BEST PRACTICES WORKBOOK

for Hunting and Shooting

Recruitment and Retention

About the National Shooting Sports Foundation

National Shooting Sports Foundation is the trade association for the shooting, hunting and firearms industry. Formed in 1961, NSSF is a non-profit organization with a membership of 2,500 manufacturers, distributors, retailers, sportsmen's organizations and publishers.

Trusted leadership

NSSF provides trusted leadership to address industry challenges and deliver programs and services to meet our members' needs. In particular, NSSF focuses on advancing hunting and shooting sports. We reaffirm and strengthen our members' commitment to the safe and responsible use of their products. NSSF also promotes a political climate supportive of America's traditional firearms rights.

Public relations for shooting sports

NSSF has led industry efforts to build a positive future for hunting and shooting sports nationwide. By creating and supervising award-winning marketing and communication programs, NSSF fosters better understanding of recreational firearms use and promotes active participation in all shooting sports.

Building hunter and shooter participation

NSSF is a national leader in providing programs, funding and support for hunting, shooting and wildlife management efforts.

American Wildlife Conservation Partners: NSSF is a member of this organization of wildlife and conservation interests that presents recommendations to the White House on priority issues for wildlife and conservation. (www.conservationforum.org/nwcp)

Becoming an Outdoorswoman: NSSF is an original sponsor and continues support of this recruitment program for women. (www.uwsp.edu/cnr/bow)

Big Brothers Big Sisters: NSSF works with this former STEP OUTSIDE® partner and is a founder of their Pass It On program. (www.outdoormentors.org)

Boy Scouts of America Jamboree: In 2005, NSSF conducted a "Junior USA Shooting" air rifle event that allowed scouts to earn their 2005 patch and a special chevron. More than 6,000 scouts participated – about 100 an hour for 10 days.

Council for Wildlife Conservation and Education℠: A nonprofit organization that distributes conservation education materials to public and private schools. A NSSF affiliate. (http://unendangeredspecies.com/)

Families Afield℠: In partnership with National Wild Turkey Federation and the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance, NSSF works to increase opportunities for youth in states with restrictive hunting regulations. (www.familiesafield.org)

First Shots℠: A shooting program that provides quality instruction, emphasizes handgun safety and gives newcomers an opportunity to give shooting a try. (www.firstshots.org)

Hunting Heritage Accord: NSSF is a signer of the North American Hunting Heritage Accord as part of its work on the Hunting Heritage Steering Committee. Copies of the Accord are available from the Wildlife Management Institute. (www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org)

International Hunter Education Association: NSSF provided a $1 million challenge grant to assist in developing an online hunter education class to reduce barriers to hunter education. (www.ihea.com)

National Hunting & Fishing Day®: In 1972, Congress and President Richard Nixon established the fourth Saturday in September as a special day to recognize hunters and anglers for their contributions to America's conservation movement. Founded by NSSF and managed by the Wonders of Wildlife Museum. (www.nhfday.org)

National Wild Turkey Federation: NSSF supports its two exceptional recruitment programs, Women in the Outdoors and Wheelin' Sportsmen. (www.womenintheoutdoors.org) (www.wheelinsportsmen.org)

STEP OUTSIDE®: NSSF's award-winning outdoor mentoring program that, for 10 years, through its many partners, introduced newcomers to traditional outdoor sports. (www.stepoutside.org)

Hunter's Handbook and Hunter's Handbook TV: NSSF supports the handbook, which is distributed to all hunter education graduates. The companion TV show is available through the Versus Network. (www.huntershandbook.com)

Scholastic Clay Target Program℠: This program provides regularly scheduled, adult-supervised events that emphasize sportsmanship, safety and skills development. (www.nssf.org/sctp) (www.nssf.org/SRP/)

Trailblazer Adventure Program: NSSF supports this groundbreaking introductory outdoor program developed for families and launched by the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance. (www.trailblazeradventure.org)

Wingshooting USA℠: NSSF launched this initiative in 2005 to increase hunter awareness of the convenient and quality experiences offered today by bird hunting preserves around the country. (www.wingshootingusa.org)

HuntandShoot.org: This site offers one-click access to all 50 state wildlife agency Web sites and shooting ranges. Hunters and shooters can find details on season dates, application deadlines, license fees, population summaries, harvest data, activities offered, costs and more.

The NSSF also supports the U.S. Shooting Team and U.S. Biathlon Association and is the largest single contributor to the International Hunter Education Association.

National Shooting Sports Foundation's
President and CEO

Like most of us, I got my start hunting with my dad. But with no one to guide us, many of our early exploits were a comedy of errors.

We could easily have given up in frustration at many steps along the way, but our love of firearms and shared experiences in the outdoors created a bond that has lasted to this day.

How I wish we had a friendly, knowledgeable mentor to help instruct us and channel our efforts! While the humorous memories remain, I'm glad to be part of NSSF's efforts to promote our Best Practices in Hunting and Shooting Recruitment and Retention. We can't afford to give up a single hunter or shooter because they are intimidated or discouraged.

We hope this workbook will help you pass on our great American heritage to future generations. They deserve all we can do to keep it going!

Steve Sanetti
President and CEO

P.S./ And remember...If you place your bow against your car's front bumper, you run a serious risk of running it over...

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INTRODUCTION

Being a hunter involves much more than simply buying a license to go hunting. However, hunting license sales do provide a quick and easy indicator of hunting participation over time, and so *recruitment* is often understood to mean a person who buys a license for the first time, and *retention* is often recognized to have occurred when a person consistently buys licenses over time. There is no similar indicator for the shooting sports. Much more information on these definitions is provided throughout this Workbook.

What's Happening with Hunters?

Hunting license sales don't lie. Across the nation, fewer people are hunting. When adults don't hunt, their kids don't hunt. While a drop in license sales doesn't tell the whole story, it flashes a warning.

Competition for time, decreasing access to places to hunt and shoot, lack of social support and other societal changes are taking a toll on hunters and shooters.

Combinations of challenges

Most states suffer from a combination of challenges. National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) research (Duda, Bissell and Young 1995) shows several top issues that strongly influence inactive (lapsed) hunters not to hunt:

- Lack of free time
- Work obligations
- Loss of interest
- Family obligations

The "lack of free time" reason is not well understood. Does it mean that there is less discretionary time overall, or that other competing recreational interests are given priority over hunting and shooting (or something else)? This issue needs additional research to give a better understanding of the specific constraints.

1975–2005: U.S. population/hunting license holders

Year	U.S. population statistics (in millions)	Paid hunting license holders	% of U.S. population
1975	215,973	15,202,583	7.0%
1980	227,726	16,257,074	7.1%
1985	238,466	15,879,562	6.7%
1990	249,973	15,806,964	6.3%
1995	263,082	15,232,338	5.8%
2000	281,422	15,044,324	5.3%
2005	296,507	14,575,484	4.9%

(U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P 25-802 and P25-1095;
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2006)

The top impediments to hunting satisfaction among active hunters are:

- Not enough public access

- Not enough places to hunt

- Work obligations

- Poor behavior of other hunters

- Too many hunters in the field

Hunters hunt with other hunters

Families and friends play a huge role in whether people hunt. Most hunters quit hunting when their social support systems break down. NSSF research suggests:

- Most hunters are initiated into hunting before the age of 20, usually by the father or other father-figure, in a rural environment. Hunters who are initiated in this manner hunt more frequently and are more likely to hunt avidly throughout their lifetime. The presence of other family members who hunt, amount of exposure to hunting and the presence of "the hunting culture" are of utmost importance in hunting initiation.

- Most current, active hunters continue to surround themselves socially with other active hunters. This is in sharp contrast to ex-hunters who have "fallen out" of a social circle of hunters.

- Hunters hunt with other hunters. As hunting partners move away, pass away, or become involved with other activities, participation by others in the group declines as well. This also happens when an avid hunter moves to a new area. Hunting activity often does not resume because the hunter does not have the social support system he/she used to have. This suggests values in the familial and social context have become greater than other values derived from hunting.

- Familial and social constraints are important considerations when developing programs to maintain participation in hunting. Without a strong social support system in place, efforts to recruit new hunters, especially individuals who do not come from traditional hunting families, will not be effective.

The best messages to motivate hunters to mentor others center on reinforcing social bonds with family and friends (RM 2002):

- Making time to be with family and friends is important to you.

- Being outdoors with family and friends is a great way to spend quality time with them.

- Hunting bonds family and is very special to you personally. You want to share that.

- Inviting someone hunting is a great way to teach someone about what sportsmen and women are really like.

- Hunting bonds friends and is very special to you personally. You want to share that.

Becoming a hunter/shooter involves more than just firing a firearm or bow, or going afield to harvest game. Being a hunter/shooter is more attitudinally based and involves development over time of an individual's perception of him/herself as a hunter/shooter and as part of a hunting/ shooting culture. This development does not occur in a vacuum, and requires a broad and deep social system of initiators, companions, and mentors. Not everyone in the hunting and shooting community is a hunter/shooter. Long-term participation in hunting/shooting depends on development of a personal/cultural identity. A person can be considered recruited when he/she has developed a personal/cultural identity as a hunter/shooter. A person can be considered retained if he/she continues to maintain this self-perception over time (Wentz and Seng 2000).

Now, ask yourself whether you know without question what is going on with *hunting in your state. You'll never truly know unless you do your homework to find out. You might be surprised by the answers.*

What happens if hunters stop hunting?
Hunting is a tradition and much more. Decreasing numbers of hunters will have a direct negative impact on the nation's economy and create problems between people and wildlife. It can impact the ability of agencies to achieve their missions.

Those affected include farmers, homeowners, families, communities, businesses, wildlife and habitats. In short, the loss of hunting touches everyone.

It's better to strengthen a levee's foundation than rebuild after the flood. It's important to halt the exodus of hunters while states have a chance. Recruitment and retention programs are widely viewed as the answer.

Other considerations for losses
These reasons just skim the surface. Why are active hunters lapsing? Why are new hunters not coming on board? Why are hunter numbers not keeping pace with population growth? Here are some other possible considerations:

- Impacts of mandatory hunter education on hunting initiation rites

- Laws that prohibit children from hunting before certain ages

- Agency programs and outreach that don't match changing demographics and hunter needs

- Costs and expenses related to hunting, particularly related to initial investments in clothing, equipment, licenses, etc.

- Risk and liability issues related to accidents, child welfare, by hunting mentors, private landowners, etc.

- Negative hunter behaviors or reputations that resonate with private landowners and the public

- Lack of public access due to new landowners posting lands in an area

- Lack of hunting areas or wildlife due to development and habitat changes

- Public misconceptions about safety or endangerment of hunted animals

- Changing opinions about what is ethical or humane

- Controversies, anti-hunting sentiments and policies that preclude certain types of hunting, e.g., hunting with dogs, over bait, etc.

- Peer pressure at all ages

Agricultural depredation

As big game animals become overabundant, they damage crops and compete with grazing livestock. Depredation by deer, elk and moose are major issues; problems could worsen if hunter numbers continue to fall.

According to the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agriculture Statistics Service estimated $944 million in wildlife-related damages to agriculture in 2001. Deer were the main culprits, causing 58 percent of reported damage to field crops, and 33 percent of damage to vegetables, fruit and nuts. More than 50 percent of farmers and ranchers suffered from wildlife damage each year to crops or livestock. Hunters can be viewed as defacto deer control specialists, not only unpaid for their services, but who pay for the privilege of hunting. If hunters were not in the field, state wildlife agencies estimate damage related to increased deer herds would grow 218 percent (AFWA 2004).

Tourism, taxes, sales and jobs

From equipment, gasoline and hotels to ice and snacks, hunters spend a great deal of money. Hunting is often the financial heart and soul of communities. Hunting is an integral part of tourism nationwide.

Southwick Associates (2007) reports that nationwide, hunting generates:

- 593,000 hunting-related jobs, equating to $20.9 billion in salaries and wages, $4.2 billion in state and local tax revenue, and almost $5 billion in federal income taxes

- $24.7 billion in retail sales, with a multiplier effect of $66 billion

- $300 million in private donations by hunters

Road hazards

Big game such as deer can become big road hazards. In oft-quoted statistics provided by Dr. Michael Conover of Utah State University, there are roughly 729,000 deer-auto accidents annually, including those not reported to police. It is estimated that the average deer-vehicle accident results in a $1,644 repair bill, with U.S. drivers paying $1.2 billion for repairs. It is also estimated that in a 12-month period, more than 23,000 injuries result from auto collisions with deer (AFWA 2004, 6).

If hunting was lost as a deer management tool, deer-vehicle collisions could increase by over 200 percent nationally, resulting in an additional 50,000 deaths per year.

Health and safety

Interactions between people and wildlife are increasing in residential areas, leading to a growing number of concerns and complaints. Raccoons invade homes. Coyotes, bobcats and foxes may prey upon small dogs and cats. In some areas, large predators like bears and mountain lions have become imprinted or habituated to humans. These wild animals may cause conflicts with homeowners and sometimes injury or death to pets, livestock and even humans. Wildlife sometimes transmit diseases to humans. West Nile Virus and Lyme Disease raise caution flags among alarmed citizens.

The balance between wildlife and humans is a delicate one. People love wildlife, but that love affair could sour when problems arise in their backyards — as homes and property are damaged, pets killed and health and safety threatened. As problems continue, citizens might be less supportive of wildlife and habitat conservation (AFWA 2004, 14).

Wildlife management

States annually generate more than $729 million in state hunting and trapping license revenues (AFWA 2007). About $280 million in excise tax revenues comes from the sale of sporting arms and ammunition, which was returned to wildlife agencies via the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program in FY 2006. These dollars are earmarked for wildlife management.

Declining numbers of hunters impact how wildlife conservation is funded. Decreased sales of sporting arms and ammunition would reduce excise taxes collected and returned to the agencies as Wildlife Restoration funds. Drops in agency revenues could force states to cut staff and management programs, worsening many existing issues.

AFWA adds, "No one knows how many deer currently taken by hunters would have to be removed by government if hunting was no longer permitted (or if hunters no longer hunted), but 50 percent of the current hunter harvest is regarded as a reasonable conservative estimate. AFWA estimates that $934.2 million to $9.3 billion of taxpayers' money could be required annually to control white-tailed deer if hunting was lost as a management tool." (AFWA 2004).

The ramifications of losing hunters are huge on a societal scale. We can't ignore the impacts that hunting license sales and taxes on hunting and shooting equipment have on the ability of state and federal agencies to work with citizens and manage wildlife.

Hunting tradition

"Tradition" is often used to justify or explain hunting. But what really does it mean? State agencies know that the way to recruit and retain hunters – and to motivate hunters to mentor others – is to reach them where they live: their families, friends and social bonds. Hunting also is a way to keep people connected to and supportive of conservation. It is an important part of conserving nature and passing it on.

In 2003, Steve Williams, then director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, spoke movingly of the importance of the hunting tradition (Williams 2003):

I strongly believe we must preserve the hunting tradition. When I was a kid growing up in Pennsylvania, I used to hunt and fish with my dad. With my own son, I've found that some of our greatest experiences together have been doing the same things. These experiences allow parents and kids to bond, but they do more than that. They strengthen our tie to the natural world. Hunting and fishing instill in us a lasting respect for the outdoors. We keep a keen eye on the lay of our land and a steady finger on the pulse of our wildlife.

But I am concerned that in this increasingly urbanized world, fewer folks get the same kind of opportunities I did growing up. For the sake of our children and the future of our resources, we need to get kids to put down the TV remote or the video game and pick up a shotgun or a fly rod.

If we do not maintain our hunting and fishing traditions, there will be more people who are not familiar with the necessity of balancing wildlife populations with available habitat; who don't understand that deer herds or snow goose populations may need to be thinned; or even worse, who just aren't interested in wildlife and wildlife habitat. Certainly, unless we do something, the kids of the computer age will grow up to be adults who are never out in the field to notice whether our fish and wildlife populations and habitats are healthy.

Top Ten reasons why recruitment and retention projects fall short

Recruitment and retention (R&R) programs – from youth hunts to hunter/shooter workshops – can play a starring role in attempts to create awareness, improve knowledge, build skills and inspire life-long hunting or shooting activity. A properly designed program can help lay the foundation for a new generation of hunters/shooters.

Among your program goals, you might want to:

- Attract new hunters and shooters

- Retain existing ones

- Create safe, ethical, knowledgeable, skillful hunters and shooters

- Improve awareness of programs, public access, regulations, etc.

- Increase hunting license sales

- Build constituent support for your efforts.

But will your programs meet any of these goals? If the answer is "I think so – but I don't really know," it's important to consider another approach. The truth is that many programs – including those related to R&R – have faced increasing scrutiny in recent years. Today, the organizational buzzword is "accountability." NSSF wants to help agencies and organizations embrace accountability for all R&R projects.

You're not alone:
Fishing is in the same boat

Hunting R&R programs aren't alone in this regard. Fishing participation also has experienced downturns in recent years. The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) was created in 1998 to improve boating and fishing recruitment and retention, as well as aquatic stewardship. But RBFF leaders realized that aquatics outreach programs weren't meeting their intended goals.

In 2000, the RBFF undertook major efforts to identify how boating, fishing and aquatic education programs could be enhanced. Their answer was to develop a program called Best Practices for Boating, Fishing and Aquatic Stewardship Education. These Best Practices laid the groundwork for agencies to improve their outreach efforts, and they are producing impressive results.

"There's a difference between being effective versus just doing 'fun stuff,'" says Steve Huffaker, former department director, Idaho Fish and Game Department. "A lot of stuff is fun for agencies to do and for people to participate in – but it might not be what is needed." (RBFF Reel Tips 2003).

THE TOP TEN REASONS

Hunter education students learn to identify a target clearly before pulling the trigger. R&R programs don't reach their full potential when coordinators don't do the same. Here are some reasons that programs don't always succeed:

1. **The feel-good factor:** Few things match the emotional high of watching a wide-eyed 13-year-old on an agency youth pheasant hunt. With shotgun at ready and a mentor's dog on point, the youngster is poised to topple his first pheasant from the sky. A proud parent beams in the background. You feel good to create fond family memories centered on hunting. The participants feel good.

    That means your program is doing great stuff, right? Of course. But what objectives have you achieved? If the objective is to give participants awareness and great memories, you have no doubt succeeded. If your objective is to create future license buyers, a single day in the field is not enough to recruit long-term hunters. It's a critical part in the process, but by itself is not enough. Does your project have specific objectives?

2. **We've always done it this way:** Managers sometimes assume just because "we've always done it this way" that a program provides maximum benefits for the agency or participants.

    Can you name R&R programs that have existed as long as you remember? Now, can you say why the program was started, what it does, and whether mid-course corrections are in order to meet current needs?

    If you don't know what your program aims to do in concrete terms to meet identified needs, you can only guess the outcome.

3. **Lack of evaluation/surface evaluation:** Evaluation is a critical component of any program. Without evaluation, no one knows what went right or wrong, or whether a program met its goals and objectives. Without evaluation, no one can take steps to ensure future success.

    Programs often identify success as the number of people who attend an event or the amount of information disseminated. But that provides only one small measure. What do your efforts mean for the long term? Have you reached the people you need to reach? Have you affected knowledge, attitudes, skills and levels of participation in ways that you intend?

    Efforts that lack clearly defined goals or methods of evaluation that are tied directly to measurable program objectives simply can't prove what they are accomplishing on a deeper level. A program is most successful when evaluation is included early in its design and for each step of the process.

4. **Dodging the fear factor:** The idea that a program might get a less-than-stellar evaluation is terrifying to some program managers, especially if it has never been evaluated. It's hard to face scrutiny or accept that no program is perfect.

    Internal and external stakeholders are apt to take your program seriously — and provide funding and support — if you can show the promise in your programs and corrective actions to get them on the right course.

Some programs will succeed outright; others will be hit-or-miss. Without guidelines to build objectives and measure outcomes, it might be difficult to tell success from failure. Using Best Practices, you stand a better chance of knowing the difference.

5. **Lack of staff, budget, expertise and support:** Program managers often are expected to know and do everything. Many folks find themselves charting new territory with limited resources:
   - To manage constituents and create new audiences
   - To inspire people to know, feel and do certain things
   - To build, market and evaluate recruitment and retention programs
   - To know the right messages and how to communicate them.

It's not easy to develop programs that influence people. Yet, you're expected to do just that. When starting any effort, it's important to:

   - Know what you know
   - Know what you don't know
   - Find people who know and are willing to help.

The best way to ensure that your program has a long, successful life is to create support and generate expertise among your internal and external audiences: agency leaders, staff, conservation partners and politicians. The more support you have, the more you can expect to have adequate resources.

Some programs have a long life because they create "program junkies" who sign up to participate time and again in a program because it's fun, and program staff do all the hard work (find a place to hunt, provide equipment, stock game animals, etc.). Try to encourage new participants in your programs, and create a connection between previous participants and a local hunting culture that he/she could be a part of.

6. **Lack of research:** Experts have compiled tons of research on what motivates hunters and impacts their levels of participation. But research must be applied. A key component of successful R&R programs is grasping and following research, particularly the "adoption model" for attracting and keeping hunters (see Chapter 1). Another critical factor is making sure that you apply research correctly. You don't want to launch an effort based on misinterpreted research or wrong conclusions. You might also find that you need to conduct your own research to get answers you need.

7. **Misunderstanding marketing:** Marketing is an essential component of R&R programs. It is finding out what customers want and then meeting their needs. Marketing includes research; deciding on products, services and prices; advertising; promoting; and providing your service.

So what tools do you use to market your programs — a direct mail postcard? Brochure? Video? Workshop? Public service announcement? News release? More events?

It's none of those things individually. What works is a customized marketing campaign that blends targeted marketing and education to recruit and retain hunters. It means understanding your audience and the best ways they receive information. Marketing typically includes the following steps: situation analysis, team/partner development, action plan development, implementation and evaluation.

It is commonly assumed that people will adopt a behavior simply after presenting information to them or through a one-time event. However, knowledge and awareness are not enough to inspire long-lasting behavior changes. While knowledge and awareness set a foundation, simple knowledge is not enough to inspire people to act.

Therefore, while mass media tactics are important, they are part of a much larger strategy. Promotional, marketing and informational efforts are valued aspects of a campaign to create awareness – but media tactics can't stand alone as a strategy to change behaviors. ***Information alone is not enough.***

8. **Wild cards:** It's those zingers from left field that can undermine your efforts. It might be staff or partners who are under-trained, over-extended or unsupportive. Or discovering halfway through your project that critical license data are missing. Perhaps a new administration frowns on your program. Maybe you didn't know that 10 other conservation groups are holding youth events at the same time as yours. Wild cards are environmental factors and attitudes that can undermine your efforts.

While it's impossible to identify all the wild cards that could sideline your effort's success, you should do all you can to play devil's advocate. Brainstorm what can go wrong, and plan, plan, plan so that things go right.

9. **Not seeing the silver lining:** A miner pans a mountain of gravel to find the nuggets. Take that into consideration when it comes to R&R. States are charting new territory, and the most successful approaches won't happen overnight. Successful programs have long-term, sustained delivery. It is important to communicate this to leaders who aren't looking past one-shot efforts and approaches that didn't post immediate results.

Sometimes, R&R projects don't reach their goals the first time around. But what makes or breaks a program are tenacity, support and Best Practices. "Ohio received HHP funding to market hunting opportunities in 2004. We had our ducks in a row. We did all the things we thought we were supposed to do," says Dave Scott, Division of Wildlife's wildlife research administrator. "You know what? We didn't get the results we had hoped for. Our modeling of hunter behavior worked great; however, our marketing tool proved to be ineffective. But our leaders don't see it as a failure, because we can show valuable lessons to help us the next time around."

10. **Not enlisting hunter support:** With decreased hunting opportunity and increased competition for access or game, hunters are sometimes resistant to programs that increase hunter numbers. Program managers that are new to R&R programs need to be aware of this unfortunate and likely unexpected response from the very community they intend to benefit. R&R programs must gain support from existing hunters by getting them to see the long-term benefit to the future of hunting and wildlife conservation. Further, these programs must improve hunters' tolerance of one another.

Next steps to take

Have your programs fallen short for any of the reasons above? If so, here's what to do:

1. Don't give up! Commit to trying again.

2. Learn from what went wrong. Document all efforts and results. Remember that projects that don't meet intended goals are NOT failures. They simply are one important step to getting where you need to be.

3. Plan your next efforts using ***Best Practices!***

What Are Best Practices?

A Best Practice is a program or practice with specific outcomes that have been clearly defined, refined, and evaluated through repeated delivery and supported by a substantial body of research.

When research is unavailable, Best Practices are at least based on best professional judgment. They represent the best knowledge available for use under specified circumstances. It's important to note that Best Practices may change over time. They are recommendations based on what has been observed or documented to be effective to date, but which may change given additional experience, evaluation, and research.

