Anglers](#)  
Reactivating lapsed anglers is vital to growing participation in fishing. This audience has already shown interest in fishing; they might just need a quick reminder to get back into fishing. Through the Fishing License Marketing Program, RBFF tested, refined and implemented direct mail and email resources to successfully reactivate anglers in up to 40 states. These resources have been organized into a step-by-step guide that provides straightforward instructions to plan, execute and manage your agency's lapsed angler license renewal program.  
[View GA's Email Results](#)  
[Download the Toolkit](#)  
[Download the direct mail and email native files](#)

4. [First-Time Buyers Retention Email Campaign Toolkit](#)

Retaining anglers, especially first-time license buyers, is an important part of keeping anglers engaged in fishing and increasing participation. In 2015, the RBFF partnered with the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division to implement a retention pilot program targeting first-time fishing license buyers to increase fishing license renewal rates. This toolkit contains email templates and steps to implement a program to retain first-time license buyers in your state.

[View the Overall Information](#)

[View Results via Video](#)

[Download the Toolkit](#)

[Download Native Email Files](#)

5. [Best Practices Workbook For Boating, Fishing, and Aquatic Resource Stewardship Education](#)

Created in 2000 by RBFF's Education Task Force for state fish and wildlife agency aquatic educators, and updated in 2010, Best Practices represents the best knowledge available for program planning, development and implementation, professional development, program evaluation and educational program research about teaching boating, fishing and stewardship of aquatic resources. Best Practices is designed to provide clear and actionable tools for aquatic educators that are research-based and tested. Companion Evaluation Guide also available.

[Best Practices Workbook](#)

[Best Practices Guide to Program Evaluation](#)

6. [Boat Registration Reactivation Program](#)

The Boat Registration Reactivation Program, initiated nationwide in 2012, includes outreach to lapsed boaters who haven't renewed their boat registration for at least one season. The program is a partnership with state agencies and is funded entirely by RBFF, with the state agency receiving all of the revenue that the programs generate.

7. [State R3 Program Grants](#)

RBFF's State Program Grants help fund state programs that are sustainable and replicable angler and boater recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) initiatives that focus on increasing fishing license sales and boat registrations to help achieve 60 million anglers in 60 months.

8. [RBFF Webinar Series](#)

In an initiative designed to help state agencies optimize their marketing strategies and tactics, RBFF has taken the content most requested by our state agency partners and developed webinars to address these topics.

9. [Hispanic Toolkit](#)



RBFF has a variety of tools for stakeholders to help them focus more strategically and effectively on Hispanic boater and angler recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) efforts.

10. [Fishing and Boating Research](#)

To better understand recreational boating and fishing and aquatic resource stewardship, RBFF works with a variety of market research and consulting firms. Final reports are posted for a number of market research studies commissioned by RBFF.