For natural resources management agencies and organizations trying to recruit and retain hunters and shooters, the use of Best Practices is simply a matter of applying tested, science-based practices to all efforts, the same way biologists apply science to the management of fish, wildlife, and other natural resources.

Best Practices vs. Recommendations

In some of the later chapters of this Workbook, research and field testing have not yet been applied to some of the listed concepts, so they don't really qualify to be listed as Best Practices (based on the definition above). However, in the best professional judgment of a Think Tank of R&R experts, they are worthy of mention as recommendations. Everywhere these occur, they are clearly labeled as recommendations rather than Best Practices. These recommendations need to be tested and carefully evaluated against specific objectives to determine if they qualify as Best Practices.

How Can Best Practices Help You?

Best Practices are meant to enhance, not replace, existing efforts.

This Best Practices in Hunting and Shooting Recruitment and Retention Workbook (Workbook) and other Best Practices materials do not constitute a "program" unto themselves. Rather, they are tools you can use to make your existing (or developing) programs more effective.

Incorporation of Best Practices will maximize your effectiveness in:

- Planning, developing, and implementing programs

- Conducting program evaluations at all levels of development and implementation

- Providing ongoing professional development

- Identifying relevant research to further understand and improve the process.

This Workbook contains research-based and tested, effective ideas for improving hunting and shooting R&R efforts wherever possible. For efforts that have yet to be tested or evaluated, the recommendations are based on best professional judgment of experts in the field.

Need For Best Practices

Each year, tens of thousands of people attend hunting and shooting R&R programs, but are these programs effective at achieving sponsor goals? What are the benefits? Outputs such as the number of participants often serve as the only measures of performance. Does this participation create new hunters and shooters, boost agency revenues, image, or mission; or increase license sales? There is little direct evidence that these goals are being achieved. The hunting and shooting community has identified this as a major need and concern.

Measuring attainment of these goals often is difficult; however, to be accountable for their programs, sponsors need to use appropriate evaluation tools and methods to measure outcomes. Furthermore, programs need to be designed and evaluated based on the best information research and practical experience have to offer.

NSSF and its partners have engaged in the Best Practices project for that reason. Tools developed in this project are designed to help practitioners build, enhance, and evaluate their programs based on research and practices shown to be effective.

How to Use This Workbook

Most Best Practices are process-oriented. They do not suggest what program you implement, but rather how you plan it, approach it, and evaluate it. Thus, nearly every chapter in this Workbook may contain information that could benefit your efforts.

This Workbook was not designed for you to read from cover to cover (although it would certainly be beneficial to do so!). Rather, it was designed to make it easy for you to skip around and quickly find the sections that are most applicable to your situation.

Worksheets throughout the text give you the opportunity to apply the Best Practice information to your own situation. By completing these as you go, you'll have the basis for an outstanding program.

A series of materials have been completed as part of the Best Practices project and have been designed to complement this Workbook (available from NSSF on its Web site at www.nssf.org/bestpractices):

INFORMATION SHEETS	Short, easy-to-read sheets that give a brief overview of various Best Practices and how they benefit R&R efforts
POWERPOINT PRESENTATION	Comprehensive presentation that includes segments on various aspects of the Best Practices; designed to be customized for use with numerous target audiences, to communicate the importance of Best Practices
TRAINER'S GUIDE	"Cookbook" for conducting a one-or two-day workshop walks end users through the Workbook and motivates them to adopt Best Practices into their programs
PROMO FLYER	One-page "pitch piece" that describes the Best Practices tools and doubles as an order form.

This Workbook has something for everyone. If you are starting a program from scratch, all chapters will be invaluable. They will help you make informed decisions on how to plan and implement your program and help you avoid pitfalls others have learned about the hard way.

Administrators of existing programs can go through each chapter to see how closely their programs meet the Best Practice guidelines. You may find valuable ideas that you want to add, holes in your program that you can fill, or scientific research to back up or justify what you've been doing all along.

The primary target audience for this Workbook is anyone who is developing or revising a program to recruit new hunters or shooters or retain existing ones.

Where are the Footnotes and Citations?

This Workbook and associated materials are based on hundreds of books, reports, research papers, journal articles, and other sources. Nearly every paragraph could contain one or more citations from the work of others. However, to make this Workbook easier to read and use by practitioners, footnotes and citations have been omitted from most of the text. (The Introduction above is the exception). A Bibliography of source material is provided in Appendix A. Original sources of information for most of the content in Chapters 2-7 can be accessed in the technical publication: Defining Best Practices in Boating, Fishing, and Aquatic Resources Stewardship Education (Fedler et al., 2001). This publication is available at www.rbff.org/educational/. NSSF and its partners are deeply indebted to RBFF and all who made this Workbook possible.

CHAPTER 1: Understanding the Recruitment and Retention Process

Before you try to implement any of the Best Practices in this Workbook, it is imperative to understand the "big picture" regarding recruitment and retention. Under the best of circumstances, recruiting and retaining hunters and shooters is not easy! It is critical to understand as much as possible about the process to be most effective.

It has been known for many years that people go through a series of stages as they adopt any new behavior. Understanding the stages of this adoption process can greatly increase your effectiveness at influencing that process.

The following Hunting/Shooting Participation Classification System is based on previous research and modified specifically for the hunting/shooting community. It describes the predictable stages that hunters and shooters go through as they adopt or desert these activities. It is important to develop programs that consider all of these stages. Failing to give each stage adequate consideration will seriously undermine your long-term efforts to recruit and retain hunters and shooters!

Don't let the fancy name scare you off! This model is simply a way to organize your thinking, and it may enable you to assess the direction and focus of existing programs as well as identify where gaps exist, taking steps to intervene where appropriate.

Research shows that there are eight basic stages people can go through as they adopt hunting and shooting activities into their personal lives. Keep in mind that in some cases, a person may skip a stage or go through two or more stages simultaneously.

What's in a Name?

There are many different understandings of what recruitment and retention (R&R) really are. In a strategic sense, R&R are concepts based partly on individual attitudes and partly on a positive socio-cultural environment. As such, it makes sense to define R&R in terms of self-perceptions – someone is recruited when they develop a self-perception as a hunter/ shooter and is retained as long as they continue to hold that self-perception. However, from a tactical standpoint, agencies and their partners need more concrete, behavioral indicators of R&R, such as license buying and actual participation.

The processes of recruitment ("becoming a member of something") and retention (continuing long-term behavior) both require development of attitudinal and socio-cultural underpinnings. That's why strategic definitions of R&R are more important than tactical definitions of exhibiting some behavior.

An individual's attitudes and a positive socio-cultural environment go hand-in-hand. Historically, an individual's self-perception of being a hunter was developed within an existing positive socio-cultural environment. Today, positive socio-cultural environments for hunting tend to be less evident and sometimes are directly questioned or even attacked. Thus, someone who has an individual self-perception as a hunter may find it difficult to continue expressing that self-perception by going hunting/shooting. And if that culture is not as evident, it is hard for individuals to develop a self-perception as a hunter/shooter. So, in general, the most successful R&R programs will focus not only on recruiting and retaining individuals, but also on maintaining and facilitating a positive socio-cultural environment.

Following are the eight basic stages of the Hunting/Shooting Participation Classification System (each will be discussed in more detail in this section):

I.	Awareness Stage		V.	Continuation without Focused Support (no longer apprentice) Stage
II.	Interest Stage		VI.	Continuation as a Hunting/Shooting Proponent Stage
III.	Trial Stage			
IV.	Continuation with Support (Apprentice) Stage		VII.	Temporary Cessation Stage
			VIII.	Permanent Desertion Stage

Obviously, the ultimate goal of recruitment and retention programs is to get hunters and shooters into Stages V and VI.

It is important to remember that:

1. Recruitment and eventual retention is a long-term process

2. An individual may be in more than one stage at any one time

3. The time needed to advance from one stage to another is dependent on the age of the person, the economic and "life" stage they are in and the amount of support they receive.

The entire recruitment and retention process must be couched in a supportive, socio-cultural environment (see Figure 1). Though not always mentioned, this socio-cultural context is the glue that holds the entire process together, continuously reinforcing participant attitudes and choices. A supportive environment is the most critical element in retaining hunters and shooters. The thicker the glue, the more likely the desired outcome will be achieved. In fact, in communities and families where hunting and shooting are honored traditions – where youngsters are encouraged and expected to become hunters and shooters – very little outside intervention is necessary. However, in communities that do not have shared values, attitudes, and stories revolving around hunting and shooting, a significant barrier exists to their development.

Figure 1. Social Network supports the Hunting/Shooting Participation Classification System.

Level of Participation	Awareness	Interest	Trial	Continuation with Support	Continuation without support	Proponent	Temporary Cessation	Permanent Desertion
Technical Skills	No demonstrated skill.	No demonstrated skill	New skills tried for the first time	Initial skills are improved; new skills learned	Competent to continue independently	Skills highly advanced; may be expert to some	Skills adequate to participate, but might be "rusty."	Skills likely very rusty.
	"I think I could do that"	"I really need to try that"	"With effort I could do this"	"I can do this with a little help"	"I can do this"	"I can help others do this"	"I can do this, but circumstances don't allow it right now"	"I am no longer able to do this or I choose not to"
Social Skills	Few or no social skills	Few or no social skills	New terms, skills and behaviors learned for the first time	Initial use of terms/ skills improved; additional social skills learned	Skills advanced enough to be comfortable in hunter groups. Expected to demonstrate norms	Social skills highly advanced; may be opinion leader to some	Social skills still present. Can easily re-enter activity	Social skills may be rusty. New jargon and social norms may make re-entry difficult
	"I have something in common with hunters/shooters"	"This fits my sense of who I am, and I can see myself doing it"	"This fits my sense of who I am, and I feel accepted in the group"	"I think of myself as a hunter/shooter—at least while I'm with other hunters/ shooters"	"I think of myself as a hunter/shooter"	"I protect my hunter/ shooter identity and share it with others"	"I think of myself as a hunter/shooter, but circumstances don't allow it right now"	"I no longer think of myself as a hunter/ shooter (but I may not be opposed to it)"

Social Support Network

Family   Friends   Community   Peers

Social support, in its broadest context, is critical for a person to advance to the next stage or continue participating. This support is often the most difficult element for an agency or organization to address. However, there are techniques that are identified that will assist in creating social support networks for new and lapsed hunters and shooters.

Developing two types of new skills

In addition to understanding the need for a social support network, successful R&R programs understand the need for new participants to develop social skills as well as technical skills as they progress through the various stages of adoption. Many R&R programs focus on developing the technical skills (such as shooting or game calling) associated with hunting and shooting. However, equally important are the skills necessary for a new participant to fit in with the group. If a person does not feel like they can fit in, then having highly developed technical skills will not recruit them. New social skills, such as knowing the correct manners and social conduct in a given situation, using terms correctly, hearing and having opportunities to tell stories are all important in fitting in and adopting a new activity. The process of teaching/learning new social skills has to be conducted in a subtle, non-threatening manner. Nonetheless, it is important to make sure that this process is integrated into your overall R&R efforts.

Detailed Explanation of the Stages

The following section has been excerpted from the 2000 report entitled, "Meeting the Challenge to Increase Participation in Hunting and Shooting." Because this is a new/revised Hunting/Shooting Participation Classification System, it is important for the terms and stages to be defined. In addition, because these stages occur within a social context, a section has been included to describe the factors that can assist (facilitate) people entering and leaving each stage.
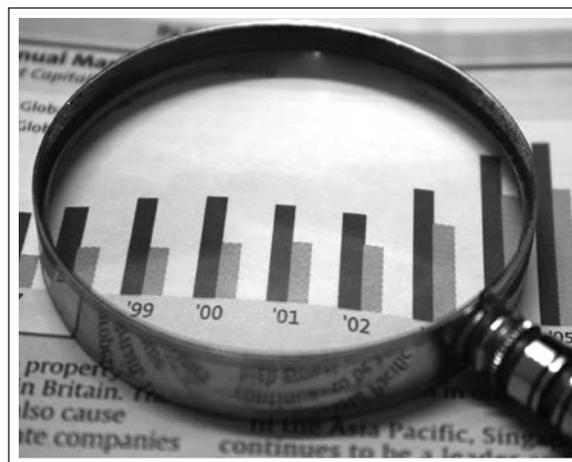
©iStockphoto.com/Tan Wei Wing

The following information is provided for each stage:

DEFINITION	Defines the segment of the population that fits in this stage.
FACILITATING FACTORS	Factors that facilitate movement or progression from one stage of adoption to the next.
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	Strategies and actions for moving people toward (and keeping them in) one of the continuation stages.
RESEARCH & EVALUATION NEEDS	Information needed in order to allow more effective and targeted strategies for moving people toward (and keeping them in) one of the continuation stages.

I. AWARENESS STAGE

Definition

People who are aware that hunting and shooting are legal and accepted recreational activities. And beyond that, it is awareness that being a hunter/shooter is an expression of a state of being and a state of mind as much as it is an expression of behaviors (such as going hunting or shooting).

Facilitating Factors

- Exposure to positive aspects of hunting and shooting through the media.

- Watching (seeing people out hunting and shooting).

- Hearing others talking about hunting and shooting.

- There may or may not be any real interaction between the individual in this stage and the hunting/shooting culture, as long as there is recognition by the individual that the activities of hunting and shooting are done.

Recommended Strategies

1. Promote hunting and shooting and the benefits of participating

2. Show that hunting and shooting are available activities

3. Develop ways to engage people in a socialization process

4. Develop programs for parents who do not hunt (include existing programs and information from NSSF and others). Potential program ideas include: Community collaboration for hunting and shooting ("Hands-on" events sponsored by retailers, clubs, agencies, youth organizations, etc.). Show the benefits that shooting sports have on life skills (increased concentration, self esteem, etc.).

5. Develop a positive presence for the hunting and shooting culture at mainstream events (i.e., fairs, festivals, outdoor expos, malls, science centers etc.).

Research & Evaluation Needs

1. Identify optimal target audiences (study non-hunters, former hunters, and present hunters, looking for patterns of influences).

2. Identify the most effective methods for reaching the target audiences (what are the communication preferences of the various target audiences – how to best reach them?).

3. Identify the attitudes of non-participating parents toward hunting and shooting – what would it take to make them part of their children's social structure?

4. Determine what aspects of hunting/ wildlife management appeal to non-hunters (what messages would encourage them to be supporters, even if they never participate).

II. INTEREST STAGE

Definition

People who move beyond the awareness stage and begin to develop some positive thoughts or feelings concerning a possible personal involvement. This stage involves an understanding that being a hunter/shooter is something more than just going hunting/ shooting, and can be exhibited in various levels of intensity. People in this stage are starting to consider whether they want to become a "participant." They are not yet developing a notion that they could have an identity as a hunter/ shooter per se, but they may be willing to participate in some related activities.

Facilitating Factors
- Direct interaction with members of the hunting and shooting culture.

- Development of an understanding of what hunting and shooting are all about.

- Development of the notion that hunting and shooting activities might be consistent with an individual's personal motivational-orientations.

- Encouragement from family and friends – assistance in overcoming barriers to entry.

- Promotional materials/media.

- Hunter education course through a school, scout, or other youth organization program.

Recommended Strategies
1. Find multiple ways to expose individuals to a threshold experience or series of experiences where they directly participate.

2. Promote hunting/shooting and hunter education programs (promote the positive role hunters play in conservation, especially to youth audiences).

3. Make hunter education courses convenient and fun.

4. Develop alternative methods for delivering the hunter education program. This may depend on the purpose of the course (license purchase vs. opportunity to learn about hunting/shooting).

5. Promote the NSSF "Step Outside" marketing message and "First Shots" program and other similar programs.

6. Develop ways to engage people in a socialization process before they take a hunter education course (e.g., game dinners, field days, outdoor expos, etc.).

7. Develop the "Pocket Park" concept (urban "mini-experience," such as airgun ranges hunting/shooting simulators, etc.).

8. Supply existing youth organizations with the resources, programs, and technical assistance needed to deliver the programs and provide places to shoot and hunt.

Opportunities in this stage do not necessarily require killing an animal. They can involve elements of the hunting experience such as shooting, scouting, tagging along on a hunt as an observer or sitting around the dinner table sharing stories and experiences. This also can be a family member or friend taking a person hunting or shooting for the first time.

Program examples include hunting clinics, shooting instructions or hunting dog trial events. They also include introduction to hunting and shooting programs through conservation camps, 4-H, and scouts. With proper social support, these threshold experiences may lead to the trial phase.

Research & Evaluation Needs
1. Measure the latent demand for hunting and shooting on a state-by-state basis.

   - How many potential participants are we missing?

   - What would it take to encourage their participation?

2. Measure the interest in a variety of hunting-related activities and determine the degree to which people in this stage recognize that being a hunter involves more than just buying a license and going afield to harvest game.

3. Determine the degree to which parents of youth in the interest stage recognize that these related activities are part of being a hunter or shooter, and the parents' willingness to help the youth to get involved in those activities.

4. Determine which groups (scouts, school, church, etc.) are important in fostering interest.

5. Measure the effectiveness of alternative delivery systems on different target groups.

6. Identify a way to quantify the political and economic support provided by the entire hunting/shooting culture, not just active license buyers.

7. Investigate the roles that age and developmental stage (social, cognitive, affective, etc.) play in the movement of a person from the awareness stage to the interest stage.

8. Investigate both the processes and social contexts through which different individuals develop self-perceptions as hunters/shooters. What events/experiences act as rites of passage that help someone develop a sense of being a hunter, and what social contexts make those events/experiences rites of passage for some people, but not for everyone.

NOTE: Some state/provincial hunter education regulations are designed to intercept people between the interest and the trial stages of hunting adoption. At the other end of the spectrum, some agencies allow youth to hunt without training or licenses for several years before hunter education is required, as long as the youth is accompanied by an adult. The implications of this range of differences are significant. The hunter education program can actually work against recruitment if program developers insist that it be an important component of being socialized as a hunter. Some people may come to think of the hunter education program as an important rite of passage, but that certainly is not guaranteed for all hunters. The hunter education program in this case probably should be separated from recruitment

and retention programs or the likelihood is high that it will become a barrier instead of a facilitator. The availability of convenient, well-designed courses is an important consideration for agencies that intervene at this stage.

In other states, young hunters have time to develop social competence and strong identities as hunters before the training is required. In these states, training can be more advanced and the course becomes a true rite of passage from being an apprentice hunter to a person who can continue hunting, socially and legally, without support.

Also, the legal and mandatory nature of the hunter education course needs to be carefully considered by all states. Many people can be in the continuation stage of adoption (i.e., be recruited and even retained as hunters) without ever taking the hunter education course. If one of the goals of increasing hunting and shooting participation is to build a base of political and economic support, it is important to not discount the support base that already exists. Licensed hunters are only one segment of the hunting culture, probably less than 25% (given the number of sporadic participants, dropouts, and nonhunting members of the hunting social world).
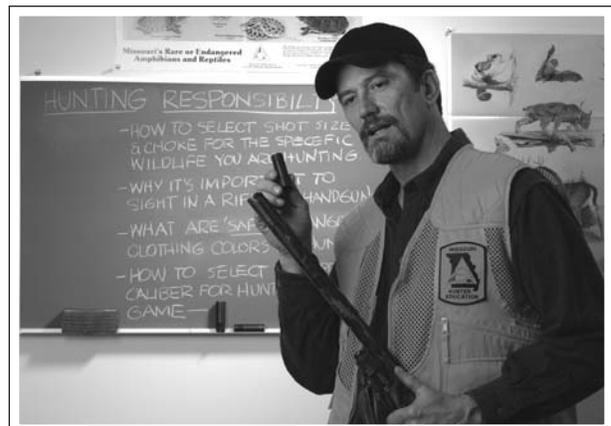
III. TRIAL STAGE

Definition

When a person begins to act on his/her interest in hunting and shooting they have entered the trial stage. Trials may be personally defined. If a person goes shooting or accompanies someone on a hunt or eats game meat or scouts for a hunting location or shooting range, it can be a trial experience. A more definite trial experience occurs when a person goes afield with a hunting implement in search of game or actually shoots at a range. People may need several trial experiences before making a decision to continue hunting/shooting or give it up. At this stage the person begins to perfect technical competence, and the development of social competence is critical to further advancement. The person may begin to develop an identity as a hunter/shooter – a strong indicator of a person in the trial stage.

Facilitating Factors

- Apprenticeship experiences.

- Social support opportunities.

- Opportunities to develop technical and social competence in all sorts of hunting-related activities (scouting, shooting, finding game, understanding habitat quality, preparing meat, telling good stories, etc.). This includes development of social and cultural attitudes and values concerning hunting/shooting.

Recommended Strategies

1. Provide apprenticeship and social support opportunities year-round, and try to embed these within non-traditional (i.e., non-hunting or non-shooting) venues.

2. Promote hunter education programs.

3. Develop and test mechanisms for providing social support to hunter education graduates very soon after they complete the course (e.g., clubs, magazines, newsletters, mentor organizations).

4. Prepare training modules for hunter education instructors, administrators, industry, and sportsmen's clubs. These modules should stress the importance of social structure to retention of participants and should show instructors how to incorporate these concepts into the course. (This can be accomplished best by a group that includes researchers, industry, etc.)

5. Develop and promote youth hunts.

6. Develop programs to intercept transient hunters from other states (could be offered by large employers, sportsman's clubs, shooting ranges, etc.).

7. Provide and promote shooting range and shooting preserve experiences.

8. Develop and promote surrogate experiences (e.g., simulators, 3-D ranges, field days, etc.).

9. Provide opportunities to develop technical competence (shooting ranges, field days, etc.).

10. Develop and provide mentoring opportunities (Adopt-A-Hunter or Apprentice programs).

The trial phase occurs as a person participates in the activity to see how well it fits. The person invests time, energy, and resources in efforts to "learn the ropes." Intervention strategies involve educational programs with opportunities for repeated participation, and with a focus on eliminating or minimizing barriers.

An understanding of behavioral expectations also must occur at this stage. Ideally, interventions include multiple opportunities to engage in a series of in-depth experiences. The development of apprentice-mentor programs, school curriculums, and other longer-term efforts clearly indicate opportunities for other partners in the process. This may include cooperative

programs with schools, summer camps, scouts, 4-H, other youth organizations, community service groups, churches, libraries, conservation and hunting/shooting organizations, state wildlife agencies, and others. These are important to show the potential recruit that hunting is a part of a person's life – it is not something "separate and apart" from the rest of the person's life.

Opportunities also can include a call to action to hunters/shooters in your area to introduce and mentor at least one person (someone they know) annually to hunting or shooting. Research shows that an invitation from a friend or request from a child is the highest motivator for individuals to hunt or shoot more often.

Research & Evaluation Needs

1. Administer a pre-course questionnaire [such as the set of questions tested at length and used for more than a decade by researchers at Cornell University to identify stages of hunting involvement (Decker and Purdy 1986; Enck et al. 1996)] to hunter education students throughout North America to collect baseline information and to determine what stage of hunting adoption most students are in. This will allow hunter education administrators to adapt courses to meet student needs and to evaluate overall recruitment and retention needs. A similar process could be used for participants at shooting ranges.

2. Collect data for immediate use in program development and longitudinal investigations.

   a. Determine percentage of hunter education graduates that hunt and do not hunt in the first, second, and third hunting seasons after graduation.

   b. For those who hunt after graduation, identify their hunting effort, experiences, satisfaction, motivations, and level of social support.

   c. For those who do not hunt after graduation, identify the reasons why.

   Conduct the same process for first-time shooting range participants.

3. Evaluate effectiveness of the participation strategies listed above.

4. Determine how the socialization process differs between groups (men vs. women; urban vs. rural; Caucasian vs. non-Caucasian, etc.).

NOTE: This is difficult because research suggests that these differences between groups are not easily defined through standard demographic characters. Assistance from evaluation professionals likely will be required.

5. Measure geographic mobility of participants – how to reach people who are "transplanted?"

6. Investigate the roles that age and developmental stage (social, cognitive, affective, etc.) play in the movement of a person from the interest stage to the continuation stage.

IV. CONTINUATION WITH SUPPORT
APPRENTICE STAGE

Definition

People who have had enough trial experiences to decide they like hunting/shooting and to perceive themselves as hunters/shooters.

Facilitating Factors

- Development of multiple motivations for being a hunter/shooter (not just for going hunting/shooting).

- Development of a sense of belonging to a broader hunting and shooting culture.

- Development of interest in taking on an initiator/companion/mentor role within the hunting and shooting culture. No longer being treated as, or feeling like, an apprentice.

- Learn new skills

- Companionship

- Challenge

- Achievement

Recommended Strategies

1. Provide quality opportunities for participation, such as youth hunts (especially targeted to urban youth and children of nonhunters who already are in the trial stage and indicate readiness to move into the continuation stage).

2. Develop and provide advanced, voluntary, species-specific hunter education programs.

3. Develop and promote opportunities to network with other hunters and shooters (to develop social competence).

4. Develop and provide "refresher" activities prior to hunting seasons to engage last year's license buyers.

5. Develop "Adopt-A-Hunter" programs (apprentice, mentoring).

6. Develop ways to immerse hunter education course graduates in a system of influences and support very soon after they complete the course.

7. Provide hunters/shooters opportunities to be mentors.

Research & Evaluation Needs

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of strategies designed to increase participation.

2. Measure geographic mobility of this group – how to reach people who are "transplanted" and partner them with appropriate mentors?

NOTE: In some states hunter education is not required until a youth reaches this stage.

Adoption/continuation choices are made based on participant satisfactions and benefits as well as the elimination of barriers. Participants begin to identify themselves as hunters and shooters. Intervention strategies focus on retention.

This is the phase in which social factors clearly play the most important role. Program strategies designed to build and reinforce this social support take time and are difficult to evaluate.

Effective programs emphasize building a long-term apprentice-mentor relationship. Although one-on-one relationships provide individual attention, apprentice-mentor relationships also can be achieved through group settings with leaders and/or teachers focusing on hunting (e.g., teachers with after-school programs with schools, 4-H leaders, scout leaders, etc.).

Social support also includes peers. When someone has a friend or relative to participate

with, the potential for continuation is much greater. Encourage participants to invite friends to attend the program with them. Having friends attend together provides the first phase of social support for the activity and someone to go hunting or shooting with.

Peer social support also can be accomplished through a club setting. An after-school hunting or shooting club not only provides opportunities to learn more and improve skills, it provides a tremendous amount of social support. Adults can join a local hunting club or groups such as Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, National Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever or a similar group.

If a participant's immediate family and/or social peer group does not support hunting or shooting, it creates a much more complex set of circumstances to address, and may be outside the scope of your efforts. However, the more social support you can provide a participant, the greater chance that individual has of seeing him/herself as a hunter or shooter. As you review the partner benefits section of this chapter, consider the opportunity to bring in partners such as schools, community groups, churches, and other organizations that can provide social support.

Another part of retention is providing advanced training. Once someone has learned the basics, they may want to try their hand at hunting with a muzzleloader or archery equipment, turkey hunting, waterfowl hunting, etc.

Programs that either offer a smorgasbord of activities and/or help lead hunters and shooters to new activities can go a long way in keeping their interest year after year and motivating them to participate.

The lines drawn between these phases frequently are quite blurred. For example, a hunter education course may bring a person to the interest stage as well as play a role in the trial stage.

The Becoming An Outdoors Woman and Women In the Outdoors programs may provide an initial experience, provide a trial, or both. Connections built by participants may contribute to the adoption/continuation process. Mentoring is likely an extremely important factor during both the trial and adoption phases.

Different audiences require different combinations of R&R strategies. Effective programs that target women are not based on assumptions that hold true for traditional, white, male constituent groups. Women have different motivations and are constrained differently from participating in outdoor activities. African, Asian, and Hispanic Americans may each require different strategies to move through the eight-stage process. Just getting these audiences to try hunting or shooting may require a look at why they have not participated in the past and addressing the personal barriers or constraints they face.

Individuals with disabilities face different sets of constraints. Refer to Chapters 6 and 7 for more information on working with diverse audiences and persons with disabilities.

V. CONTINUATION WITHOUT FOCUSED SUPPORT

NO LONGER APPRENTICE STAGE

Definition

At this stage a person has developed an identity as a hunter or shooter, along with the requisite social and technical skills needed to have satisfying experiences without outside assistance.

Facilitating Factors

- Legally allowed to hunt or shoot alone and to supervise others while they are hunting/shooting.

- Developing multiple motivations (achievement, affiliative, appreciative).

- Confident in social support from family and friends.

- Feel technically competent to hunt or shoot on their own.

- Feel comfortable with the amount of game available, hunting/shooting opportunities, complexity of hunting regulations, etc.

Recommended Strategies

1. Provide opportunities to communicate with other hunters/shooters, particularly in non-traditional settings.

2. Encourage membership in sportsmen's groups.

3. Recruit as hunter education instructors.

4. Recruit as mentors (promote the rewards of being a mentor).

5. Maintain or increase availability of game, hunting/shooting opportunities, etc.

6. Promote alternative hunting/shooting opportunities (e.g., dove hunters may also try duck hunting if they hear that waterfowl numbers are up in a given year).

Research & Evaluation Needs

The following types of information would be useful to track for all stages of hunting/shooting adoption, but it is especially important to discover what happens to "newly formed" hunters and shooters. This information can then be used to help ensure that the hunting/shooting community does not "lose track" of these people over time.

1. Track participation over time.

2. Track license buying activity.

3. Track number of days spent hunting/shooting.

4. Track amount of gear purchased.

5. Track memberships in sporting organizations.

6. Track subscriptions to sporting magazines.

7. Measure geographic mobility of this group – how to reach people who are "transplanted" and provide social support for hunting/shooting.

8. Correlate these behaviors with different hunter/shooter identity types because different self-perceptions probably require different kinds of behaviors as initiating rites of passage and reinforcing activities.

VI. CONTINUATION AS A HUNTING/ SHOOTING PROPONENT STAGE

Definition

People who provide strong social and political support for the hunting and shooting sports at local, state/provincial, and/or regional and national levels.

NOTE: A small proportion of hunters and shooters are in this stage, although for those who take it on or seek it out, it is a major part of their identity as a hunter or shooter.

Facilitating Factors
- They have multiple motivations (Affiliative; Affective; Appreciation)
- Tradition, heritage
- "Individualist," Second Amendment rights

Recommended Strategies
1. Provide opportunities to communicate with other hunters/shooters.
2. Develop rewards programs.
3. Develop recognition programs.
4. Recruit as mentors (promote the rewards of being a mentor).
5. Increase acceptance of this group's vital role by agency personnel.

Research & Evaluation Needs
Hunting/shooting proponents make up a small but vitally important segment of the hunting/shooting culture – a segment that has not been studied much.
1. Study the factors that lead people to this stage. Can we recruit more of these?
2. Evaluate agency effectiveness at nurturing this group to retain them in this stage.
3. Evaluate the impact of these people on other hunters/shooters and on other segments of society.

VII. TEMPORARY CESSATION STAGE

Definition
People who temporarily drop out of the hunting or shooting ranks because of various factors. These people may experience a temporary loss of connection with the hunting and shooting culture; or they may remain connected with the culture, but cease their hunting or shooting activities.

Facilitating Factors
- Physical (illness, hospitalization, etc.).
- Economic (cannot afford to hunt/shoot, work obligations, etc.).
- Family obligations.
- Reduced prospects for success (reduced game populations, bag limits, etc.).
- Limited access to hunting land or shooting ranges.
- Displacement (moved to new, unfamiliar area of the country).
- Loss of social support (long-time partner moves away, dies, or quits hunting/shooting).
- Loss of free time.

Recommended Strategies
1. Maintain contact.
2. Promote opportunities to rejoin active participation.
3. Promote opportunities to take on other roles in the hunting and shooting culture (mentor, initiator, companion).
4. Promote alternative hunting opportunities (e.g., displaced dove hunters may take up duck hunting if they hear that waterfowl hunting is good in their new location).

Research & Evaluation Needs
1. Measure rates of temporary cessation.
2. Monitor trends in license buying habits.
3. Determine reasons for temporary cessation.

VIII. PERMANENT DESERTION STAGE

Definition

People who permanently stop hunting/ shooting and no longer consider themselves hunters or shooters.

Note: Although a hunter/shooter may him or herself permanently desert the ranks of hunters/shooters, that doesn't mean that he or she is opposed to hunting/shooting or will not support hunting and shooting in other ways.

Facilitating Factors

- Physical (death, or can no longer walk, shoot, hear, etc.).

- Economic (cannot afford to hunt or shoot).

- Family obligations.

- "Bad experience" with hunting or other hunters (including legal violation/citation).

- Reduced prospects for success (reduced game populations, bag limits, etc.).

- Limited access to hunting land or shooting ranges.

- Displacement (moved to new, unfamiliar area of the country).

Recommended Strategies

1. Maintain contact where possible.

2. Promote opportunities to take on other roles in the hunting and shooting culture (mentor, initiator, companion).

Research & Evaluation Needs

1. Measure rates of desertion (loss of interest).

2. Determine reasons for permanent desertion.

Social Support is Critical!

Arguably the biggest obstacle facing hunter/shooter participation today is the lack of social infrastructure and social support mechanisms for hunters and shooters. This lack of social support has impacts at every stage of hunter/shooter involvement.

The issue of social support for hunters and shooters is complex and pervasive. It is far beyond the scope of any single program, agency, or organization to solve by itself. However, there are many actions that individual programs, agencies, and organizations can take to move in the right direction – to help introduce more people to hunting and shooting activities and to increase their participation at every stage in their hunting/shooting "careers."

Hunter Motivations

All hunters have one or more motivations for hunting – primary reasons why they become involved and stay involved. These motivations have been described as Achievement, Affiliation, and Appreciation (see descriptions below). People in every stage of hunting involvement may have one, two, or all three of these motivations, but in general, research suggests that people in earlier stages of involvement tend to have single motivations, and that motivation is often achievement-oriented.

Agencies should provide opportunities for hunters to develop and satisfy multiple motivations to encourage their long-term participation. Satisfaction of multiple motivations not only makes "hunting" a more integral part of the person's life, but also is reflective of the person starting to recognize that being a hunter is more than just going out to shoot something. A person begins the recruitment process when he or she has the desire to develop the characteristics that are unique to

Achievement

Achievement-oriented hunters are motivated by numbers of animals harvested, trophy animals, methodology, recognition, and demonstration of skill. Achievement-oriented hunters may exhibit what others may describe as negative behavior patterns in an attempt to satisfy their desire to excel and be recognized. These hunters may also be motivated by higher ideals.

Affiliative

Affiliative hunters are motivated by relationships and interactions with family, friends, and organizations. Those relationships are important for fueling their identity development – they use those relationships to ensure they have opportunities to engage in the activities and behaviors that make them think of themselves as hunters. Hunters may also develop affiliative relationships with dogs, whereby the desire to share time with the animal companion becomes a motivation to hunt. Affiliative hunters may be good candidates for mentoring people or for becoming hunter education instructors.

Appreciative

Hunters with an appreciative orientation are motivated to seek solitude and "wilderness" experiences. The motivation is to get away, renew energy, and enjoy or appreciate nature – whether or not an animal is harvested. Hunters driven solely by appreciative motivations may not be good candidates for mentoring unless they see hunters as essential supporters of "wilderness" and open-space.

Don't Miss the Point

While this Hunting/Shooting Participation Classification System may seem to be academic, it is critical to understand the complex process that becoming a hunter or shooter entails. Adopting these activities does not come about in isolation. It is a multi-faceted process that involves considerable social support.

Different kinds of social support are needed for the different stages of adoption.

Developing programs without a complete understanding of this process is a serious mistake!

More About Motivations

Motivations reflect personal goals that people have (whether articulated or not). When you measure important satisfaction/dissatisfaction components of hunting and shooting, you are measuring, in a sense, the degree to which people's personal motivations have been fulfilled or not. So, it makes sense to try to meet multiple motivations by providing satisfying experiences of the various types that are important to them.

Another way to look at it is that people are satisfied when they can exhibit or accomplish characteristics they use to think of or describe themselves as hunters or shooters. They are dissatisfied when they fail to exhibit or accomplish those characteristics.

If a person thinks of herself as a hunter who is competent, responsible, and respectful of the game she pursues, but then wounds and can't find a deer, it is dissatisfying in large part because she has failed to achieve the attributes she associates with being a hunter. If she fails enough times or in enough ways, maybe she ceases hunting temporarily or permanently. Similarly, if a person can no longer connect to nature through hunting or shooting by doing the activity out his back door because of a new housing development, he cannot achieve whatever characteristics he typically could have achieved by connecting to nature out his back door.

CHAPTER 2: Plan Ahead for Success

If you are planning to implement a hunting or shooting recruitment or retention program, or if you are expanding or enhancing an existing program, this chapter will provide ideas for making the most of this opportunity. The things you do before you contact a single participant literally can be the difference between a program that is effective, engaging, and exciting, and a program that perhaps makes you feel good, but does not achieve its objectives. The time you spend planning will greatly increase your success.

This chapter focuses on initial planning efforts, but the entire Workbook is essentially about planning. Programs–even longstanding ones–that follow Best Practices continually plan ahead–for the next year, the next cycle, the next participant.

Below is a list of Best Practices for program planning. Following the list, each Best Practice from the list is explained, and worksheets throughout the chapter help you apply each practice to your own particular situation. Under ideal circumstances, many of these practices would be implemented simultaneously. However, it is critical that the first two precede the others. There have been cases where practitioners have selected program tools (curricula, materials, instructors, etc.) before determining program purposes (mission, goals, and objectives). A hallmark of effective programs is that they determine the program's purpose before doing anything else.

BEST PRACTICE FOR PROGRAM PLANNING

Effective Programs...

- Are relevant to the mission of the sponsoring agency or organization.

- Clearly define the program's purpose, which includes mission, goals, and objectives, and assures that all are aligned with each other.

- Plan for program evaluation in the initial stages of planning.

- Are based on and shaped by some form of needs assessment and/or logic model.

- Receive adequate support, resources, and staffing to become sustainable over time.

- Rely on experienced, well informed, prepared, and ethical staff to develop, implement, and evaluate programs.

- Provide recruitment and retention opportunities that are frequent and sustained over time.

- Involve stakeholders and partnerships at all levels of program development.

- Are inclusive of all audiences (accessible/available to anyone with an interest in participating).

Effective programs are relevant to the mission of the agency or organization sponsoring the program.

Relevance helps justify your program and your funding, prevents the establishment of ineffective programs, and helps make your program more efficient and sustainable. In addition, it helps keep you on track and reminds you and your staff that what you are doing is important to the entire agency and its future. How do you know if you've hit the mark? For starters, use your agency or organization mission statement. Then look at your agency or organization strategic plan. Programs that follow Best Practices can show clearly how their educational programs contribute to the mission and how they help achieve the goals and objectives in the strategic plan.

A fish and wildlife agency may have a broad, general mission such as "conserve the state's natural resources and provide recreational opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations." In such a case, an R&R program may be appropriate, although more specific objectives to help you focus your efforts are beneficial. When a broad goal, such as "provide hunting and shooting opportunities" is supported by more specific objectives, such as "provide hunter education courses to 10,000 new hunters" or "build 5 new shooting ranges," you get a much clearer picture as to whether your program is helping the cause. The objectives are the measurable steps that get you to your goal.

Agency/organization administrators can help define program goals and objectives. Involve them in development of the mission, goals, and objectives of your program. They probably do not have expertise in R&R issues, but getting their input early in the process provides them ownership in your efforts and helps them understand the value of the programs that result.

If you have existing R&R programs, look at your goals and objectives and consider how well they match up with the mission of your agency/organization and its strategic plan. Also, consider whether other agency/organization objectives or issues could be addressed through your program. If you have not clearly communicated the relevance of your programs to your agency, plan to do so as soon as possible. See the following section for more information on setting effective goals and objectives.

Effective programs have a clearly stated purpose, which includes mission, goals, and objectives, and assures that all are aligned with each other.

Defining the purpose of your program may be the most important step you can take in program planning, yet it is overlooked or not closely considered surprisingly often. Basically, the purpose defines what you are trying to accomplish with your program.

What Do You Call It?

There are myriad different terms used to describe the elements that make up a program's purpose. Some of the more common ones include: mission, vision, goals, aims, guidelines, strategies, principles, purposes, objectives, and actions. Your agency or organization may have specific terms for these elements that it expects you to use. It is not so important what you call these elements as it is that you consider what they represent, and clearly communicate that with your audience. Picture these terms as layers of a pyramid, and think of them in terms of the questions they answer.

First level (i.e., the mission)

Why is this program in existence? What is it trying to do? This usually is called the mission statement. It is a broad, philosophical statement about what the program hopes to contribute. It provides overall guidance for program goals and objectives.

Second level (i.e., the goals)

Why are we doing this program? The answers to this question provide the goals of the program. They help define how the program will help achieve the mission.

Third level (i.e., the objectives)

What, specifically, do we want to accomplish? These elements are commonly called objectives. Another way to identify objectives is to fill in the blank on the following phrase: "As a result of this program, participants will be able to _____." Objectives should be measurable, and generally – though not always – are set up on a relatively short timeframe.

Sometimes, the differences between missions, goals, and objectives can get fuzzy, especially when you're working in partnership with other organizations. Also, goals and objectives may overlap, which can add to the complexity. At times, you may be tempted to throw up your hands and forget the whole thing. *Don't do it!*

The thing to remember is this: Regardless of what you call the various levels, it is critical to ask the questions "Why are we doing this program?" and "What do we want to accomplish with this program?" You can create missions, goals, objectives,
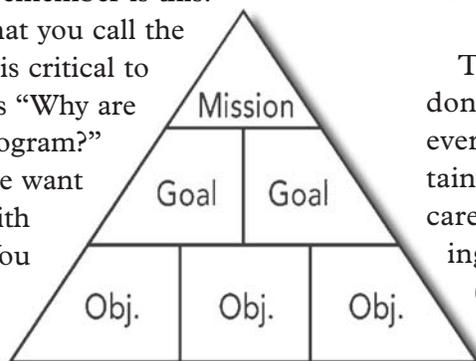
and whatever other levels you want or need to clarify your answers or meet organizational requirements, but be sure to answer the basic questions.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs plan for program evaluation in the initial stages of planning.

Most people recognize that evaluation is a critical part of R&R programs, but many are not aware that, to be most effective, evaluation must begin before a program is implemented. Effective programs build evaluation into the program plan and budget. It is a core part of the program, not something extra funded only in years of plenty.

Far too often, managers think about evaluation only in terms of an after-the-fact judgment as to whether desired outcomes were achieved. This kind of evaluation is critical, but incomplete. Building evaluation into your program from the beginning can help you better develop your program, adjust it over time with stakeholder input, and achieve the end results you are looking for more effectively and efficiently. If you are trying to demonstrate positive outcomes, you have to have a "before picture" to compare with your "after picture."

Chapter 5 is devoted to program evaluation and provides more information.

There is an old saying that goes: "If you don't know where you're going, any (and every!) road will get you there." This is certainly true of R&R programs. If you don't care where you're going, then just start walking! But if you have a destination in mind (goals and objectives for your program), a program logic model is the road map to success.

Don't be fooled by the fancy name. A program logic model is nothing more than a simplified, visual description of how different factors of the program are related. It helps you visualize how factors fit together and relate to each other. It also helps you think of questions you will need to answer concerning program design, implementation, and evaluation.

Do you need it?

The first question to ask, and probably the most commonly overlooked, is "Do we need the program?" Consider this question carefully before you do anything else. Perhaps your agency director or chapter executive committee said you must implement a program. In this case, the question may be moot.

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Be proactive. Develop a needs assessment. The purpose of a needs assessment is to determine whether the activity you want to do is actually needed. Are other groups already doing it (or something similar)? Does the target audience want it? Will it accomplish organization goals? Where does it fit in the Hunting/Shooting Participation Classification System? (see Chapter 1). If the program you're considering does not address a specific need identified in the Classification System and/or your specific goals and objectives, you may be well served to spend your scarce resources elsewhere.

Consider what you're putting into the program and what you will get out of it. The logic model in Figure 2 is a great tool to do this. It will show how well the proposed activity fits into the overall program, how it impacts other programs, and how it impacts budget and staff. Perhaps you'll find the program is indeed a

good fit. But even if not, at least the "powers that be" can make an informed decision.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs are based on and shaped by some form of needs assessment and/or logic model.

A basic program design strategy might ask:

- What are the expected outcomes of the program? These should be based on your objectives identified above, and the objectives should reflect a process that leads to someone developing a self-perception as a hunter/shooter.

- What methods are appropriate to achieve these outcomes?

- What resources are necessary to apply the methods?

- In what environment and setting will the program occur?

- How does the program meet the needs/wants of the target audience?

The simple logic model in Figure 2 includes common program inputs, throughputs, outputs, and outcomes. These are fancy names for simple factors, but it is important to understand them so you can gain the full benefit of the process. Each component is explained below.

The same logic model you develop as a conceptual map for program design also can be used for evaluation purposes (see Chapter 5).

Understanding the parts of the model

Inputs are resources you must invest to implement a program. Inputs include staff, money, equipment, facilities, administrative approvals, budget authority, agreements with cooperating agencies, volunteer support, in-kind services, donations, and environmental and community resources. The model links these resources to specific activities designed for your target audiences.

FIGURE 2: Conceptual Logic Model for Program Development and Evaluation

Inputs	Throughputs		Outputs	Outcomes		
Resources	*Activities*	*Participation*	*Counts/Feedback*	*Short-term*	*Medium-term*	*Long-term*
→		→	→	Learning	Action	Conditions
Staff	Curriculum Design	Participants	Number reached	Awareness	Practice	Social
Volunteers		Customers	Experiences	Motivations	Decisions	Economic
Curricula	Product dev.	Stakeholders	Satisfaction Surveys	Knowledge	Action	Political
Donors	Recruiting	Citizens		Values	Behavior	Civic
Time	Clinics	Volunteers	Other feedback	Attitudes	Stewardship	Environmental
Money	Workshops	Trainers	Service units	Opinions	Policies	Public relations
Materials	Meeting	Teachers	Cost per unit	Skills		
Equipment	Counseling	Youth	Service quality	Aspirations		
Technology	Facilitation	Families				
Partners	Assessments					
	Media work					
	Training					

INFLUENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Activities and their participants are viewed as throughputs. The term "participants" should include staff, administrators, and others who are themselves learners in training programs and briefing sessions.

Program outputs include things such as how many people would attend, how many would be reached or exposed to a message, how satisfied participants would be with their experience, etc. If your program objective is only to provide satisfying experiences for participants or to convey information to the public, this may be all you need to consider.

Outcomes are results of a program beyond simple outputs. Successful outcomes include increased awareness and knowledge, changed attitudes and opinions, or establishment of a foundation for self-definition as a hunter or shooter, or responsible behavior toward the environment. For hunting and shooting pro-grams, outcomes can include increased knowledge of hunting and shooting, changed attitudes about the value and benefits of hunting and shooting to participants or their families, establishment of a foundation of hunting and shooting skills (including problem solving and decision making) increased social support for hunting and shooting, and increased participation. Measuring outcomes is more difficult than measuring outputs, and it is impossible without carefully planned programs and rigorous evaluation activities.

All model components described above are influenced by environmental factors and assumptions that can influence development, implementation, and success of a program. Examples include politics, socio-economic conditions, and institutional constraints. The ability to identify and control influential environmental factors (and the costs of doing so) is crucial to program success.

A fully developed program logic model helps you:

- Summarize key elements of your program.

- Clarify relationships between activities and intended outcomes of the program.

- Show cause-and-effect relationships among activities and outcomes – that is, which activities are expected to lead to which outcomes.

- Help identify critical questions for improving program design and evaluation.

- Provide opportunities for program stakeholders to discuss the program and agree upon its description.

- Link program development and evaluation.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs receive adequate support, resources and staffing to become sustainable over time.

As you plan your efforts, make sure all elements of your program (including staff and evaluation) are considered to be core elements in your organization's budget.

Emphasize to administrators of your agency or organization that R&R programs are long-term efforts. They cannot be cut to solve a funding problem, and then be expected to start up again at the same level in a year or two. Many successful R&R programs involve partnerships with groups or volunteers that have made a commitment to assist the program. If your organization cuts programs it is involved in, it may lose trust and cred-

ibility with partners. It can take years to overcome those losses.

Your program logic model will help you create a budget. Work with your team to identify all the variables you need to consider. Look at what is feasible to fund over the long term and what is not. This will help avoid planning a program that takes more staff or resources than your agency/organization can fund. This process will help make the case that, in order for R&R programs to be effective, staff must have support of the administration on several levels.

Obviously, financial support is critical. Just as important is that administrators see R&R as an integral part of doing business and that it is part of the strategic planning process. Encourage staff from all areas within the agency or organization (wildlife, enforcement, forestry, information, and others) to constantly work together to enhance programs.

Examples:

1. Provide agency wildlife biologists training in how to effectively communicate the agency's role and efforts in maintaining quality habitat and an opportunity to present this information at R&R events.

2. Involve conservation law enforcement in R&R events. In many states, officers are an integral part of the hunter education course. Encourage this and participation in other R&R events.

3. Involve communications and marketing staffs in development of a marketing and communications strategy and in reaching key audiences with your R&R messages.

4. Assist other organizations in developing and delivering programs that help participants create or facilitate personal identities as hunters/shooters.

A key ingredient to any successful program is highly qualified, motivated, and well-trained staff (volunteer or paid) that provides leadership and works effectively with volunteer instructors and/or other learners in a socially support-ive situation. You wouldn't hire an accountant to fill a wildlife biologist position. It is just as important to consid-er the professional back-ground needed for your R&R programs. Knowledgeable, committed, and ethical indi-viduals capable of working with diverse groups are important keys to success.

Professional development and support

Effective programs plan ongoing profession-al development and support for staff and vol-unteers. This is critical to sustaining effective programs over time. You may hire the best peo-ple when your program begins, but if you don't give them opportunities to keep up to date in their fields, you'll lose ground in the long run.

Clear understanding of agency goals and objectives

Everyone associated with the program must have a clear understanding of agency goals and objectives and how they relate to the R&R pro-grams. If the staff is familiar only with the R&R goals and not the agency/organization goals, they will not see the big picture. Understanding the big picture helps staff stay on track, be more effective, and carry that mis-sion forward into the training of instructors and volunteers.

One of the keys to creating lifelong hunters and shooters is to provide opportunities for accessing and practicing new behaviors fre-quently, in a variety of ways, and over a long period of time. It also helps if the program or information is easily accessible and offered on a predictable schedule.

Newly acquired behaviors require follow-up support to maintain. Research clearly shows that, even when strong, short-term behavioral change occurs, long-term change is doubtful without continued reinforcement. For example, if you take a group of young teens on a youth hunt, but then never do anything more with them over time (even if they left your program with new skills, knowl-edge and motivation) it is not likely they will maintain it without follow-up support. Apprenticeship experiences that the learner shares over time with a personally significant individual are one way (but not the only way) to encourage and maintain that follow-up support.

As you plan your program, consider how you might provide opportunities to keep your partici-pants engaged in multiple ways, as well as over a span of time. Realistically, this can be accomplished only through partnership efforts among schools, agencies, and nongovernmental organizations.

Successful programs bring a coalition of stakeholders and partners together to design, implement, and evaluate a program that meets

their mutual needs. Stakeholders are people who have some sort of a stake or interest in the program being developed. They care about a program and are willing to commit to it. Stakeholders might be sponsors (funding sources), agency supervisors, community leaders, landowners, extension workers, parents, and/or targeted participants in the program. A careful needs assessment process will help identify potential partners.

Keep in mind that family members have a huge role to play in R&R efforts, even if they have no interest personally in becoming hunters. For instance, a young hunter's non-hunter parent who cooks and serves his game to the family contributes immensely to his identity as a hunter by reinforcing the "self-sufficiency" characteristic that is often a key motivation associated with being a hunter.

Diverse stakeholders lend a variety of perspectives to the program, helping you shape the focus and audience for maximum benefit. Their participation also helps achieve buy-in early in the process, so the program is more likely to be used. Involving participants from your target audience (e.g., youth, women, ethnic groups, persons with disabilities) in the planning stage helps ensure success. During evaluation phases, stakeholders can offer input about what information to gather, how to gather it, and ultimately how to share it with important audiences.

Stakeholders also reinforce a sense of community partnership, ownership, and interest in the program. Research indicates that parental and community involvement in schools improves student learning (recognizing that involvement means more than mere presence–in this case it means fostering a learning environment in which the student is invigorated to develop characteristics associat-

ed with being a learner).

Community members and parents can be role models and mentors and serve as an additional layer of support for educators.

Tips for developing a team of stakeholders:
- Think about who will be the ultimate users of the results and try to structure your team so that the results are channeled directly to those end-user groups.
- Use community leaders to help identify groups and individuals to invite to your team.
- After identifying which groups should be represented on the team, select specific individuals to represent each group.
- Select team members who are enthusiastic, who are willing to represent their group, who are willing to commit to the project, and who have opinions but not "axes to grind."
- Strive for diversity among team members. Don't limit members to those holding formal leadership positions within their groups or those who are the "most involved."

Once you have established a stakeholder team, communication is key. Set goals and objectives for the team as appropriate. Clarify responsibilities early and often. Make sure your team knows they are acting in an advisory capacity and not in a decision-making capacity. Work with the team to identify rules and roles for smooth and effective operation. If possible, the team should have a leader or facilitator with training or experience in leading a team to achieve goals and objectives. It is also helpful to identify information and resources that the team will need and who is responsible or available to provide it.

Potential Stakeholders/Partners:

Local gun shops or sporting goods retailers	Schools and church groups
Local law enforcement authorities and parks and recreation centers	YMCA and local community centers
Local government agencies	Wildlife conservation organizations (Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever, Quail Unlimited, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, etc.)
Local shooting ranges and gun clubs	
Local fish and game/conservation clubs	Youth organizations (Scouts, 4-H, Campfire, Big Brothers Big Sisters, etc.)
Representatives from target audiences	Local politicians, influential and famous people (athletes, TV personalities, etc.)

NOTE: Family members, neighbors, and other hunters are perhaps the most important of all stakeholder/partner groups, although they are much more difficult to identify and work with on an extensive level.

BEST PRACTICE

Effective programs are inclusive of all audiences (accessible/available to anyone with an interest in participating).

Making your program accessible/available to all individuals regardless of their race, gender, age, physical characteristics or cultural differences is an important part of program planning.
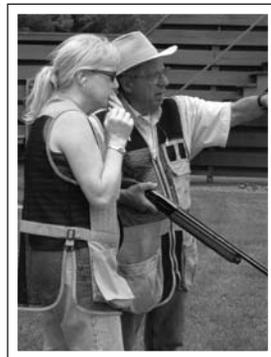
Although no individual should ever feel excluded from a program, it is important to target certain segments of the public to accomplish your goal of inclusion. For example, to attract more women, Hispanics, African Americans, and other ethnic groups, it is important to develop elements of your pro-

gram to specifically address the barriers and constraints these groups face. Chapter 6 contains information that will help you plan your efforts to reach a diverse audience.

Whether your program is targeted to the general public or a specific segment of the public (women, youth, adults, or an ethnic group), consider the needs of persons with disabilities. You may need to adopt new adaptive technology, hire support staff, and/or provide special services to make your program accessible and welcoming. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 3: Building Your Program

This chapter will help you develop the tools, implementation strategy and delivery systems to ensure the program you put in place is top-notch in every respect – to ensure it achieves the goals and objectives you set.

Have You Planned It Out?

Chapter 2 covered important information about initial planning. Defining your program's purpose and making certain it is relevant to the mission of your agency or organization are important steps that must be completed before you consider the tools to use. Some Best Practices need to be carried out simultaneously. For example, you don't know how large a staff you will need for a program until you identify the delivery system and tools. In addition, you have to consider your budget before a final decision can be made on the delivery system and tools. If you haven't developed a program logic model and completed the planning steps outlined in Chapter 2, it will be much more difficult to get the maximum benefit from this chapter.

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The list below contains currently recognized Best Practices for program development and implementation. Following the list, each Best Practice is explained and worksheets throughout the chapter help you apply each practice to your own unique situation.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Effective Programs:

- Consider delivery systems and involve stakeholders during program development.

- Are relevant to the mission of the sponsors and the objectives of the audience.

- Align curricula with national and state standards when appropriate.

- Recognize the critical role of ongoing professional development.

- Support, engage in, and make use of scientific, social, educational, and other appropriate research.

- Examine existing materials and resources before developing new ones.

- Clearly address safety and other regulations, and reduce real risks to everyone involved.

- Are experiential.

- Empower learners.

- Are learner-centered to provide collaborative learning opportunities and development of critical thinking skills.

- Use multiple teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles.

- Consider the social context in which the education takes place and provide avenues to enhance the social support for learners.

- Identify and target one or more outcomes or skills, beyond the subject matter, that are broadly useful to the participant.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs consider delivery systems and involve stakeholders during program development.

During initial planning, you identified goals and objectives for your program. Next, you need to select the delivery system. Will the program be delivered at your own facility? Will staff deliver the program directly to participants? Will volunteers deliver it? Will it be delivered through the schools, 4-H, camps, scouts, community centers, churches, parks, or a combination of these?

If your program is going to be delivered by individuals beyond your immediate staff, you should involve key individuals – who will be involved in the administration or delivery of the program – in the planning of program materials and implementation strategies.

When starting to work on program development, most people tend to think that raising awareness of and interest in hunting and shooting are easy, whereas the trial and continuation stages are hard. However, trial and continuation are likely to happen "naturally" if awareness and interest are generated well.

In many sectors of society, people have lost the awareness of what it really means to be a hunter, and the elements that lead to a desire to become a hunter or shooter. It is not awareness of hunting and shooting as activities that is necessary or even important. Most people are aware they exist. But how many people are aware of the characteristics that hunters and shooters themselves attribute to being a hunter or shooter? For people who have developed a self-perception as a hunter or shooter, how did they acquire an interest in developing those attributes? Program development should focus on raising awareness about these things and on helping people develop that "fire in the belly"

for these activities. If this is done well, it probably would be hard to keep people from going on to the trial and continuation stages.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs are relevant to the mission of the sponsors and to the objectives of the audience.

Relevant to sponsors

If you plan to deliver your program through schools, 4-H, scout groups, community programs, or other outside organizations, you must be able to demonstrate how it is relevant to them. The key to doing this is in finding common ground among your agency or organization's mission/goals/objectives and those of the groups you want to conduct your program.

Based on the mission/goals/objectives you developed for your program in Chapter 2, ask the potential sponsor to help identify common ground. For 4-H or scout groups you might ask: "Does the program help them incorporate youth development or meet project requirements?" For churches or community programs ask: "Does it help bring families together?"

Relevant to instructors

Unless you personally conduct the program you are planning, you must make it relevant to those who will be instructing your participants. If you cannot convince instructors that the program helps them meet their goals and objectives, they will not participate. If your staff is going to deliver the program, then your directive to deliver it may be enough to meet their objective. However, do not miss the opportunity to assess how well the program meets their broader goals and objectives.

The same things apply to parents and family members of potential hunters and shooters. How is the activity relevant to their goals and objectives within the context of the family?

The attribute of self-sufficiency may not be as important to a rural family in 2007 as it was to a rural family in earlier times. Perhaps the health benefits of wild game might be important. You should consider and try to discover what elements are important to today's family (and other micro-social groups) that overlaps with the characteristic attributes of being a hunter or shooter.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs align curricula with national standards, when appropriate.

There are a large number of national, state, and district standards that formal educators use to guide their curricula. Standards are typically subject-specific; that is, there are standards for science, geography, mathematics, etc. Teachers know about and use standards, so they can help you identify appropriate ones for your program. (Check with your state office of public instruction.)

Guidelines for environmental education also exist. Guidelines/standards have been developed for environmental education materials, professional development, and environmental literacy (see www.naaee.org). Standards also have been established for hunter education (see Chapter 8). Effective programs take these standards and guidelines into account during program development, regardless of whether the program is formal or informal. This will help make your program more relevant to a wider range of potential partners and/or delivery systems.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs recognize the critical role of ongoing professional development.

Teacher or instructor preparation and training is a must to assure the accurate and consistent use of curriculum materials. See Chapter 4 for more details.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs support, engage in, and make use of scientific, social, educational and other appropriate research.

Best Practices may change over time, and should be challenged continually by research, personal knowledge, and experience. The Best Practices provided in this Workbook are based on the best research and experience currently available, but they should not be considered to be the "final word" on the subject. Effective programs allocate time for staff to follow (or participate in) related research, and provide latitude for program changes based on new information.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs examine existing materials and resources before developing new ones.

After you have identified the goals, objectives, and delivery mechanism for your program, you can select the tools you will need. Identify and review as many existing materials as possible before selecting or developing your own. Do not waste energy re-inventing the wheel. Conducting a needs assessment for tools can help you make more effective use of your money and time.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs clearly address safety and other regulations, and reduce real risks to everyone involved.

Effective programs are committed to the safety of participants and staff. Each aspect of the program (activities, facilities, related services) is reviewed and concerns addressed. Liability is also a concern that must be addressed. If you are in a large agency or organization, enlist the assistance of risk managers.

It is impossible to cover this huge topic in detail here. What follows is a very brief overview of issues to consider as you implement your program.

Safety

Safety is not optional in recruitment and retention programs. It is a must! Safety of participants and staff members is essential. Safety includes obtaining background information about participants and instructors, communicating program curriculum with participants, and having skills needed for the given activity. Staff must know the safety protocol of the organization, and have written emergency plans accessible at all times. Safety includes training, communication, and preparation of all educators.

Just a few safety considerations for recruitment programs include:

- Safety around firearms
- Safety around hunting fields, water and/or in the woods
- Selection and inspection of program sites
- Weather
- Dealing with cold, heat and sun
- Insects and wildlife (including handling game)
- Supervision (two-deep instruction) and background checks on volunteers

- Age appropriateness of activity
- Safe transportation to and from activities

Regulations

Hunting and shooting have specific regulations that must be met. These vary by jurisdiction, and must be identified, communicated and demonstrated to participants, and followed explicitly.

Liability
A few of the liability issues that need to be addressed include:

- Personal participant liability
- Personnel issues
- Automobile liability
- General liability and directors' and officers' liability
- Liability associated with vulnerable volunteers or instructors (some may have mental, physical or emotional impairment making them unable or unlikely to report problems)
- Equipment and materials
- Accounts receivable

If your agency or organization does not have a risk management coordinator, consider hiring one to help you carefully analyze all risks associated with your program.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs are experiential.

Experiential learning includes four important elements:

CONCRETE EXPERIENCE	Learner has a real-world experience relevant to learning outcomes.
PROCESS INFORMATION	Learner thinks about and reflects on what happened.
GENERALIZE	Learners summarize what they've experienced and connect it to real-world examples (they answer the question "so what?").
APPLY	Learners apply what was learned to real-world and personally relevant examples (they answer the question "now what?").

There are two basic types of experiential learning. One is learning that occurs as a direct participation in the events of life. It doesn't take place as part of a structured course – it occurs through reflection on everyday experiences. This is the way people do most their learning.

The other type of experiential learning is related to education programs. It describes the sort of learning undertaken by participants who are given a chance to acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and feelings in an immediate and relevant setting. Through practice, people actively learn, then share their experiences, reflect on their importance, connect them to real world examples, and apply the resulting knowledge to other situations.

To fully apply experiential learning, R&R programs need to be relevant to the learner, be learner-centered, and include other principles covered in this chapter. Program developers must look for ways to make their program experiences relevant in the context of the potential hunter/shooter's family or other social group.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs empower learners.

Internationally accepted objectives for environmental education provide learners an opportunity to gain:
- **Awareness** – to acquire an awareness of and sensitivity to the total environment and its associated problems;

- **Knowledge** – to gain a variety of experiences in and acquire a basic understanding of the environment and its associated problems;

- **Attitudes** – to acquire a set of values and feelings of concern for the environment and motivation for actively participating in environmental improvement and protection;

- **Skills** – to acquire the skills for identifying and solving environmental problems; and

- **Participation** – to encourage citizens to use their knowledge to become actively involved at all levels in working toward resolution of environmental problems.

With slight modifications, these objectives can serve as overall guidelines for R&R programs as well.

Education is more than just the presentation of information. It helps learners achieve literacy in issues, working toward attitude and behavior changes in addition to knowledge. It seeks to give people the tools they need to weigh various sides of an issue to make informed and responsible decisions and engage in responsible behaviors. It also empowers them to seek out information and be able to participate in activities like hunting and shooting on their own. How do you do this?

Teach them how to think

The key to empowering your learners is to teach them how to think, not what to think. Rather than directing learners in a specific course of behavior, help them form the capacity to collect and analyze information and make informed decisions.

This requires more than the awareness and knowledge of hunting, shooting and wildlife stewardship processes and systems. It requires practical knowledge of how to bring about change, and citizen action skills needed to participate fully in civic life. You can help develop these by providing opportunities for learners to define an issue, determine if action is warranted, identify others involved, select appropriate action strategies, create and evaluate an action plan, implement the plan, and evaluate the results. You also can provide opportunities for participants to build skills in oral and written

communication, conflict resolution, and leadership, as well as participate in the political or regulatory process, consumer action, and community service.

In short, you can empower your learners by leading them from mere awareness of an issue to informed, responsible action.

The commitment and motivation a learner needs to take action often begins with awareness of the immediate surroundings. Instructors can help foster learners' curiosity and enthusiasm, and provide continuing opportunities to explore and discover the world around them. As learners develop and apply analysis and action skills, as they make their own decisions and think more critically about their choices, and as they hear stories of success, they learn that what they do individually and in groups can make a difference. This internal locus of control, or sense that they have the ability to influence the outcome of a situation, is important in helping learners develop a sense of empowerment and personal responsibility – key elements in good education.

How instructors present material can have a great impact on whether they are just conveying information or changing behavior.

More principles and guidelines regarding the learning process are available at:

North American Association for
Environmental Education
www.naaee.org/npeee/learner_guidelines.php

American Psychological Association
www.apa.org/ed/lcp.html

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs are learner-centered to provide collaborative learning opportunities and development of critical thinking skills.

In order for recruitment programs to be effective in an educational sense, they must take into account the ways people learn. Understanding how people learn can help you tremendously in your efforts to build effective programs.

Much more than blank slates

For most of the 20th Century, educational practices were based on a model of learning that assumed that students were blank slates on which the knowledge of others was written. Research since the mid-1970s suggests that learning occurs as a result of dynamic interactions between individuals and physical and social environments. Knowledge is actively built by learners based on their actions in the environment.

Social Aspects of Safety

Safety – especially with respect to firearms – is likely to be an important thing to many non-hunters and non-shooters in today's society. It's very important that the hunting/shooting community communicate that hunting and shooting can help someone develop skill in and the expectation of being safe when handling firearms. Safety must be part of an individual's self-perception as a hunter or shooter.

What does a new hunter's family need to help them feel comfortable letting the hunter keep a gun at home or use one afield? If they keep sending the message that guns and gun users are unsafe, the new hunter is not going to be recruited or retained, and probably will not even become aware that "safe" is a key characteristic of being a hunter or shooter.

This development of knowledge is an ongoing process of construction and reorganization by the learner. The most important factors influencing learning are what the learner already knows, and the context in which he or she obtained that knowledge. Learning occurs when a learner weighs new information against previous understanding, works through any discrepancies caused by the new information, and comes to a new understanding based on the new and the old. Learning can occur only when the new idea or concept can be integrated into the learner's existing conceptual system.

If the learner cannot integrate the new material with previous knowledge, it is either rejected, or rote learning (memorization through repetition) occurs. To be most effective, your teaching methods need to be consistent with how students build knowledge, and the context or content must be relevant. Learning can be improved if you build upon your learners' existing knowledge about a subject, rather than assuming they don't have any. That is, do not start from where you think they are, start from where they truly are.

Researchers have described a three-stage process that can be used to achieve conceptual change:

PHASE 1	**Preparation** – learners begin to think about the new concept, discuss their own explanations, and become aware of the limitations of their naïve explanations.
PHASE 2	**Presentation** – instructors explain or provide and interpret experiences with key principles and theories.
PHASE 3	**Application and integration** – learners apply scientific principles to new concepts and integrate those principles into their personal knowledge.

This process encourages programs that are learner-centered and involve active, experiential learning. This type of education is something students do, not something that is done to them. When learning is an active process, new experiences build upon previous experiences in a positive way, and incorporate interaction between the learner and the environment. Program materials should encourage positive attitudes toward learning by being presented in a fun, appealing, engaging, and challenging manner.

Instructors become facilitators, enabling students to use active techniques to create knowledge. The students' newly created knowledge is based on asking questions, exploring, and assessing what they already know.

Ages and Stages

Following is a generalized overview of developmental stages children go through from kindergarten through high school. Children develop at their own pace, and all characteristics will not be observed in all children at the same age or at the same stage of development. However, the order of the stages does not change much. It is important to remember, however, that each child is unique.

Kindergarten-3rd Grade

Five- to nine-year olds are optimistic, eager, and excited about learning. They have short attention spans. Five-year-olds can sit still and listen for 10-15 minutes; nine-year-olds for 20-30 minutes. They still think and learn primarily by experience. Rather than simply giving

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instructions verbally, demonstrate the activity. They enjoy doing, want to be active, and are always in motion. They are more interested in working on a project than completing it. Children this age need rules to guide their behavior, information to make good choices and decisions, and consistency once the rule is established. Provide small group activities and lots of opportunity for them to be active.

Grades 4-6

This is a period of slowed physical growth when a lot of energy goes into learning. Children 10-12 years old love to learn facts, especially strange ones, and they want to know how things work and what sources of information are available to them. They still think in terms of concrete objects and handle ideas better if they are related to something

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they can experience with their senses. They are beginning to understanding abstract ideas. They still look to adults for approval and need guidance to stay on task and achieve best performance. They often are surprised at what they can accomplish.

Grades 7-9

Youth 13-15 years of age are in a period characterized by much "storm and stress." Although they look older, most remain emotionally and intellectually immature. Young teens move from concrete to more abstract thinking. They can be very self-conscious, and a smaller group usually is less intimidating. Help them get over inferiority complexes by concentrating on developing skills. They are ready for in-depth, longer learning experiences. They can begin to deal with abstractions and the future. Fitting in with friends is a controlling influence.

Grades 10-12

High school students are future-oriented and can engage in abstract thinking. Teenagers continue to be group-oriented, and belonging to

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the group motivates much of their behavior and actions. They have more time constraints, such as work, social ties, or sports interests. They want to help plan their own programs. Involve them in the planning process. Use the discussion method when working with them. Instead of providing detailed instructions for how to put something together, provide suggestions and several alternatives.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs use multiple teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles.

Learning styles
Researchers have described four major learning styles:

IMAGINATIVE	Person perceives information concretely and process it reflectively. They learn by listening, sharing ideas, and social interaction. Almost all children less than 7-9 years old are imaginative learners.
ANALYTIC	Person perceives information abstractly and process it reflectively. They prefer sequential thinking, need details, and value what experts have to offer.
COMMON SENSE	Person perceives information abstractly and process it actively. They are practical and enjoy hands-on learning, looking for immediate use of what is learned.
DYNAMIC	Person perceives information concretely and process it actively. They learn by trial and error and self-discovery, being excited by anything new.

Not all students learn the same way. Intelligence is not unchanging, but can be learned, taught and developed. The content, teaching methods and assessment you use in your programs should allow students multiple ways of learning. It also allows them multiple ways to demonstrate what they have learned and can do.

Many teaching methods have been used over the years (lecture, panel of experts, brainstorming, videotapes/DVDs, small group discussion, case studies, role playing, cooperative learning, experiential learning, Internet, among many others).

Each has strengths and appropriate applications. It is important to consider your learner-centered objectives and the ages and stages of your learners to help determine what methods work best under varying conditions.

Researchers evaluating drug, alcohol, and violence prevention programs have documented the general effectiveness of some approaches to character education.

Practices and strategies that are often effective:

- Small groups where learners help set their own as well as the group's agenda.

- Peer guidance and peer counseling approaches.

- Peer group activities involving problem solving and developing group norms and codes of behavior.

- Focusing on behavioral issues of relevance within the cultural context of the learners and their communities.

- Creating positive and mutually respectful learning climates.

- Establishing adults as participant-learners and guides in the ethics education process.

Practices and strategies that are often ineffective:

- Lecturing and moralizing.

- Use of charismatic hero figures to lead and inspire.

- Use of authoritarian teachers/leaders.

- Values clarification.

Instructors can be very effective as guides who help learners reflect on their experience, making it more personal and relevant, and ultimately more powerful and long-lasting. Hands-on teaching techniques have been used in high quality education for decades. Recently, the term has been expanded to "hands-on, minds-on." The change points out that activity for activity's sake is not the goal, but use of active learning for engaging the mind on a task is the desired outcome. Hands-on techniques are particularly important for hunting and shooting programs.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs consider the social context in which the instruction takes place and provide avenues to enhance social support for the learners.

Research clearly shows that the social context in which education takes place is at least as important as the methods used to teach the concepts. In fact, the influence of the community within which the behavior will occur may be the strongest force acting on the behavior, regardless of instruction or other treatment. If you do not incorporate the community and cultural context of your learners into your program, it is likely to remain abstract and outside their scope of experience.

Research also indicates that parental and community involvement improves student learning in schools. Stakeholders and community groups are critical to help move learners past a mere understanding of concepts – to get them to change attitudes and cultural norms in the community.

Belonging to a group or community is important for personal development – especially ethics and values. Community can include family, school, ethnic community, and groups such as 4-H or scouts. Family, peers, and others in the community transmit their attitudes, beliefs, and values to your learners. Group members can positively influence and actually initiate your learners into activities like hunting and shooting and can encourage or discourage stewardship behaviors associated with those activities.

This suggests that, to be most effective, recruitment programs should incorporate relevant issues and active learning, and emphasize peer activities. Mentoring, clubs, and family programs implemented over the long term may build the kinds of communities that facilitate education. Therefore, programs will be most effective in reaching behavioral goals if they are designed to incorporate parents, family, and neighborhood as part of the learning community.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs identify and target one or more outcomes or skills, beyond the subject matter, that are broadly useful to the participant.

By providing outcomes or skills beyond the subject matter, you provide skills for participants to develop and learn. These outcomes or skills may come from any source, such as life skills, workforce competencies, or internal assets. Life skills can be particularly important when working with youth who may not yet

have developed them. Researchers agree that development of life skills such as goal-setting, decision-making, and problem solving is just as important as the acquisition of subject matter knowledge.

Over the last two decades the phrase "positive youth development" has become ingrained in the language of research and practice. One of the major forces in this movement was the work done by the Search Institute on developmental assets. At the heart of this work is the framework of 40 developmental assets – positive experiences, relationships, and opportunities that young people need to grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. The more assets a young person has, the more likely he/she will make healthy choices and avoid high-risk behaviors.

CHAPTER 4: **Well-Trained Instructors**

Programs can expand their capabilities by reaching out to partners and training instructors. High quality professional development of instructors goes hand in hand with high quality curriculum materials. One without the other will more than likely lead to failure. The content, scope, and level of instruction may be (and probably should be) different for formal educators (school teachers) than for non-formal educators (agency, staff, volunteers, etc.), but the Best Practices identified in this chapter are concerned with the process of professional development/training, which should be similar for both.

Teacher or instructor preparation and training is critical to assure the accurate and consistent use of curriculum materials. Program evaluations document that many curriculum materials go unused unless supported with in-service training and implementation support for users. Simply distributing free materials usually will not result in their use. Without training in the use of curriculum materials or recommended teaching strategies, instructors may not be able to achieve many of the goals or objectives you have set for your program.

Effective training also reduces the possibility of instructors unintentionally misleading learners. Wherever possible, evaluate trainers in the field to ensure they are presenting the material as you intended.

Unfortunately, opportunities for educator preparation in hunting and shooting Recruitment and Retention (R&R) are limited. Most teachers have no formal training in hunting and shooting R&R, and non-formal educators may have no training in teaching at all. All educators need professional development programs that focus on education processes and teaching methods, in addition to content. There are many ways you might prepare educators, including workshops, in-service training, mentoring, and other forms of professional development.

Below you'll find lists of Best Practices for professional development. Following the table, each Best Practice from the list is explained, and worksheets throughout the chapter help you apply each practice to your own particular situation.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PLANNING
Effective Programs:
- Establish goals and objectives for training.
- Involve partners in educating/reaching a broader audience.
- Provide several layers of training.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS/SESSIONS
Effective Programs:
- Train instructors in education theory and models of good instructional practices.
- Model effective teaching methods during training.
- Incorporate social support into training.
- Discuss settings for instruction so instructors understand the importance

of a safe and appropriate learning environment both indoors and outside.

SELECTION
Effective Programs:
- Recruit instructors with experience and knowledge in appropriate subject areas.
- Screen instructors.
- Inform potential teachers, instructors and volunteers of what will be expected of them prior to training.

EVALUATION
Effective Programs:
- Provide appropriate models of and approaches to program evaluation.
- Include formative, summative, and long-term evaluation of the trainer, the program, and the trainee.

Lack of educator training is a common cause of program failure. Researchers urge the hunting and shooting recruitment and retention community to adopt extensive instructor training as a cornerstone of educational programs. The importance of the people who deliver your programs cannot be overestimated.

PLANNING

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs establish goals and objectives for training.

What training do you currently provide? What do you want to accomplish with it? Effective programs establish clear goals and objectives for training just like they do for the program in general. Without goals and objectives you won't be able to evaluate whether or not your training activities have any impact on instructors and their ability to deliver your program.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs involve partners in educating/reaching a broader audience.

Agencies and organizations that rely solely on their staff for instruction limit the scope and potential of their programs. Involve staff in the development of partnerships with schools, communities, youth organizations and others, and then train teachers or volunteers to work with these groups to expand the number and diversity of individuals you can eventually reach.

The cornerstone of successful partnership programs is professional development of teachers/volunteers (addressed below), and the cornerstone of professional training development is recruitment of qualified and motivated staff. It all works together.

Partnerships are good, but recognize that too much of a good thing can be detrimental. That is, evaluate each potential partnership for how it can benefit your program and the partner. Do not feel obligated to enter into partnerships just because someone makes an offer. Use the worksheet to help determine if the partnerships is worthwhile.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs provide several layers of training.

Training includes basic orientation and exposure to program materials, processes, and mechanics, as well as additional training where instructors can receive in-depth exposure to specific program elements or new curriculum areas.

Effective programs encourage, facilitate, and support opportunities for continuing education. This includes opportunities to review and help update program materials and training procedures.

Consider when thinking about layers of training:

- Include basic and in-depth training modules where possible.

- Offer tiers of training to provide continuing education, gradually increasing learner knowledge and competency over time.

- Provide opportunities for learning to continue over time (e.g., through innovative use of the Internet, list-serves, newsletters, and networking).

- Provide ways to update existing information and disseminate it to instructors.

- Inspire active, ongoing, lifelong learning by educators/instructors.

- Use experienced instructors and staff as mentors.

INSTRUCTOR SELECTION
The following Best Practices refer to instructors who help deliver your programs, but who are not part of your staff.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs recruit instructors with experience and knowledge in appropriate subject areas.

You can train an instructor to deliver a simple introductory program to others. However, when you get beyond introductory programs, it is difficult to provide novice individuals the level of training they need to be effective. Recruit instructors with base experience and knowledge and then build on that. This results in more effective instructors and better implementation of your program, with less training time.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs screen instructors.

Instructors who conduct your programs reflect on you, your program, and your organization. An instructor's knowledge, demeanor, ethics, and background can affect the credibility and even the existence of your program. You are not obligated to use an individual just because he or she volunteers to be an instructor. Develop guidelines for your program that address the types of instructors you want conducting your programs. Make these guidelines

readily available before you solicit volunteer instructors. This will minimize the chances of someone coming forward who doesn't meet the criteria.

Actively recruit from trusted pools of people to improve your success at finding good instructors. For example, you might recruit from natural resources agencies/organizations (e.g., naturalists, biologists), reputable youth organizations (scouts, 4-H), teachers, etc.

After you identify potential instructors, criminal background checks are recommended where legal. This is particularly important when a volunteer will be working one-on-one with youth. Background checks are handled differently within each jurisdiction. Be sure to determine the laws, policies, and procedures used to conduct background checks on volunteers in your jurisdiction.

Whether or not you can do a criminal background check, it is important to interview instructors for potential motivations, commitment, ethical behavior, knowledge, and the ability to work with diverse groups. See Appendix C for a sample of a volunteer application.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs inform potential instructors and volunteers of what will be expected of them prior to training.

You do not want to spend a lot of money training individuals who never use the training, and you don't want people leaving your training feeling they wasted their time. Avoid this by letting them know in pre-training advertisements, mailings, and/or conversations, what you expect from participants, and what outcomes you want to accomplish.

For example, you may expect them to:
- Conduct programs after the training to... (this list might include such things as enhance families hunting or shooting together, enhance youth development skills through hunting and shooting activities, etc.).

- Teach a minimum number of classes/hours.

- Submit reports (after classes, quarterly, etc).

- Attend additional training (annually/ semi-annually, etc).

- Be a positive role model.

Some organizations, particularly those that conduct extensive trainings, have participants sign a commitment form or a job description (see Appendix D for a sample of a volunteer job description).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS/SESSIONS

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs train instructors on educational theory and models of good instructional practices.

Many non-formal educators have no formal training in teaching, and many formal educa-

tors have no training in environmental or outdoor education. It is critical to design training programs to reflect participant needs.

Effective programs are built on sound instructional models that recognize the diversity in any group of learners. They utilize multiple

methods of presenting information and incorporate active learning opportunities.

Educational theory and sound instructional practices include making information relevant to the learner, empowering learners, approaching teaching in a learning-centered way, accommodating diverse learning styles, using a variety of teaching methods, understanding developmental stages, and more. These subjects are covered in Chapter 3.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs model effective teaching methods during training.

Trainers at professional development workshops must model effective teaching methods throughout the training session. High-quality training must:

- Immerse participants in inquiry, questioning, and experimentation.

- Focus on process instead of content. An inordinate focus on hunting/shooting content only reinforces the inadequacy many instructors feel about their own knowledge. When the focus is on process, instructors' hesitation to teach hunting/shooting is greatly diminished.

- Engage instructors in concrete teaching tasks based on experiences with students.

- Show instructors how hunting and shooting recruitment and retention can be connected to specific standards for student performance or organizational goals (e.g., when working with school, 4-H, or drug prevention instructors, show how hunting and shooting recruitment and retention can be used to enhance development skills).

- Be connected to other aspects of school/organizational change.

- Use attractive and appropriate training materials. Good training starts with good materials. Instructors are more likely to use materials if they are attractive, engaging, and easy to use.

- Provide hands-on exposure to materials. Give instructors opportunities to engage in hunting and shooting projects, even if on a simplified basis. When instructors engage in projects themselves, they become more fully aware of project requirements, components, procedures, difficulties, and associated evaluation and grading procedures.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs incorporate social support into training.

Three levels of social support need to be addressed. Two apply to instructors/teachers. If they feel isolated, it is harder for them to stay motivated. The first is the need for social support by the training organization. This could be in the form of site visits to end users after training sessions, and communication through emails, phone conversations, and newsletters – all of which are designed to maintain contact and provide support during their initial trial and improvement efforts.

The second level is for social support among instructors after the training. This type of social support can be advanced by:

- Incorporating peer teaching experiences.

- Providing ice breakers to encourage relationship development.

- Putting participants into teams during training exercises, providing opportunities for peer discussion, and then review during implementation planning.

- Providing opportunities to socialize.

- Requesting that participants come to

training in teams, so they leave with "built-in" partners.

- Sharing names and emails of those attending the training and/or those who are conducting similar programs.

Social support among instructors also can be advanced through instructor recognition efforts. Most volunteers are motivated by a need to contribute. Certificates, award banquets, or other recognition may help keep them motivated and involved. Consider what motivations will best meet the needs of your volunteers.

These first two dimensions of social support can overlap, such as when a training organization invites teachers and instructors to follow-up sessions intending to provide both work-related and interpersonal interaction and support opportunities.

The third level of social support is for end users. Social support is an extremely important process to help individuals develop to the point where they see themselves as hunters or shooters. Give your instructors examples of how they can incorporate social support into their programs/classes, such as involving family members in the program, developing an after-school club for youth, making adult participants aware of clubs or organizations they can join, or incorporating positive role models.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs discuss settings for instruction so that instructors understand the importance of a safe and appropriate learning environment both indoors and outdoors.

Effective programs identify, create, and use diverse settings appropriate to different subject matter and available resources (e.g., shooting range, gym, schoolyard, state wildlife area, demonstration sites). Hold your training sessions in appropriate, engaging locations to make the instruction more effective and to model this behavior for your participants.

Direct experience with the natural world makes the learning process faster, retained longer, and appreciated greater. Effective programs get instructors/teachers outdoors during training sessions whenever possible. Demonstrate a concern for learner safety in designing, planning, and implementing instruction, especially hands-on experiences that take place outside the classroom. Review safety guidelines for a variety of activities. Discuss liability issues instructors may encounter and how to minimize risks (See Chapter 3 for more about safety).

EVALUATION

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs provide appropriate models of and approaches to program evaluation.

Instructors in effective training programs possess the knowledge, abilities, and commitment to assess and evaluate their programs. Provide them tools for assessing learner progress and evaluating the effectiveness of their instruction and other features of the program.

Help instructors understand the importance of tying assessment to learning:

- State expected learner outcomes that are tied to the goals and objectives of the program.

- Identify national, state, and local standards that apply to stated learner outcomes and and link assessment of hunting and shooting recruitment and retention to these.

- Describe and use means for engaging learners in setting their own expectations for achievement. Discuss the importance of these abilities on learner-centered education and lifelong learning.

Familiarize educators/instructors with ways to incorporate assessment into their programs:

- Make objectives and other expectations clear at the outset of instruction.

- Provide examples of and implement specific performance-based assessment such as open-ended questions, oral reports, group and independent research, other types of actual performance-oriented tasks, appropriate projects, and portfolios (collections of a variety of work products.)

- Identify and use techniques that assess learners' baseline understandings and skills at the beginning of lessons, units, and other segments of instruction.

- Develop formative and summative assessment tools appropriate to specific instructional segments or projects.

- Discuss the importance of and identify techniques for encouraging learners to assess their own and others' work. Use these assessments to improve their learning experiences.

- Discuss how to organize, interpret, and use the results of differing kinds of assessment to help modify and improve future instruction.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs include formative, summative, and long-term evaluation of the trainer, the program, and the trainee.

One of the most neglected components of education programs is evaluation. Many evalu-

ation efforts rarely report more than program outputs such as the number of participants, participant satisfaction, or information exposure. Conversely, effective programs engage in evaluation of all aspects of the program. Evaluation is seen as a permanent, ongoing part of the education process.

Even if you have effective training, you may occasionally have an educator or instructor who "wanders astray." He or she may utilize other materials or examples that are incorrect or mislead an audience.

During a course given by one of the teacher/instructors, an agency instructor should observe the training and do a subjective evaluation of the instructor's ability to teach effectively. Some points to consider are:

- Did he or she understand the material well enough to teach it?

- Did he or she deviate unnecessarily from the lesson plan?

- Was he or she able to handle questions or communicate effectively?

- Did he or she stay on time?

- Were there credibility issues, egocentric behaviors, or other characteristics that would detract from the class, the program, the individuals involved, or the sponsor?

Ask students to fill out a course evaluation at the end of the course. If results indicate problems, the administrator should discuss these with the instructor.

Evaluation of the trainer

It is important that quality be reflected from the start. If your agency/organization trainers are not effective, it will "trickle down" and decrease the quality of the overall program. Have all instructors evaluated by their peers and by those teachers/ instructors attending the workshops.

Evaluation of the program

You'll receive some evaluation from your instructors using the previous Best Practice, but an in-depth evaluation is important. Refer to Chapter 5 for details on how to evaluate your program.

CHAPTER 5: How do you know if it's working? EVALUATION!

Probably the most neglected component of all recruitment and retention programs is evaluation. Far too often, Recruitment and Retention (R&R) programs are based, not on research evidence supporting their effectiveness, but only on what another program or agency is doing. And most evaluation efforts rarely report more than simple program outputs such as the number of participants at an event, participant satisfaction, and cost of delivery. What do these simple outputs tell you about how many life-long hunters and shooters you are creating? If you are asked what kind of impact your program is having on the knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors of your audience, how will you answer?

The rarity of formal evaluations of the short- and long-term impacts of R&R programs is somewhat puzzling, given what evaluation has to offer. Programs that implement formal evaluation are successful (or on their way to success), because the evaluation process shows you what works and what does not. By building on what works and changing or removing what doesn't, you continually work toward and/or achieve your program goals and objectives.

Evaluation has an added benefit because it provides tangible evidence that your efforts are based on solid ground and are accomplishing agency/organizational goals and objectives.

The list below contains currently recognized Best Practices for program evaluation. These practices are based on the best research and experience currently available. Following the list, each Best Practice from the list is explained, and worksheets throughout the chapter help you apply each practice to your own particular situation.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION

Effective program evaluation:

- Is based on program goals and objectives.

- Is a systematic and ongoing process that begins when a program is being planned and carries through implementation.

- Receives administrative and financial support.

- Is used as a learning tool to support program reflection, decision-making, and improvement.

- Helps identify program outputs, such as number of participants and participant feedback.

- Explores and investigates the program's short-term learning outcomes.

- Explores and investigates the program's long-term benefits and impacts.

- Encourages the use of multiple and varied assessment methods.

- Allows program staff to take advantage of professional development opportunities relating to evaluation.

More on Evaluation

More information regarding program evaluation can be found at the American Evaluation Association website: www.eval.org.

Perhaps including this as a Best Practice is overstating the obvious, but everything else in this chapter is based to some degree on this simple assumption: In order to evaluate your program, you must have some standard(s) to evaluate it against. Your program goals and objectives are those standards.

Many R&R programs are conducted because they sound good or because someone else is doing them, without any consideration of their contribution to the agency's or organization's mission, goals, or objectives, or the needs of the target audience. If asked whether such a program was working or not, a program manager would simply be giving an opinion based on some set of unspecified standards – a gut feeling. The whole purpose of program evaluation is to put aside gut feelings and get down to what really works (and does not work) to help you meet your goals and objectives.

What if you've been ordered to conduct a certain program that does not contribute to your organization's mission? Armed with the information in this chapter, you can at least demonstrate to the "powers that be" that evaluation is considered a critical component of effective programs and that evaluation is
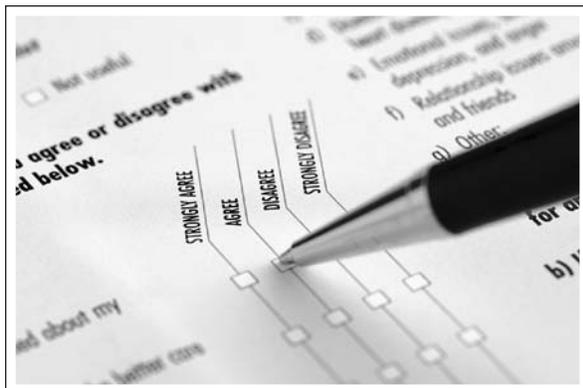
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impossible without carefully articulated goals and objectives (for more information on setting goals and objectives, see Chapter 2).

Many people are not aware that, to be most effective, evaluation must begin before a program is implemented. This is called formative evaluation (that is, evaluation conducted during formation of the program). Far too often, program coordinators only think about evaluation in terms of an after-the-fact judgment as to whether desired outcomes were achieved. This kind of summative evaluation (evaluation conducted as a sort of summary of the program) is critical, but incomplete. A systematic evaluation process can help you build your program correctly, adjust it over time, and ultimately achieve the results you are looking for more effectively and efficiently.

The first step is to evaluate whether the program is even needed. Chapter 2 discusses program planning in detail, and the following discussion assumes you have already determined that the program is needed, and have developed a program logic model for it. Your model should be similar to (or have similar factors as) the conceptual model shown in Figure 3.

Your program logic model is an excellent tool for formative evaluation, because it forces you to quantify all the steps required for delivery of your program. Putting all the steps on paper can help point out where your program may need some adjustment.

Other tools or methods you can use to collect information as the program is being

developed include comment or feedback forms, observations, interviews, focus groups, and surveys. These often are collectively called a "program needs assessment." Use these with administrators, instructors, students, colleagues, or other stakeholders. If you are not the only one who will be delivering your program, consider conducting focus groups and surveys of your instructors or staff.

For example, you may conduct surveys or focus groups to ask:

1. Do you currently teach [topic of interest]?

2. Why or why not?

3. If yes, what resources do you use/need?

4. If not, would you teach it if you had appropriate resources?

FIGURE 3: Conceptual Logic Model for Program Development and Evaluation

Inputs	Throughputs		Outputs	Outcomes		
Resources	*Activities*	*Participation*	*Counts/Feedback*	*Short-term*	*Medium-term*	*Long-term*
				Learning	**Action**	**Conditions**
Staff	Curriculum Design	Participants	Number reached	Awareness	Practice	Social
Volunteers		Customers	Experiences	Motivations	Decisions	Economic
Curricula	Product dev.	Stakeholders	Satisfaction Surveys	Knowledge	Action	Political
Donors	Recruiting	Citizens		Values	Behavior	Civic
Time	Clinics	Volunteers	Other feedback	Attitudes	Stewardship	Environmental
Money	Workshops	Trainers	Service units	Opinions	Policies	Public relations
Materials	Meeting	Teachers	Cost per unit	Skills		
Equipment	Counseling	Youth	Service quality	Aspirations		
Technology	Facilitation	Families				
Partners	Assessments					
	Media work					
	Training					

INFLUENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND ASSUMPTIONS

BEST PRACTICE
Effective program evaluation receives administrative and finanacial support

It is a common misconception that program evaluation is or should only be a periodic event. This reasoning suggests that managers should continue a given program as-is for a number of years, and then occasionally evaluate it to make sure it is on track.

Unfortunately, the real world is not nearly so simple. Nearly all aspects of hunting and shooting R&R programs are in a continual state of flux-educational theory, target audiences, social norms, and environmental conditions. Even the agencies and organizations implementing the programs are growing and changing. Evaluation is most effective – and offers the most benefits – when it is built into the program.

Making evaluation a permanent and integral part of your R&R program requires support at every level. Use the following points to help build, enhance, or maintain this support within your agency or organization.

Permanent, integral evaluation is:

- The only real measure of program effectiveness.

- The only way to be certain that a program is meeting agency goals and objectives and the needs of target audiences.

- The primary way you can demonstrate the value of the program to those to whom you are accountable.

- A learning tool that allows your program to adjust to changes and maintain effectiveness in the ever-changing world.

- A nationally accepted Best Practice for hunting and shooting programs. (It is a hallmark of "best" programs.)

Your agency or organization may not have the internal budget to fund full program evaluation. However, partners and outside funding sources can help, and indeed, often require evaluation of the projects they fund. Whenever possible, include evaluation components in your outside grant/funding proposals.

Faculty and graduate students at universities can be another source of evaluation for your program. They may be able to provide considerable assistance at low or no cost.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective program evaluation is used as a learning tool to support program reflection, decision-making, and improvement.

When evaluation is an integral part of your program, it becomes a powerful learning tool that helps you make the program more effective. Imagine the value of receiving specific feedback on your program while it is ongoing as well as at the end of a cycle. You could make changes or adjustments to improve learning and better serve your constituents. You could make curriculum choices and other program decisions based on data, not on opinion. You could continually maximize your program's

effectiveness at helping you achieve your organization's goals and objectives.

Here is another place where your program logic model can be helpful. Refer to the model as you proceed through the various steps and phases of your program. Use it to match and align program inputs (e.g., materials, resources) and processes (e.g., activities, services) with the outcomes you expect.

If your program or event is heavy on facts, your participants might come out of it with the short-term outcome of learning, whereas your goal may be action. In this case, you could revise your program to include more hands-on, skill-building, real-world examples that better prepare your students for taking appropriate actions upon completion of the program.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective program evaluation helps identify program outputs, such as number of participants and participant feedback.

A fault of some programs is that they collect information on program outputs (number of participants, participant feedback, cost per participant, etc.) as their only form of evaluation, neglecting to consider the outcomes, such as knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. While collection of outputs alone is not sufficient it is useful. In fact, in some situations, outputs can be of primary importance. For instance, if you plan a workshop or event for 50 people and only two show up (or if 300 show up), that alone is a very strong indicator that you need to work on matching your resources with the demand for your program. Likewise, a participant evaluation form distributed at the end of an event can give you a lot of good insight into how well your program met the immediate needs of the audience. This kind of output information is easy and inexpensive to collect, and it is an important piece of the evaluation puzzle.

Assessing Program Outputs

A good way to assess program outputs is through use of pre- and post-program surveys (see Figure 5).

BEST PRACTICE
Effective program evaluation explores and investigates the program's short-term learning outcomes.

If your program is oriented toward fostering knowledge gains and/or skill acquisition (as opposed to behavioral change, which often comes over longer periods of time), it is important that this be done at the end of any training or program experience. Many audiences will want to know, "What did we learn (or come away with)?" Effective programs determine and periodically assess short-term learning outcomes based on objectives and program experiences.

Short-term assessment can be accomplished with traditional assessment methods such as quizzes and tests. Also useful are alternative methods, such as journaling and responses to open-ended questions, oral question-and-response sessions, observations of performance, papers and projects, etc.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective program evaluation explores and investigates the program's long-term benefits and impacts.

Although collection of program outputs such as number of participants is important, effective program evaluation goes beyond that as well. The conceptual program logic model in Figure 3 includes sample short-term, medium-term, and long-term outcomes such as knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that lead to improved social conditions. These specific outcomes will vary based on the goals and objectives of your program.

Managers of effective programs identify the outcomes they expect and continually assess their program's impact on achieving them. A good way to begin this process is to consider all the potential impacts of the program. Then select from this list those that are most likely or plausible. These are the impacts that should be assessed. The methods to be used for assessment will vary from one kind of impact to another (see the following section for more information).

BEST PRACTICE
Effective program evaluation encourages the use of multiple and varied assessment methods.

Reliably assessing program outcomes such as the knowledge, attitudes, intentions, and behaviors of participants is difficult. Many methods and techniques are available, and each has strengths and weaknesses.

Not all assessment methods need to be quantitative, or have the rigor of a university research project. Do not be afraid to use less formal methods at times. However, whatever methods you choose, be sure they are based on the systematic collection of data, and that the data are credible and dependable. Information gathered randomly or haphazardly will not be useful and may be misleading. You might consider contacting a university or professional research firm to help you conduct long-term evaluation. When you use multiple assessment methods, you gain a much clearer picture of what is actually going on than when you rely on any single method.

One possible way to assess development of particular characteristic attributes associated with being a hunter (of course these need to be determined, defined, and well-understood over time) is to ask the person the following kinds of questions. For example, assume that patience and integrity are two important characteristics of being a hunter.

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1. If being a hunter means being patient, how much hunting patience do you feel you have developed?

Not patient at all   Very patient

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

2. What is the minimum amount of hunting patience do you feel like you need to develop to consider yourself to be a hunter?

Not patient at all   Very patient

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Comparing the developed patience (first scale) with the minimum amount of patience needed to have a self-perception as a hunter gives one some evaluation of how much work is still needed.

The same kinds of questions could be asked of mentors. How much do you think the participant has developed, compared to minimum amount needed to be a hunter? Assessing this from the perspective of both the trainee and the mentor can point to areas that need additional work.

Multiple and varied methods increase your confidence that you have a valid and reliable "reading" of what has been learned. Some people have high levels of test anxiety and will rarely be able to fully demonstrate what they have learned through testing, while others will test well. Similarly, some learners need to be able to do something to demonstrate what they have learned. In these cases, a test or language-based assessment method will not work well. Multiple and varied methods accommodate the capacity of learners to demonstrate what they have acquired.

The same purposes hold true in program evaluation. You may want teachers and content experts to review a piece of curriculum, each with different questions in mind (e.g., usability vs. content accuracy), and then run a field test of this curriculum in a similar setting to determine how well it works in action. These different methods increase confidence that the curriculum is sound and can help learners achieve the objectives (or anticipated learning outcomes).

If you assess or evaluate something using several different methods, you can compare results from these different methods. If the results agree, you gain confidence in them. If they do not, then you can explore why (e.g., a learner doing poorly on a test but performing well in natural settings may indicate test anxiety). The use of two or three separate methods allows you to triangulate results. The methods don't have to be conducted at the same time or in the same way. The use of multiple and varied methods is highly recommended.

Following are some assessment methods commonly used to evaluate hunting and shooting programs. Some are best suited for formal education settings (schools). Others are best suited for non-formal education settings. Some can be used in either. There may be some overlap among the methods. These methods are not listed in any particular order.

Surveys

A survey is a series of questions to be asked of a sample group of people. It can be conducted by telephone, e-mail, mail, or in-person interviews. On-site interviews are an effective way to gain information, such as extent of hunting and shooting activity, social group size

and composition, and other participation characteristics. However, on-site survey samples exclude non-participants. That is, if you are interviewing people at a managed/maintained shooting range, you are not likely to include in your survey any target shooters who practice in non-formal settings. For some surveys this may be fine; but often you will want to compare and contrast types of participants (e.g., those who target shoot at formal ranges, and those who target shoot elsewhere).

Population surveys that are national, regional, or statewide in scope can be designed to include subgroups of participants and non-participants. Population surveys allow you to determine specific rates (as percentages of the population) of hunting and shooting activities. Large population studies are necessary for establishing trends and baseline information. The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment and National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation are important for this reason.

NOTE: If you evaluate a program targeted at minority populations in urban, inner-city areas, you will need to adjust the standard survey technique. Minorities in inner-cities generally are regarded as "hard-to-reach" populations with characteristically low response rates.

Testing

Testing is commonly associated with school programs, although it can be used in many settings. Test questions must be specific enough to target some difference that will be measurable, and enough students must be involved to find significant differences. Further, to measure the impact of the program, you must be able to compare students who participated in the program with students who did not (experimental and control groups), or compare students' knowledge at two different times – before and after the program (pre-test/post-test).

Some programs use both strategies to reduce the problems associated with each. That is, they assign equivalent classes in the same school to be control and experimental; inform teachers of their roles in the evaluation process. Carefully select teachers and schools to provide a realistic cross-section of the school situation, and accept that there will be some factors that cannot be controlled.

Focus groups

Focus groups consist of a small number of individuals assembled to discuss a topic of interest to an evaluator or agency. Focus groups produce qualitative data through a focused discussion among individuals who may possess some common attributes. Advantages of the focus group method include:

- Allowing the interviewer to probe

- Usually costing little to facilitate

- Providing timely results

The major disadvantages are that data derived from the discussion are qualitative and may be difficult to analyze, and there often are problems with logistics – getting individuals together and finding a setting conducive for conversation.

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Ethnographic method

Another qualitative alternative to surveys is the ethnographic method. Ethnographic research differs from traditional survey research by placing the researcher inside the community being studied. The advantage of an insider's view is being able to see how a leisure activity, such as hunting or shooting sports, is connected to the daily patterns and routines of a community. This approach to evaluation holds potential for understanding how members of rural, suburban, and urban communities perceive hunting and shooting in relation to their own culture.

Information gathered this way can be used to tailor programs to meet needs of particular ethnic communities. Success depends on four factors:

- Ability of a researcher to establish an identity within an ethnic community

- Project based on community need rather than agency priority

- Recognition that relationships are the most important task in the process

- Remembering that community members are the experts on their culture

(More information on working with diverse audiences is included in Chapter 6.)

Longitudinal studies

Program evaluations should employ longitudinal designs to track participation over time and to observe long-term changes in behavior. Longitudinal designs track a fixed number of individuals who respond to questions over time (weeks, months, or years, depending on study design). In contrast, cross-sectional designs are based on measurements taken at only one point in time. The greatest advantage of a longitudinal design is the ability to examine enduring participation in an activity. Disadvantages of this design approach include the large effort required to recruit and retain

individuals. Mortality, in terms of refusals to participate in subsequent measures, change of residence, death, and other factors, is a disadvantage. This approach appears to be most effective for evaluating long-term participation in hunting and shooting.

Experimental methods

Experimental methods are arguably the most effective tools for determining whether a specific program leads to a particular outcome. In controlled laboratory experiments, the effect of manipulating an independent variable on a dependent or outcome variable can be observed while the effects of other relevant factors are minimized.

However, many variables of interest such as skill development, attitudes, and program leaders cannot be controlled and manipulated in experimental designs. Tightly controlled experiments are difficult to employ, but field experiments can be conducted in realistic or natural settings. Field experiments appear more suitable for relating the effects of educational program components to hunting and shooting outcomes.

A major advantage of experimental designs is that the variables in question are specified prior to the study. In survey research, it is common to collect large amounts of data and then identify operational definitions "after the fact." Developing definitions prior to testing forces researchers and sponsors to consider what particular outcomes are most relevant for evaluation.

Apart from the technical aspects of program evaluation, having to define the meaning of effectiveness or success may cause agencies and program providers to reflect more deeply on the goals of hunting and shooting R&R efforts. This may serve to clarify an agency's mission with regard to educational practices, and may result in a higher level of service for the public.

BEST PRACTICE

Effective program evaluation allows program staff to take advantage of professional development opportunities relating to evaluation.

One limitation of many educational programs is the lack of trained staff that can plan and carry out evaluations. Thus, allowing (and encouraging) program staff (including administrators, coordinators, and instructors) to take advantage of professional development opportunities in the areas of assessment and evaluation builds greater capacity for staff to become directly involved in these activities and applying the results to your program. If your agency or organization lacks this capability, consider building partnerships with institutions, agencies, and consultants with experience in conducting formal evaluations. For much more information on Best Practices in professional development, see Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 6: Expanding Your Reach: Diverse Audiences

Substantial segments of the population encounter barriers and constraints to participation in hunting and shooting.

Research indicates that, compared to the majority of the population, racial and ethnic minority groups are less likely to participate in many forms of natural resource-based recreation activities.

Why should you help these groups overcome barriers and constraints to participation? **Consider:**

- Racial and ethnic minority populations, particularly Hispanic populations, will dramatically increase their share of the U.S. population over the next several decades. In states like Texas and California, the current population characterized as "minority" will become the "majority" population by 2020. In New Mexico, Hispanics could become the "majority" in a few years. Delaying the process of involving these groups in hunting and shooting only compounds the problem as they become a more significant portion of the U.S. population.

- The number of females exceeded the number of males in this country as of July 1, 2001. Women today have more freedom than they did in previous generations to explore recreational choices. African American families tend to be matriarchal, where the women make the decisions for family outings and budget. Hispanic families tend to be patriarchal, but because they do activities more socially and with family, Hispanic women are very important to the decision-making process.

- Working with diverse groups provides opportunities to broaden the base of political support for hunting and shooting.

This is not to suggest that women and racial and ethnic minorities should be targeted more than white males, necessarily. There may be times and situations where quite the opposite may be true, depending on your program objectives (for more on setting program objectives, see Chapter 2). Always let your program goals and objectives guide your efforts, and when they call for outreach to diverse audiences, this chapter can help.

The following list contains currently recognized Best Practices for expanding your reach with diverse audiences. These are based on the best research and experience currently available. Following the list, each is explained. Worksheets throughout the chapter help you apply each practice to your own situation.

BEST PRACTICES FOR EXPANDING YOUR REACH WITH DIVERSE AUDIENCES

Effective Programs:

- Involve the minority population being addressed in all aspects of planning.
- Lessen or remove barriers that constrain access.
- Reflect the culture of those being served.
- Develop a network of social support.
- Reduce boundaries that can occur when members of two or more cultures meet.
- Make members of minority groups feel welcome.
- Provide positive role models.
- Ensure the materials are instructionally sound.
- Use evaluation to determine whether their objectives are being achieved.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs involve the minority population being addressed in all aspects of the planning process.

One of the best ways to understand what barriers or constraints a group may have and how to most effectively work with that group is to invite representatives to discuss the issue with you. Have representatives or a community group assist when planning and implementing programs.

When you first sit down with representatives, make sure they understand what you are trying to accomplish. It is just as important that you also find out what they would like to accomplish by working with you.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs lessen or remove barriers that constrain access.

Seek to understand and identify barriers that constrain a person's access to the hunting/shooting culture and activities. Then design programs to minimize or eliminate them, and provide continued reinforcement. Barriers and constraints might include: feeling unsafe or uncomfortable; feeling unable to perform a behavior; lack of skills, confidence, opportunity, or place to perform the behavior; having someone who is discouraging them from taking part; not having someone to share the activity with; lack of time or money. You can identify these constraints by involving representatives in your planning. You also can conduct focus groups and surveys to learn more about constraints.

Social-economic barriers

Current data on household income by race and ethnicity show significant gaps (see Table 6). Incomes for African American, Hispanic, and American Indian households are significantly less than for white, Asian, and Pacific Islander populations. African American households earn less than all others. Income may be a significant barrier to consider in planning programs, especially for less affluent African Americans.

Examples of how you can surmount the economic barriers include offering programs free or at reduced costs, providing necessary equipment and gear, and/or providing transportation. As of 2000, 54 percent of all African Americans in the U.S. lived in the central cities of the largest metropolitan areas, so if you have a program objective to reach this audience, be sure to look for ways to provide hunting and shooting opportunities near urban areas.

Table 6 – Household Income by Race and Ethnicity: 2006 Median Income

Race/Ethnicity	Median Income
White	$52,375
Black	$32,372
Hispanic	$38,747
Asian and Pacific Islander	$63,642
American Indian	$33,767
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey, Median Income in the past 12 months (in 2006 inflation adjusted dollars).	

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs reflect the culture of those being served.

Cultural factors such as different norms, beliefs, value systems, and socialization practices may be even more significant than socioeconomic constraints. For example, for many people, a significant part of the joy of deer hunting comes from the contact with nature. However, for the Hispanic population, that joy may be justifiable only when they can help their community, such as by giving deer meat to family and neighbors. This may legitimize, as well as intensify, the natural experience for them. Contrast that with many white hunters, for whom the ultimate destination of the meat is unimportant compared to the hunt itself. Another cultural difference is that most females favor cooperation rather than competition, and often enjoy participating in activities as part of a group. Research has shown that women are most likely to become "self-made hunters." They may seek and get some advice, but on their own terms, and then they apply it through trial and error. They don't mind trying and erring in groups of other women, but not so much in mixed-gender groups.

Women hunters (and non-white ethnic groups) may have substantially different characteristic attributes they associate with being a hunter compared to middle-aged white men. Your program is not likely to recruit or retain very many people from these audiences (compared to white males) if you try to instill in them attributes that are important to 40-year old white men.

Programs that are sensitive to cultural influences might include opportunities for family hunting or shooting participation, and opportunities that support or reinforce cultural identity. Programs designed and/or implemented by staff that include women and members of the racial and ethnic group being served can be very effective.

Planning shooting activities as part of established ethnic community activities (such as festivals) rather than sponsoring stand-alone agency events can send positive messages to minority communities. The stand-alone events can be labeled as paternalistic and condescending, especially when it might appear that racial and ethnic minorities are characterized as deficient in their knowledge of outdoor activities.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs develop a network of social support.

Look for ways to provide social support for hunting and shooting activities within the community you are targeting. Even if a person attends your program, if friends and family are negative or indifferent toward hunting or shooting, the chances of that person participating declines with every negative reaction received. You must help support participants beyond your program.

Start by involving the group most influential to your learners. If they are younger than 11, the most influential group may be their parents, so involve parents in your activity. For teenagers, try to involve other teens. Establish hunting and shooting clubs after school or on weekends to provide the social support they need to stay involved. For adult women, set up an Internet list-serve where they can communicate with other women

who are hunters and shooters. Conduct programs through a group already established within a community (such as a church or boys/girls club) to provide an immediate mechanism for social support.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs reduce boundaries that can occur when members of two or more cultures meet.

Asia and Latin America account for 84 percent of immigrants to the U.S., so the vast majority of "new Americans" comes from countries where English is not the primary language. Where possible, provide bilingual information, preferably oral communication rather than written. For example, if your instructor can speak both English and Spanish for a group of Hispanic students, this would help break down a major barrier.

Instructors from within the culture of the target audience can help reduce boundaries. They also can help you consider the cultural factors that may impact communication.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs make members of minority groups feel welcome.

Managers and providers of hunting and shooting opportunities must be aware of the social climate their settings create. Consider potential issues such as instructor behavior, facility personnel behavior, behavior of participants, and potential interaction with other individuals at the location where instruction will take place. Taking it one step further, you might consider the behavior of retailers of hunting and shooting products.

Eliminate all interpersonal discrimination, which refers to actions carried out by members of the dominant group that have differential

Make it Familiar

The best way to make people feel welcome in any situation is to make sure there are other people around who look, sound, and act like them. This is true for hunters in general, regardless of race, sex, or other grouping. For instance, at a school or other community event, a hunter likely would feel more comfortable if he/she looked around the room and saw a smattering of camouflaged hats or sweatshirts, compared to a room full of non-hunters – even when the context has nothing to do with hunting (e.g., kid's school play or soccer game).

It is unfortunate that in today's society many (certainly not all) hunters feel uncomfortable with outward expressions of their identity as hunters. They don't want to hear comments about "killing Bambi," etc., so they hide that they are hunters in public. Such behavior essentially makes the hunting culture go underground and become less and less noticeable in society.

and negative impacts on the minority group. These actions can range from nonverbal cues and verbal harassment, to physical gestures, assaults, and harassment.

Some issues are handled more easily than others. Staff who are racially, ethnically, and gender-diverse are more likely to attract and engage a diverse audience. However, even if your program is a success, if participants have a bad experience with facility personnel, field staff, or enforcement officers after they leave, it can undo all the good work you did. Monitor personnel and correct any negative situations immediately.

The same is true for retailers. Nothing turns women off more than walking into a hunting and shooting retail store and being ignored or

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not taken seriously. Contact retailers in your area and let them know you are having classes for different minority groups, and help them understand how to effectively work with these groups. If you know a particular retailer that does a good job at this, you may want to refer your students to that retailer.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs provide positive role models.

Recruit people who represent your target audience to assist in delivering your program. These role models are not celebrities, but everyday people from the community who love hunting and shooting. If you are working with women, seek the assistance of women who enjoy the activities and who can motivate other women to try it. The same is true for African American audiences, Hispanic audiences, or any other target group.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs are instructionally sound.

Chapter 3 describes how to make your program instructionally sound. Review those recommendations again now, with diverse audiences in mind. Understanding your audience's background and what helps them learn will enhance your program. For example, women tend to learn better in environments that favor cooperation rather than competition. Explicit directions and guidelines make women more comfortable in the class, and they need the opportunity to ask questions. All groups want to be addressed respectfully and not feel like the instructor is being condescending. Most groups want to know more than how to do something; they also want to know why it should be done a certain way.

BEST PRACTICE
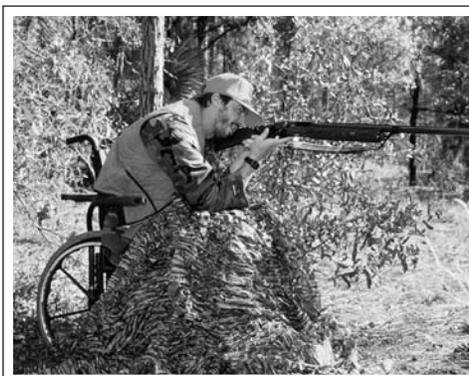*Effective programs use evaluation to determine whether their objectives are being achieved.*

See Chapter 5 for information on program evaluation.

CHAPTER 7: Expanding Your Reach: Persons with Disabilities

Including people with disabilities in your program strengthens the community and the individuals. People with disabilities have long been hindered from participating in outdoor recreation activities like hunting and shooting because of structural and social barriers. As a result of changing attitudes, legislation, technological developments, and education, significant progress has been made within the past decade to include people with disabilities in outdoor recreation programs and improve access to related facilities and lands.

Research on people with disabilities shows they have the same motivations and educational needs as others participating in outdoor recreation activities. With the use of assistive devices, universal design, and some additional planning, you can make your hunting and shooting programs available to everyone.

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce's 1997 report, approximately one of every five Americans has a serious disability. Persons with disabilities are found in every socioeconomic, age, ethnic, and religious group. They also are found in every geographical area, and both genders. With the general aging of the population, the number of persons with disabilities is expected to increase.

Persons with disabilities represent a wide variety of conditions.
The basic categories are:

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES	Including sensory (vision, hearing) mobility, and motor impairments.
COGNITIVE DISABILITIES	Including mentally challenged, autism, Alzheimer's disease, etc.
MENTAL HEALTH IMPAIRMENTS	Including bi-polar disorder, eating disorders, and depression.
CHRONIC HEALTH IMPAIRMENTS	Including respiratory disease, cardiac disease, and AIDS.
MULTIPLE DISABILITIES/ IMPAIRMENTS	A combination of any of the above.

Each category includes wide variation. Persons may be considered to have a temporary, episodic, or permanent disability present at birth or due to an accident or illness. By using your imagination and input of participants, you can overcome most obstacles and barriers so everyone has a fun and meaningful experience participating in hunting and shooting activities.

The list below contains currently recognized Best Practices for expanding your reach with persons with disabilities. Following the list, each Best Practice from the list is explained, and worksheets throughout the chapter help you apply each practice to your own particular situation.

BEST PRACTICES FOR EXPANDING YOUR REACH TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Effective Programs:

- Include persons with disabilities and individuals who work with them in the design and implementation of the program.

- Are inclusive.

- See people with disabilities as people first and use appropriate terminology, which conveys a sense of inclusion.

- Work to eliminate or lessen constraints to involvement.

- Strive to make hunting and shooting activities accessible to all individuals.

- Conform to appropriate legislation.

- Provide pre-training and continual training of staff.

- Provide appropriate ratio of instructors to students.

- Include accessibility information in all marketing and informational material.

One of the best ways to ensure that your program can accommodate persons with disabilities is to invite individuals with disabilities to assist you in planning all phases. Also include individuals who work with persons with disabilities. Both can help you look at every aspect of the program – from facilities, to instruction, to activities – to ensure that each is welcoming and appropriate for people with disabilities.

There are numerous places you can find individuals to serve on your planning team. Most states have a commission on disabilities or similar entity. Look to federal, state, and local rehabilitation centers, local independent living centers, Paralyzed Veterans of America, human service agencies dedicated to specific disabilities (e.g., Arthritis Foundation, United Cerebral Palsy) therapeutic recreational professionals, universities, and hunting organizations dedicated to disabilities such as Wheelin' Sportsmen.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs are inclusive.

The principles of inclusion are:

- *More than integration and accessibility* – inclusion does not happen just because persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities are in the same program or at the same place, nor does an accessible environment ensure inclusion. The following points are critical.

- *Celebrate diversity* – rather than trying to fit everyone into the same mold, recognize and appreciate differences (including unique characteristics) as well as contributions of everyone. Focus on providing support (rather than on eliminating the disability) so individuals can fully engage in activities of their choosing.

- *Respect differences* – look at a disability as a form of diversity, rather than a negative attribute. Toss out the word normal and avoid labeling people.

- *Interdependence* – create situations where individuals work cooperatively, interrelate, and function together. Encourage individuals to support one another and to work in teams as equals.

- *Participation and cooperation* – enable everyone to be an active participant and participate according to desire and abilities. Offer choices and promote a variety of ways to participate, including partnership with others.

- *Supportive relationships* – develop/facilitate relationships that support the individual's ability to engage in the activity on an equal basis, according to the individual's needs and desires.

- *Friendships* – create a feeling of belonging and an environment that makes no one feel excluded or inferior, so friendships develop among persons with differences.

The recent trend in recreation and education is to provide opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate with everyone else. This means programs that are socially integrated as well as physically integrated.

Many individuals with disabilities still prefer programs designed specifically for them and offered in a segregated format. In addition to inclusive programs, consider offering a segregated format if people in your community request it and you have the resources to do it. Remember the resources of your partners and look to create new partners. Train instructors on how to teach hunting and shooting at the school for the blind, school for the deaf, and other schools, rehabilitation centers, and institutions dealing with persons with severe impairments.

Research indicates that students want everyone to be treated the same, yet they accept and recognize individual learning differences and styles. Students do not perceive instructional adaptations and accommodations to meet the special needs of selected students as problematic.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs see people with disabilities as people first and use appropriate terminology, which conveys a sense of inclusion.

Your first priority in any activity should be to demonstrate respect for and maintain the dignity of all participants. Focus on the individual and his ability and functioning. Functioning can include more than just the ability to function physically. It can include the person's ability to function cognitively, socially, and emotionally.

Photos courtesy of he National Wild Turkey Federation

Some people consider themselves as having a disability, whereas others with similar conditions do not consider it a disability. Regardless of a person's self-definition, the key is to focus on the person and her functioning first, and avoid labels.

Talk directly to the person with the disability, not to a third party. Even when an interpreter (such as for an individual with hearing impairment) is present, be sure to speak to the person, not to the interpreter.

Make sure language used by those involved in your program is humanizing versus dehumanizing. Focus on the person first.

HUMANIZING LANGUAGE

Do not use dehumanizing language	Use humanizing language
The person who is crazy	The person with mental illness
The person who is wheelchair bound	The person who uses a wheelchair
The person confined to a wheelchair	The person who uses a wheelchair
The deformed person	The person with a physical impairment
The cripple	The person with a physical impairment
The blind	The person who is blind or the person with a visual impairment.
The retarded	The mentally challenged person
The person who is a stroke victim	The person who had a stroke
Deaf and dumb/mute	The person who is deaf and does not speak or hear the person with hearing impairment

For additional humanizing language visit:
www.lsi.ku.edu/lsi/internal/guidelines.html#Appropriate

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs work to eliminate or lessen constraints to involvement.

Constraints to involvement in general (and in outdoor recreation in particular) for persons with disabilities tend to involve attitudes and resources.

Attitudinal barriers for persons with disabilities include their own attitudes about participation, as well as attitudes of their significant others, the community or society at large, other hunters and shooters, and activity providers. One way to help overcome attitudinal barriers is with media exposure. Include a person with a disability participating with persons without disabilities. For example, show a grandparent in a wheelchair or with a walker at a shooting range with his grandchild; show someone with a speech communication device talking via her device about the enjoyment of hunting and shooting. This helps people with disabilities see themselves participating in the activity. It also helps the family and community realize persons with disabilities can be involved in outdoor recreation.

Resource barriers can include:
- Finances
- Transportation
- Assistance or support of another person
- Hunting/shooting partner
- Knowledge and skills
- Functioning

If you get individuals to your programs, overcoming the barriers of knowledge and skills is relatively easy. Providing free programs and providing transportation to programs will help persons with disabilities participate initially.

However, consider how to overcome barriers so they can participate on their own. For example, develop an equipment loaner program

(including adaptable equipment) and provide ideas about how individuals can obtain their own equipment (perhaps through local donations). Encourage persons with disabilities to bring others to your program; train all of them in hunting and shooting so they can participate together in the future.

There are specific constraints inherent with each disability. For people with physical disabilities (neurological, muscular, auditory, or visual), allow extra time and consider transportation. For people with cognitive disabilities (conditions that affect processing of information and/or perception of the world around them) keep directions basic, break everything into small steps, repeat as needed, and be specific. For people with learning disabilities (have average or above intelligence but difficulty processing information) first remember these people are smart. Secondly, present information in different ways, such as visual and auditory cues and physical demonstration.

Time also can be a significant constraint to many people with disabilities. It may be more difficult for them to be spontaneous. Their actions may require more planning and effort, and it often takes more time for them to complete activities. This will vary depending on the type and severity of the disability, but always allocate extra time.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs strive to make hunting and shooting activities accessible to all individuals.

Standards exist for making physical structures such as bathrooms, education centers, and boat ramps accessible, but few standards apply to the natural environment.

Effective programs work to make all pro-grams and opportunities inclusive and accessible. Facilities and access areas may not be your direct responsibility, but as you help develop your organization's strategic plan, you will want to have input since it impacts your ability to offer inclusive programs.

For people with mobility impairments, review the site. Utilize areas of your facility that are wheelchair accessible first. Try to enable individuals with mobility impairments

to participate in all activities. Temporary adaptive devices such as portable ramps are available to extend wheelchair accessibility.

Accessibility also applies to printed and audio/visual materials. For printed materials, consider large print, Braille, and audio tape versions. For video, use captions for persons with hearing impairments, and use narrative descriptions of the scenes, setting, and clothing for persons with significant visual impairments (offer as an option via a headset). For your website, follow the World Wide Web Accessibility Standards (see sidebar). Keep materials simple and concise, and use a combination of words and pictures so individuals with cognitive impairments can comprehend. Anything too busy or crowded will be difficult to decipher. Remember that some people are colorblind; typical color blindness involves the inability to distinguish or see items as red/green. Finally, make materials easy to handle so anyone with a physical impairment such as arthritis may manipulate and read it.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs conform to appropriate legislation.

There are federal, state, and local regulations and mandates regarding accessibility. It is important to know and understand these in order to maximize opportunities for all participants. Chapter 10 of the Defining Best Practices in Boating, Fishing, and Aquatic Resources Stewardship Education report by Jo-Ellen Ross summarizes the federal legislation. You can review that paper at www.rbff.org/educational/BPE10.pdf.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs provide pre-training and continual training of staff.

Continually prepare and train your staff to effectively engage persons with disabilities. Include basic information about disabilities and how to interact effectively. Provide information about assistive devices and resources (agencies, organizations, manuals, Web sites) they might consult.

Provide sensitivity and awareness training for staff. Following are very general guidelines for working with visitors with disabilities:

- Relax. You are merely meeting a new person.

- Communication is important. Use the same communication skills you use with all visitors, adjusting as necessary for persons with hearing and visual impairments.

- Make initial contact with each participant as they arrive.

- Ask them if they would like assistance and to suggest specific ways for you to assist. Some may need assistance throughout the day, and others may have special (including personal) needs at different times of the day. Allow the person to instruct you on the best way to provide assistance.

- Talk directly to the person with the disability, not to a third party.

- If you feel you need to find out more about a person's disability in order to assist them, say, "Can you explain your disability so I can be of further assistance?"

- Do not underestimate a person's abilities. Individuals make their own decisions about what they can or cannot do. (However, the instructor's responsibility is to maintain a safe environment; so if the instructor believes the activity would be unsafe to the individual or others, he/she must make the decision and discuss it with the individual with the disability.)

- Speak clearly. Even for participants without hearing impairments, the spoken word may be difficult to hear or understand.

- The decision to participate in your program is left up to each individual. If a participant is uncomfortable doing a certain part of the program, he/she should be offered an alternative activity for that section of the day. Some people may just want to watch. Let them choose.

- Provide plenty of drinking water and sunscreen.

- Make staff aware of adaptive devices and how to use them.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs provide an appropriate ratio of instructors to students.

The number of instructors needed to effectively deliver a program will vary according to the age of the participants and the severity of their disabilities. Additional support staff or volunteers can assist in various ways. Partnering with agencies or institutions that provide service to persons with disabilities is an excellent way to ensure appropriate ratio of instructors/helpers to students as well as to provide knowledgeable support.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs include accessibility information in all marketing and information materials.

Accessibility information in your promotional material lets people with disabilities know they are welcome to attend your events and activities. Use the correct terminology and make materials available in accessible formats. Promote that your facility meets accessibility standards and any other assistance you can provide, such as adaptive shooting equipment or a sign language interpreter. Offer a variety of means of registering.

ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION

Accessibility guidelines and assistance are available at the following Web sites:

- Federal Access Board: www.access-board.gov

- ADA Technical Assistance Program: http://www.dbtac.vcu.edu/. There is one for each region of the country.

- National Center on Accessibility: www.ncaonline.org. This site provides technical assistance regarding accessibility standards, including those related to boating, fishing, and aquatic environments, as well as information about equipment for fishing.

Adaptive equipment is available for a variety of disabilities. The following Web sites offer adaptive equipment:

- Abledata: www.abledata.com

- Access to Recreation: www.accesstr.com

- National Public Website on Assisted Technology: www.assistivetech.net

Websites that provide information on developing media-related information include:

- Lighthouse International: www.lighthouse.org/accessibility/effective-color-contrast/. This site provides information on designing for people with partial sight and color deficiencies.

- National Center for Accessible Media: http://ncam.wgbh.org. This site provides information on media access equality for people with disabilities.

- Web Accessibility Initiative: www.w3.org/WAI. This site provides information on accessibility of the Web for people with disabilities.

- Trace Center, University of Wisconsin, Madison: http://trace.wisc.edu/. This site provides information regarding products, particularly technology/computer-related products.

Many states also have organizations that deal with accessibility. Be sure to take advantage of this resource.

CHAPTER 8: Enhancing Hunter Education Programs

Hunter education programs are well established and generally well run. They play an important role in training new hunters to be safe, responsible members of the hunting community. When considering hunter education programs as part of a Recruitment and Retention (R&R) effort, it is important to remember that their goal is not to recruit new hunters. It is to train people who have expressed an interest in hunting to be safe and responsible.

Any efforts to revise the role of hunter education programs into R&R efforts should be carefully examined. Society at-large has an expectation that hunters are well trained and skilled before going into the field to hunt. Any changes to this expectation may have significant impacts on the public support that hunting and hunter education enjoy. On the other hand, hunter education does provide unique opportunities for R&R which should be considered.

There is great danger in thinking of a hunter education program as the "switch" that defines someone as a recruit. If agencies use the hunter education program to certify people as being qualified to go afield in the company of others, the hunter education program can inhibit the development of that person's self-perception as a hunter, because going afield with other hunters may be a necessary step in helping the individual understand how shooting game is a significant element of the full context of being a hunter (which also includes a variety of other hunting-related activities).

Hunter education programs should complement, and not inhibit, other efforts to recruit new hunters and retain existing ones. The following Best Practices have been developed with this in mind.

The list below contains Best Practices for hunter education programs. Following the list, each Best Practice from the list is explained, and worksheets throughout the chapter help you apply each practice to your own particular situation.

BEST PRACTICES FOR HUNTER EDUCATION

Effective Hunter Education programs:

- Carefully define the content of hunter education experiences.
- Meet the standards of the International Hunter Education Association.
- Ensure quality by careful selection, preparation training and re-training of instructors.
- Offer training frequently and on a predictable schedule.
- Offer training that is well advertised and easily accessed.
- Utilize a variety of approaches to increase participation.
- Develop partnerships to strengthen programs.
- Are learner-centered.
- Are experiential.
- Use multiple teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles.
- Consider the social context in which the education takes place and provide avenues to enhance social support for participants.
- Provide multiple ways for people to act on what they've learned.
- Examine the statutes and regulations regarding the "mandatory" nature of their program to ensure that some types of early hunting experiences are allowed.

BEST PRACTICE
*Effective hunter education pro-
grams carefully define the content
of hunter education experiences.*

It is important to clearly decide what you want to accomplish with your program. Chapter 2 discusses the planning process in detail. Refer to it as you work through this process.

Many states offer a variety of hunter educations courses, such as a basic course, an advanced archery or muzzleloader course, or a specialty course like turkey or waterfowl hunting. Each of these courses will be quite different, so it is important to have the content of each well defined.

One approach to developing Best Practices is to consider what you want the learner to be able to do, or to be like, after completing your program. The following list is a good place to start.

After completing this program, learners will have:
- An understanding of how to participate in hunting.
- The physical skills necessary for successful, safe participation.
- The ability to use information to build knowledge to become a successful hunter.
- An understanding of how to overcome barriers to participation.
- A social support network that allows them to continue participating in hunting.
- An understanding of the importance of using knowledge to support and provide a rationale for their attitudes and behaviors.
- The critical thinking, judgment, and decision-making skills to be able to iden-

tify, use, and act appropriately on good information.
- Ethical competence.
- An understanding of the roles of local, state, and federal agencies and organizations that are involved in protecting and managing wildlife habitats and recreation.
- The ability to make their views known to the appropriate people in these organizations and agencies.
- The ability to effect positive changes and the recognition that they can make a difference with their informed participation and actions.

The International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) along with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has developed standards for hunter education programs (see following page).

BEST PRACTICE
*Effective hunter education pro-
grams meet the standards for
hunter education developed by the
International Hunter Education
Association.*

Standards for hunter education have been developed by the IHEA with assistance from the AFWA, the WMI, and USFWS. The standards are intended to show the minimum content of the course materials to be included in an approved hunter education course. Course developers, instructors, agency staff, and organizations are encouraged to go beyond the standards when, in their judgment and experience, it assists hunters to hunt more safely and responsibly. A list of the topics included in the National Hunter Education Standards is included in Figure 5.

Figure 5. International Hunter Education Standards (IHEA, 2007)

I.	INTRODUCTION
1.	Purpose

II.	HUNTER SAFETY
1.	Basic Safety Rules
2.	Loading/Unloading
3.	Action types
4.	Safety Mechanism
5.	Matching Ammunition
6.	Safe Transport
7.	Ground blind/elevated stand
8.	Crossing obstacles
9.	Safe Zones of Fire
10.	Carry methods
11.	Shot selection
12.	Obstructions in Barrels
13.	Hunter Orange
14.	Alcohol and Drug Avoidance
15.	Safe Cleaning and Storage
16.	Archery Equipment
17.	Muzzleloading equipment
18.	Eye and ear protection

III.	HUNTER RESPONSIBILITY
1.	Why Hunting Regulations
2.	How to Find Hunting Regulations
3.	Hunter Ethics
4.	Public Image
5.	Clean Kill
6.	Care of Game

IV.	OUTDOOR SAFETY
1.	Physical Conditioning
2.	Hunt Planning
3.	Outdoor Exposure
4.	Signaling When Lost
5.	Survival Kit
6.	Personal Flotation Device

V.	WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
1.	Hunting's Role in Wildlife Conservation
2.	Key Wildlife Principles
3.	Wildlife Identification

VI.	EXAMINATIONS
1.	Design
2.	Testing formats
3.	Direction to respond to the questions
4.	Material included in Standards 1-5
5.	Emphasis on importance
6.	Establish minimum passing grades

It is important to remember that these standards are closely related to, but are not necessarily the same as the characteristic attributes that are needed to recruit and retain hunters and shooters.

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![dog icon] **BEST PRACTICE**
Effective hunter education programs ensure quality by careful selection, preparation, training and re-training of instructors.

Instructor selection, preparation, training and re-training are critical to ensure accurate, consistent use of hunter education program materials. With training in the use of curriculum materials and teaching strategies, instructors are more likely to achieve your program goals and objectives.

It is important to establish objectives for each training program. In addition to training the trainers for entry-level programs, you may have other training sessions for advanced programs. Training will be different for programs that focus on introducing individuals to the techniques of hunting rather than teaching hunter safety alone.

Refer to **Chapter 4** on well-trained instructors for general details and worksheets on selecting, training, and evaluating instructors.

![dog icon] **BEST PRACTICE**
Effective hunter education programs utilize a variety of approaches to increase participation in hunter education.

While the overall goals, objectives and minimum standards for general hunter education programs have been established, there is considerable flexibility to allow individual agencies and organizations to offer various types of courses and instruction in different formats, including classroom and field-based seminars, multi-lesson courses, self study, and on-line courses.

Most states offer courses through a designated hunter education section within the state wildlife agency. In some cases this program is housed within the wildlife law enforcement arm of state government. All states accept courses offered by other states. A growing trend is to offer this training via an on-line, home study program that is paired with hands-on training (e.g., field day). Many states use a combination of approaches.

Providing a variety of formats and delivery mechanisms allows students to select the format that best meets their needs. Rigid, inflexible schedules will not accommodate the hectic lifestyles so common in today's society. An inflexible course schedule should not be the factor that prevents a person from becoming a life-long hunter.

![dog icon] **BEST PRACTICE**
Effective hunter education programs are offered frequently and on a predictable schedule.

The simple reality is that if a person wants to take hunter education but cannot find your course offerings, you might as well not even have the course. For that individual, you have missed the opportunity. Hunter education programs should be offered frequently and on a predictable schedule, and promotion is critical. Planning and advertising courses well ahead of time will allow people to incorporate them into their schedules. Often the extra effort to make sure people are aware of your course is the difference between great attendance and marginal attendance.

If your courses are always full, you should consider adding additional courses. If you offer alternative means to complete the course, you also should promote those options along with the traditional courses.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective hunter education programs offer training that is well advertised and easily accessed at the time the new hunter is interested.

Make potential hunters aware of your programs. Potential new hunters from non-hunting families or cultures look for hunter education courses when they first get interested in hunting. This group is motivated and will seek you out, but programs must be available and easily accessed at the time the new hunter is interested. You may have a narrow window of time to get a person into a course before the initial interest wears off and they go onto something else. The first priority is to have courses or alternative delivery available to meet diverse demands. The second (but equally important) priority is to be sure people can find these offerings. Public awareness campaigns can help.

Awareness campaigns can include:
- TV, radio, and print advertisements (paid)

- "Earned coverage" on TV, radio and print (unpaid)

- Visible print or video programs at retailers

- Information that goes with the purchase of hunting equipment (point of sale)

- One-on-one information from retailers to the purchaser of hunting equipment or supplies (or from partner organizations that inform new purchasers)

BEST PRACTICE
Effective hunter education programs develop partnerships to strengthen programs.

Partnering with other organizations provides more opportunities to get important messages to a wider range of individuals. Chapters 2 and 3 of the Workbook lead you through the process of setting goals and objectives for your program and involving stakeholders and partners to help you meet your goals and objectives. The hunting community offers numerous opportunities

Benefits of Hunting

Hunting:
- ✓ Is an equalizer – an activity that anyone can participate in equally, regardless of size, age, strength, gender, or social status.

- ✓ Is fun.

- ✓ Is a lifetime activity.

- ✓ Is an activity people can do with friends and family.

- ✓ Is an activity that people can do alone without feeling lonely.

- ✓ Is an activity that provides quality time with families and friends.

- ✓ Is an activity that bonds families and provides memories that last a lifetime.

- ✓ Helps youth develop life skills/assets such as decision-making skills and high self-esteem.

- ✓ Helps youth develop respect and responsibility.

- ✓ Provides youth a positive alternative to drugs, alcohol, and violence.

- ✓ Helps individuals become more connected to the natural resources.

- ✓ Helps people become better stewards of wildlife resources.

- ✓ Can turn students on to learning about biology, ecology, conservation, and other subjects.

- ✓ Can raise attendance at school (when used as part of a school curriculum).

for partnerships. Both the hunting-related industries themselves and their trade associations also are active players in hunter education.

The recruitment and retention of hunters requires more than a single agency/organization response. Partnerships with other agencies, organizations, businesses, universities, and communities are essential to success. Avoid the temptation to go it alone. There is absolutely no room for turf battles, departmental infighting, or agency provinciality.

To develop effective partnerships, the hunter education program must be relevant to the partner. Some people make the mistake of thinking their partners must have an interest in hunting, but that is not necessarily the case. Multiple benefits can attract diverse partners (see sidebar on following page).

Churches, schools, family counseling groups, youth groups, city parks, community groups, and numerous others could benefit as a partner in your hunter education program.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective hunter education programs are learner-centered to provide collaborative learning opportunities and development of critical thinking skills.

Research from various disciplines suggests that education should focus attention on the learners, rather than on teaching, curriculum and instruction, or on the administrative structure of a program. But to accomplish this, teaching styles, the curriculum, and instruction itself must be focused on the learner (learner-centered).

In order for hunter education programs to be effective in an educational sense, they must take into account the ways people learn. Understanding how people learn can help you tremendously in your efforts to build effective programs. Chapter 3 contains excellent guidelines for making your program learner-centered (see page 40).

BEST PRACTICE
Effective hunter education programs are experiential.

Experiential learning includes four important elements:

CONCRETE EXPERIENCE	Learner has a real-world experience relevant to learning outcomes.
PROCESS INFORMATION	Learner thinks about and reflects on what happened.
GENERALIZE	Learners summarize what they've experienced and connect it to real-world examples (they answer the question "so what?").
APPLY	Learners apply what was learned to real-world and personally relevant examples (they answer the question "now what?").

There are two basic types of experiential learning. One is education that occurs as a direct participation in the events of life. It doesn't take place as part of a structured course – it occurs through reflection on everyday experiences. This is the way people do most of their learning.

The other type of experiential learning is related to education programs. It describes the sort of learning undertaken by students who are given a chance to acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and feelings in an immediate and relevant setting. Through practice, people actively learn, then share their experiences, reflect on their importance, connect them to real world examples, and apply the resulting knowledge to other situations.

To fully apply experiential learning, hunter education programs need to be relevant to the learner, be learner-centered, and include other principles covered in this chapter.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective hunter education programs use multiple teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles.

Not all students learn the same way. Intelligence is not unchanging, but can be learned, taught and developed. The content, teaching methods and assessment you use in your programs should allow students multiple ways of learning. It also allows them multiple ways to demonstrate what they have learned and can do. Chapter 3 contains a detailed description of common learning styles and how to accommodate them effectively (see page 40).

BEST PRACTICE
Effective hunter education programs consider the social context in which the education takes place and provide avenues to enhance social support for the learners.

Research clearly shows that the social context in which education takes place is at least as important as the methods used to teach the concepts. In fact, the influence of the community within which the behavior will occur may be the strongest force acting on the behavior, regardless of instruction or other treatment. If you do not incorporate the community and cultural context of your learners into your hunter education program, it is likely to remain abstract and outside their scope of experience.

Research also indicates that parental and community involvement improves student learning in formal education (schools). Whether your program is formal or non-formal, stakeholders and community groups are critical to help move learners past a mere understanding of concepts – to get them to change attitudes and cultural norms in the community.

Belonging to and identifying with a group or community is important for personal development – especially ethics and values. Community can include family, school, ethnic community, and groups such as 4-H or scouts. Family, peers, and others in the community transmit their attitudes, beliefs, and values to your learners. Group members can positively influence and actually initiate your learners into activities like hunting and shooting, and can encourage or discourage stewardship behaviors associated with those activities.

This suggests that, to be most effective, hunter education programs should incorporate

relevant issues and active learning, and emphasize peer activities. Mentoring, clubs, and family programs implemented over the long term may build the kinds of communities that facilitate education. Therefore, programs will be most effective in reaching behavioral goals if they are designed to incorporate parents, family, and neighborhood as part of the learning community.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective hunter education programs provide multiple ways for people to act on what they've learned.

Single, isolated experiences are rarely enough to create hunters and shooters. Multiple experiences are critical. Hunter education programs can assist with R&R efforts by considering the question "What are the next steps/opportunities available to the "graduates" of this program?" Consider providing information on the location of various shooting ranges, hunting clubs, advanced hunter education programs, hunting shows, mentoring programs, youth hunting days, etc. The more opportunities that are presented, the more likely the graduates of the current program will be able to find one that fits their schedule and interest.

New hunters often have an expectation that a hunter education course will provide information on how to hunt specific animals or use specific equipment. This information is often beyond the scope of the initial course, but you may have entire specialty courses for people with such interests. Be sure to provide information on how your participants can learn more about areas of particular interest.

Offering a variety of "How-to" clinics has proven to be an excellent means to provide ongoing hunter education to both existing and new hunters. These events also improve the social support system for the hunters by introducing them to other hunters that have the same interest. These events, if well advertised, also provide social support for hunting within the larger community by making hunting a main-stream activity.

However, great care should be taken to not to fall into a "Field Days – Feel Good" trap. Great effort often is expended and large numbers of participants are reached in these single-day events. Short-term evaluations generally reflect positive outcomes, and event organizers are proud of their accomplishments. However, by understanding and using the Hunting/Shooting Participation Classification System (see Chapter 1) you will quickly determine that without efforts focused on moving participants further along this continuum towards continuation as a hunting proponent stage, simply generating interest may do little more than make event organizers feel good.

Generally, smaller, more focused events that have a goal to develop a stronger social support network have greater long-term impact than larger-scale events that provide little direct interaction or social support for participants.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective hunter education programs examine the statutes and regulations regarding the "mandatory" nature of their program to ensure that some types of early hunting experiences are allowed.

NOTE: *Maintaining a mandatory requirement for hunter education is important in a larger social context; that is, society expects hunters to be skilled and trained before going hunting. However, when and how the mandatory training takes place is an important consideration for recruitment of new*

hunters. Providing opportunities for informal training of new hunters in the field with experienced mentors should not be viewed as a conflict with a mandatory hunter education requirement.

Hunter education is offered in every state, although the agencies responsible for this function and methods of delivering it vary considerably from state to state. Some states allow children (and adults) to hunt with their parents or other adults without obtaining licenses or hunter education training. This allows people with an interest in hunting to have numerous trial experiences prior to taking a course. Accompanying others on a hunt can be an important factor in helping children understand hunting in the context of other hunting-related activities like target shooting, cleaning firearms, eating game, and sharing hunting stories. In this scenario, youth are more likely to be in an advanced stage of hunting adoption when they actually take the hunter education course (see Chapter 1 for a discussion of the Hunting/Shooting Participation Classification System).

Other states require youth to be certified and licensed before they can do anything other than observe the hunt. These requirements put strong time and planning constraints on children and their parents. If people are unable to obtain contextual experience without first taking a hunter education course, then the course may act as a barrier to someone trying to obtain this experience. That is, the hunter education requirement could prevent or discourage people from moving from the interest stage into the trial and continuation stages of hunter adoption.

Agencies need to analyze their approach to licensing and hunter education to determine where in the Hunting Participation Classification System their education program

is designed to intercept hunting participants. Agencies may want to change certain aspects of the licensing and training process, or they may want to redesign their hunter education curriculum and delivery systems to better serve the people who are interested in hunting.

The ways in which agencies implement hunter education programs, and especially the ways in which they interpret and apply mandatory certification requirements, can unintentionally affect progression from a lower stage of hunting involvement into higher stages. Hunter education programs aimed at the general public (i.e., with no assumption that all participants intend to become hunters) and that are intended to help people recognize that the activity of hunting is just a part of the broader hunting and shooting culture could help people move from the awareness to the interest or even trial stages of involvement. At the other end of the spectrum, courses aimed at knowledge and skill development in terms of shooting game may inadvertently diminish interest by giving people in the awareness stage the false impression that being a hunter is only equated with harvesting game.

Also, agencies that allow non-certified people to accompany hunters in the field on hunting trips benefit the development of interest, provide opportunities for the non-certified individual to gain contextual understanding and experience, and allow them to move toward the trial or even continuation stage unimpeded. At the other end of the spectrum, requiring a person to be certified just so they can participate in a trial experience probably acts as a significant barrier to movement from the interest stage into the trial stage.

Making hunter education programs mandatory for license purchase should not present

any real barrier to someone becoming a hunter, as long as courses are well-designed and available. It's the middle ground where hunter education programs try to be "gatekeepers" of whether people can think of themselves as hunters that the real problem occurs.

In some states, the agency tries to make the hunter education program into a legal rite of passage for all hunters, even though it is not seen that way by most license buyers. Making hunter education certification mandatory for moving from the interest stage to the trial stage is problematic.

Under this scenario, a hunter education course may become a barrier rather than an experience that helps transform someone from a person who is interested in becoming a hunter into someone who has a self-perception as a hunter. Certainly, some hunters think back on their hunter education course as a rite of passage, but research suggests that most do not. If hunter education certification is turned into an initiation rite so someone can get a "membership card" in the hunting and shooting culture, it can deny "membership" to people who can benefit most from apprenticeship experiences (people in the interest and trial stages). It also can deny "membership" to people who already think of themselves as being hunters (those in the continuation stage who are not legally old enough to get a license, or adults who for whatever reason have not yet gone through the course).

Agencies need to clearly understand that there is a difference between the activity of hunting and what is meant by "being a hunter." Similarly, recruitment and retention of hunters is quite different from recruitment and retention of license buyers. License buying is a necessary activity, but it is not generally thought of as a transforming experience.

Specific Hunter Education Recommendations

In 2000, the National Shooting Sports Foundation convened a "Think Tank" of experts to discuss ways to improve hunter education in North America. Many of the recommendations they made are included in the Best Practices in this chapter. Others are good ideas that have not yet been tested in the field. Anyone involved in hunter education would do well to incorporate as many of these specific ideas as possible into their programs.

Recommendations to the Agency that Administers the Hunter Education Program

1. Continue review of state/provincial hunter education programs.

2. Develop effective measures of the impact/success of hunter education on recruitment/retention (other than license sales).

3. Recognize that hunter education offers tremendous opportunities for the agency to interact with its constituents – take advantage of these opportunities.

4. Provide more shooting ranges and hunting and shooting opportunities for the public.

5. Evaluate the impacts of agency regulations on hunting and shooting participation.

6. Make it easier for hunters to get the necessary licenses/tags.

7. Encourage agency personnel that do not hunt to become familiar with hunting/shooting activities (participate in a "Becoming an Outdoors Woman" program or similar course).

Recommendations to the Hunter Education Program

1. Develop systems for delivering hunter education programs in non-traditional ways.

2. Identify and evaluate other successful programs and their delivery systems (e.g., anti-smoking campaign, seatbelts, etc.).

3. Determine if there are teaching methods/behaviors that encourage retention of hunter education students. If so, develop a delivery system to impart these methods/behaviors to hunter education instructors.

4. Document the relationship (if any) between course quality and permanent participation of the student in hunting and shooting activities.

5. Develop effective messages and media for convincing agency leadership of the value of hunter education to the agency.

6. Develop effective messages and media for agency leadership to use to promote the importance of hunter education outside the agency.

7. Assess levels and locus of agency support for the hunter education program.

8. Explore new ways to deliver hunter education to under-represented groups (ethnic, women, disabled).

Recommendations to Industry and Other Stakeholders

Like agencies, industry and other stakeholders need to understand that there is a difference between the activity of hunting and what is meant by "being a hunter." The primary focus of hunter participation efforts should be, not so much to get people to buy hunting licenses, but to move people from the interest stage to the trial stage and ultimately to the continuation stage of hunting involvement.

1. Encourage and support the development of flexible hunter education delivery systems that allow convenient access to programs for all students.

2. Encourage and support the further development and implementation of mentoring programs that serve to introduce newcomers to hunting and the shooting sports.

3. Continue to explore and evaluate new strategies that encourage and promote youth interest in the out-of-doors, including outdoor "adventure camps" and similar innovative concepts.

4. Continue to explore and evaluate landowner programs that provide hunting access and that recognize landowners who are active in such efforts.

5. Encourage and support the development of programs that focus on recruitment from non-traditional audiences.

6. Enhance communication and coordination among existing youth shooting programs to promote "cross-over" opportunities, sharing of information, and creation of strong, new partnership programs.

7. Support and expand existing programs to enhance opportunities for women within the shooting sports, and consider new programs that enhance the effectiveness of these efforts.

8. Continue to develop and support efforts aimed at expanding existing high school shooting sports programs and starting new high school programs that provide continuing shooting opportunities for young adults.

9. Support and expand existing programs to enhance opportunities for minorities within the shooting sports, and consider new programs that enhance the effectiveness of these efforts.

10. Support and expand existing programs to enhance opportunities for physically challenged people within the shooting sports, and consider new programs that enhance the effectiveness of these efforts.

11. Provide modern, safe, and environmentally responsible shooting facilities.

12. Expedite construction of public and commercial ranges in those metropolitan areas where there is a lack of accessible and convenient shooting opportunities.

CHAPTER 9: Let Research Help

To date, there has not been very much research conducted specifically on hunting and shooting Recruitment and Retention (R&R). The need for this kind of research has only recently been identified and has not been quick to catch on in most of the hunting and shooting community. For example, the question, "Are we having an impact with our R&R programs?" largely is unanswered.

One reason for this is the fact that there has been lack of a consensus about the definition of the terms recruitment and retention. Some people define recruitment as when a person buys a hunting license or goes target shooting for the first time, and retention as continued participation over time. One problem with this thinking is that it is hard to identify people who would have bought a license anyway without the program. As noted in other places in this Workbook, there is greater benefit in thinking about R&R from an attitudinal (i.e., self-perception) perspective than a behavioral (i.e., license-buying) perspective. It is very hard to measure the impact of a program when one hasn't adequately defined the objective.

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Another major reason why the impacts of R&R programs have not been evaluated satisfactorily is a lack of capacity by sponsoring agencies and organizations. Few state agencies or conservation organizations know how to identify research needs and design and complete appropriate studies. As a result, the Best Practice recommendations for research below focus on capacity building within organizations.

This does not necessarily mean researchers need to be hired, although that could certainly help. It does mean that program staff should be able to recognize and communicate the value of and need for research that is relevant to their programs. Awareness of existing research, and research experience, will allow program staff to incorporate research findings into their programs. It also will help them identify gaps in existing research and additional research needs.

BEST PRACTICES FOR RESEARCH

Effective programs:

- Allow staff to recognize and explore the value of and need for research that is relevant to their programs.

- Provide opportunities for staff to become aware of and familiar with collections, reviews, and summaries of research relevant to their programs.

- Encourage staff to incorporate research findings into the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of their programs.

- Allow staff to take advantage of professional development opportunities that enhance their research skills and strengthen their capacity to become meaningfully involved in the research process.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs allow staff to recognize and explore the value of and need for research that is relevant to their programs.

Best Practices are recommendations based on what has been observed or documented to be effective to date, but which may change given additional experience, evaluation, and research. It is critical that staff (or anyone associated with program delivery) understand the importance of research that can impact their programs specifically.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs provide opportunities for staff to become aware of and familiar with collections, reviews, and summaries of research relevant to their programs.

Effective programs encourage and provide mechanisms for staff to remain up to date with current research. You can find opportunities through publications, newsletters, websites, training, etc.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs encourage staff to incorporate research findings into the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of their programs.

It is not enough for staff to merely be aware of or know where to find research information regarding their programs. The best research in the world will remain useless unless it is incorporated into programs to make them more effective. At all levels, the program should encourage staff to continually upgrade their efforts based on pertinent research findings.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs allow staff to take advantage of professional development opportunities that enhance their research skills and strengthen their capacity to become meaningfully involved in the research process.

With continuing professional development/ training regarding research, staff can become a powerful force for the improvement of the program and of hunting and shooting R&R in general. With training, they are able to recognize, explore, and share gaps in existing research and additional research needs. This is very valuable to researchers who look to practitioners for insight into the areas in greatest need of exploration. Over time, this feedback loop between practitioners and researchers works to tremendous advantage to both.

Professional development regarding research also can enhance staff abilities to understand the implications of research for their program and strategies for making use of it. Even if you encourage staff to seek out research results, if they cannot apply the information, your program has little to show for their efforts. A basic understanding of research methods and terminology can make a big difference in their ability to effectively use the information. For more information on other aspects of professional development, see Chapter 4.

Future Research Needs
The Hunting and Shooting R&R Think Tank that helped assemble this Workbook recognized that, with a few notable exceptions, few of the various R&R programs in existence were developed based on sound, science-based research, and little specific research has been focused on evaluating hunting and shooting R&R programs.

The following specific areas were identified as being particularly important for the hunting/shooting community to research/implement in order to recruit and retain hunters and shooters:

- Encourage state agencies to acquire automated licensing systems and mine the data to learn more about their hunting and shooting clientele.

- Encourage USFWS to continue R&R analysis of data from the National Survey on Hunting, Fishing, and Wildlife-Related Recreation.

- Develop indicators of social and technical competence for each stage of hunting/shooting adoption.

- Identify the specific social attributes of a hunter/shooter (when does a person become one?).

- Create a clearinghouse of existing R&R data (National Hunting Heritage Action Plan).

- Implement a nationwide, longitudinal study of hunter education deferral participants (do they buy licenses and participate in following years?).

- Study the effectiveness of 4-H shooting sports program, Scholastic Clay Target Program and National Archery in the Schools Program in creating life-long hunters and shooters.

- Research the cross-over relationships between shooting sports and hunting.

- Encourage long-term (longitudinal) monitoring of R&R efforts.

CHAPTER 10: Mentoring

Mentors provide an important mechanism for new participants to develop technical skills, as well as the social competence to become a long-term hunter or shooter. The concept of being socially competent may be new to some planners of Recruitment and Retention (R&R) programs. This is a fancy term for understanding and adopting the norms of behavior, etiquette, and belief system of hunters or shooters. These attitudes and beliefs, while often very subtle, are important to "fit in" with the group – to see yourself as a hunter or shooter. Having a guide or mentor to assist in this process makes "joining" much easier and less awkward.

Most recruitment programs and events have largely focused on developing technical competence with little or no consideration for influencing social competence.

Technical competence is also a critical element of recruitment, but if a person with a high level of skill does not fit in with a group, he or she will not likely continue the activity.

Apprenticeship experiences provide opportunities for interested persons to become socialized into hunting and shooting. Through these experiences, the individual develops technical competence in a set of skills and techniques, and social competence through recognition and adoption of implicit qualities and beliefs that are associated with being a hunter.

Mentors play an important role in imparting both technical and social skills to students who are in the continuation with support stage of the hunting/shooting adoption model (see Chapter 1 for description of the model). They play an equally important role in guiding and encouraging learners to move out of that stage into the continuation without support stage, where they can form new relationships with other participants in that higher-level stage.

The list below contains currently recognized Best Practices for mentoring new hunters and shooters. Following the list, each is explained. Worksheets throughout the chapter help you apply each practice to your own situation.

BEST PRACTICES FOR MENTORING

Effective programs:

- Recruit qualified mentors.
- Are community-based.
- Are sustained over time and provide multiple follow-up activities.
- Incorporate training/continuing education as part of the instructor recruitment process.
- Evaluate mentors and have procedures for termination.
- Recognize and reward good mentors.
- Integrate their programs with other existing mentoring efforts.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs recruit qualified mentors.

Because of the extremely important role that mentors play, great care must be taken in their selection. Inter-personal skills, enthusiasm, and an overriding concern that their apprentice succeeds are critical elements to look for in mentors. Being a mentor is about transferring the technical and social skills plus the knowledge necessary to become a long-term hunter or shooter to another person. It is not about the mentor's skills or ego; it is about assisting the new participant in obtaining appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviors in a welcoming, supportive and nurturing environment.
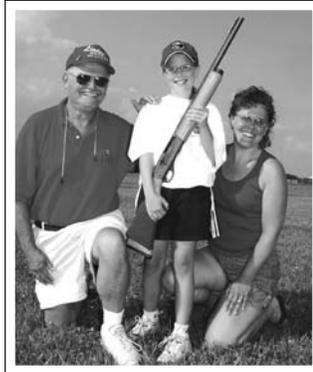
It is important to note that having highly honed hunting or shooting skills is not a prerequisite for becoming a mentor. However, having the skills, knowledge and attitude to be able to transfer what hunting and shooting skills they may have to another person in an effective, positive manner is critical.

All potential mentors should undergo a background check and a psychological profile, if possible. Nothing can undermine recruitment or retention programs faster than having mentors who are there for the wrong reasons (see Chapter 4 for Best Practices on Selecting instructors and mentors).

Several existing mentoring programs exist (such as Big Brothers; Big Sisters and Boy Scouts of America) that can serve as models (or partners) in developing mentor programs.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs are community-based.

There are hunting and shooting R&R programs at work at the national level, state level and local level. By far the most effective place to effectively recruit and retain new hunters and shooters is the local community. This is where most people find activities and social support. Mentors who live and hunt and shoot in local areas can be effective guides to introduce newcomers into these activities.

Having mentors and activities focused in local areas also assists in ensuring that hunting and shooting sports are viewed as mainstream activities that anyone can participate in. Having these activities viewed as something exotic or that only happen in some distant location will greatly undermine R&R efforts. Local mentors who can relate well to newcomers make it "real" and attainable to them.

For example, if a person with potential interest in hunting or shooting attends a sport show or expo and hears a seminar on deer hunting by a nationally recognized expert or TV celebrity, his or her interest may be piqued and knowledge increased, but he or she may see hunting/shooting as something distant and exotic (much like the celebrity). On the other hand, if the newcomer has a local resident alongside to help interpret the new knowledge and provide real-world examples, the newcomer is much more likely to look upon the activity as something he or she could really do.

It is important to note that mentoring need not be one-on-one to be meaningful. Mentoring a parent and their children (or a small group of children) multiplies your efforts and provides the local social support for continuing the activity.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs are sustained over time and provide multiple follow-up activities that logically lead to the next stage of adoption.

Because recruiting a new hunter and shooter takes place over a long period of time and involves many steps; R&R efforts also must be sustained over a long period of time.

Research has clearly demonstrated that one-time events do not make lifelong hunters or shooters, even when mentors are involved. To realize maximum return on your mentors' efforts, build a program that incorporates multiple contacts between the participants and the mentors for a sustained period. These include multiple skill development sessions that are coupled with multiple social support networking opportunities. These events need not be major events, but they do need to be supportive of the process. These may include a casual target shooting event, assisting in training a hunting dog or helping the landowner with some chores where you hunt.

Creating long-term contacts can be very difficult, because the number of potential new participants often far exceeds the number of available mentors. You must take care not to overwhelm your cadre of mentors. Providing mentors with clear direction and expectations ahead of time can avoid the pitfall. However, planning and implementing anything less than a multi-dimensional, multi-contact program will likely result in disappointment.

It is important to remember that the goal of the mentoring program is to transfer the technical and social skills plus the knowledge necessary to become a long-term hunter or shooter to another person. Therefore it is important to develop programs that logically lead to the subsequent stages in the adoption model.

Continually repeating activities within the same stage does not move students along the adoption model and may not create new hunters and shooters.

Understanding how hard this is requires thinking about the fact that there are people who do things and people who are things. Some people do things that may have taken several years of learning and practice – car mechanics, teachers or construction workers. However, these people may define themselves (outside of their work) as artists, collectors or... hunters. The ultimate success of any R&R effort is when someone moves along the adoption model until they define themselves as a hunter or shooter.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs incorporate training/continuing education as part of their mentor recruitment process.

Effective mentors can be an R&R program's most valuable asset. Because they play such a key role, they should be trained and re-trained over time. It is the program's obligation to ensure that its mentors can deliver the program as intended.

The training programs should have well thought-out objectives and provide the mentors with clear standards and expectations. In addition, the training provided should match the roles that the mentors will utilize. Providing opportunities for veteran mentors to share their experiences and to communicate about their successes and difficulties will often create a cadre of trainers you can rely on.

Effective mentors should be primarily concerned about transferring the technical and social skills, knowledge, and attitude necessary to becoming a long-term hunter or shooter to

another person, and assisting the new participant to obtain these skills in a welcoming, supportive and nurturing environment.

To achieve this, it is critical to understand the needs of the student or new participant. This understanding includes being aware of the student's current technical and social skill level, learning and physical difficulties, and personality. All of these elements, and more, must be considered in developing a personalized, student-centered mentoring.

Skillful mentors make sure that their students participate in meaningful, hands-on, fun activities that aid in their technical and social skill development. These activities should be driven by the needs of the student.

Program managers should provide mentor training and continuing education to show and model the behaviors and attitudes they want their mentors to exhibit to participants.

It is important to note that having highly honed hunting or shooting skills is not a prerequisite for becoming a mentor. However, having the skills, knowledge and attitude to be able to transfer what hunting and shooting skills they may have to another person in an effective, positive manner is critical.

The training required does not have to take place overnight or all at one time. Just as creating a new recruit does not happen with one exposure, training a new mentor also should take place over time. Training programs should include social support mechanisms for the mentors whenever possible (see Chapter 4 for more details on recruiting and training instructors).

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs evaluate mentors and have procedures for termination.

Programs should not fear creating high standards. In fact, they cannot afford not to. Having high standards creates an esprit de corps that can enhance the pride of being part of a select group. It also ensures the best possible results for the program participants entrusted to the mentors.

However, the standards developed should be clear so mentors know what their expectations are. They also should be set in a manner that they can realistically be reached by most of the mentors that are recruited.

Don't assume that just because someone volunteers to become a mentor in your program that they are qualified to do so. Careful screening processes should be in place prior to recruiting mentors. The screening process should be rigorous enough to screen out inappropriate people but not so arduous that it scares potential good mentors off. This process should also be matched with the role that the mentor may be utilized. This process should be periodically evaluated to ensure its appropriateness.

Instructors and mentors also should be regularly evaluated against a set of carefully selected criteria. Any mentor that does not measure up to these requirements and expectations should be provided remedial training, allowed to co-mentor with a highly successful mentor, or if these effort are unsuccessful, be terminated. Having specific, written procedures in place to terminate mentors is critical to avoid unpleasant situations, misunderstandings or legal action.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs recognize good mentors.

Don't overlook your mentors or take them for granted. Most mentors are not overly concerned with personal recognition, but everyone likes to know that their efforts are appreciated. Simple thank you letters, mementos, service awards, recognition dinners, stories about the program being published in newspapers, etc. are often all that it takes to keep them engaged and energized about the program. Figure 6 contains an example of a volunteer incentive/award program.

INCENTIVE AWARDS
Instructors accumulate points based on their involvement in the Texas Hunter Education program. "Incentive Awards" are the agency's way of thanking volunteers, teachers and employees involved in hunter education. Points are accumulated based on the following:

FIGURE 6: Sample Volunteer Incentive Program

Students taught	1 point per student
Class points	10 points per course
Scheduled classes	5 points per course additional if scheduled prior to class conducted
Tenure	10 points per year 15 points per year for Master Instructors
Hours	1 additional point for 11 hours 2 for 12 hours; 3 for 13 4 for 14-15, 5 for 16-17 and 6 for 18+
Program orientation (includes standards of live fire, skills trial and home study)	50 points
Hunter Ed workshops and special events	25 points per workshop/event
Area Chief	20 tenure points per year 1 point per new instructor taught 25 points per workshop taught

Instructors receive training aids at early point levels. After continued involvement, instructors receive items they can use personally and/or as training aids in the program.

Instructors achieving the highest point level (4500) are recognized in the Texas Hunter Education Hall of Fame and have their names added to the plaque located in the hallway of the education branch of the Texas Parks and Wildlife headquarters building.

25 (Students)	Training aid
50 (Students)	Training aid
100	Orange cap
200	Orange vest
300	Gun cleaning kit
500	Belt buckle, hearing & eye protection
750	Custom leather product (Bino-System), lapel pin

1000	Fanny pack, bolo tie
1500	Gun case, hunter education print
2000	Custom engraved knife
2500	Handgun gift certificate
3000	Rifle gift certificate
3500	Shotgun gift certificate
4500	Hall of Fame Award

Tenure Pins

Instructors receive hat/lapel pins recognizing their years of service in the Texas Hunter Education Program (upon attending first in-service workshop, and 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 years of service).

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs integrate with other existing mentoring efforts.

NOTE: This practice cannot truly be called a Best Practice, because it has not been tested and proven through careful evaluation. However, it does represent the best professional judgment of experts in the field of hunting and shooting R&R, and should be implemented with careful evaluation to validate effectiveness.

Developing a mentoring program from scratch can be very difficult and time consuming. However, there may be existing programs that have resources to assist.

For example, the Big Brothers and Big Sisters programs often assist with mentoring outdoor skills programs. These organizations already have volunteer training, screening and evaluation programs in place. What they need (and often are looking for) is a new focus to recruit more volunteers into their program. Leveraging these and other similar programs can save tremendous effort and help you be more effective.

Boy Scouts of America, 4-H, YMCA and many conservation groups offer similar mentor development programs that may serve as models. Rather than reinventing new programs, we should look to expand participation in existing ones. Communicating the existence of these opportunities is the key to increasing participation.

Additional resources on mentoring can be found on the Web. One organization devoted to developing mentoring partnerships is Mentor (http://www.mentoring.org).

It is important to remember that not all mentoring organizations will be interested in partnering with the hunting and shooting sports. However, there are many mentoring organizations that should be given the opportunity to join your effort.

CHAPTER 11: Creating Opportunities

Every successful company is constantly looking for opportunities to create new customers or to provide new services and products to existing customers. In the past, the shooting and wildlife recreation community has had either stable or growing participation without having to compete for new participants. However, as the Introduction points out, those days are history.

It has only recently been recognized that the projected reduction in participation rates in hunting, if remained unchecked, could seriously undermine the future of wildlife conservation in North America. This realization has spurred the need to retain existing participants and create new ones where there is unmet demand.

Research indicates there is significant interest within the general public to try hunting and the shooting sports. This unmet demand is a prime target for R&R efforts.

Studies show...

31 million men and 17 million women who have never been target shooting would accept an invitation if asked.

This is good news and bad news: The good news is that the formula for finding and servicing new customers is well established. The bad news is that state agencies and their partners usually are not well equipped to implement the formula.

The list below contains currently recognized Best Practices and recommendations for creating hunting and shooting opportunities. Following the list, each is explained. Worksheets throughout the chapter help you apply each practice to your own situation.

NOTE: The first six items in the list are Best Practices. The remainder cannot truly be called Best Practices, because they have not been tested and proven through careful evaluation. However, they do represent the best professional judgment of experts in the field of hunting and shooting R&R, and should be implemented with careful evaluation to validate effectiveness.

BEST PRACTICES FOR CREATING SHOOTING OPPORTUNITIES

Effective programs:

- Have access to safe, accessible ranges or demonstrations areas.

- Provide alternatives to shooting/hunting where necessary.

- Provide information on and promote where to find opportunities.

- Create a welcoming, family-friendly environment.

- Make it easy, simple and fun for the learner.

- Provide instruction/training.

- Are low cost or free.

- Partner with private ranges.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs have access to safe, accessible ranges or demonstrations areas.

The first step toward meeting the existing demand for shooting experiences is making potential customers aware that there are facilities available for them to try this new experience. Shooting ranges can be the ideal setting for hosting the important experiential learning that new customers are looking for (see Chapter 3 for Best Practices on experiential learning). However, they need to be well run and welcoming to new shooters.

A welcoming environment includes a well-maintained, clean facility that has family friendly amenities, such as flush toilets, hot and cold running water, and shelter to get out of the elements.

This awareness process begins by making sure you know where the local facilities are and what they have to offer. Regional phone directories and Internet sites like www.where-toshoot.org and www.archerysearch.com are excellent places to start. However, even these Web sites may not be fully up to date. If you own or operate a range, make sure it is listed on these sites. If you know other local ranges not listed, encourage the management to get on the list right away. Many people live surprisingly close to shooting opportunities, but have no idea where to find them.

In addition, you should not ignore the local retailer – it is their job to know local resources.

Every person in your program should know about and have access to this list so they can direct interested people to local facilities.

It is also important that your range be listed in local and regional phone directories. An answering machine and Web site homepage with services available, directions, hours of operation and general information may be the first contact that an interested person makes. Therefore it is imperative that the information is current and the tone is welcoming.

All shooting ranges should have at least one, and preferably several, well-maintained and visible signs along well-traveled roads leading to it. Having the local community know that you exist is important in developing a social support network for new shooters. It is critical that shooting and hunting are viewed as mainstream activities by the general public.

It goes without saying that all shooting ranges should be operated safely and in an environmentally friendly manner. A tremendous amount of information and tips on improving the visibility and operations of your range can be found at the National Association of Shooting Range's (NASR) Web site, http://www.rangeinfo.org.

It is also important for shooting ranges to actively be involved with the local community to help ensure that the shooting sports are mainstream activities and part of the community.

How your facility is maintained is another important consideration. The learning environment is critical for success. Far too often, eager new participants arrive at a shooting range to find it in disrepair or staffed by less-than-helpful people. This often has a smothering effect on initial interest.

A formal shooting range may not be needed for initial experiences. Mobile and portable ranges set up in safe locations can serve this purpose very well. These may be part of larger "field days" or less elaborate events such as setting up a mobile air gun range in a parking

lot of a local business. In all cases, operators must have safety training; the event should be well advertised (see Chapter 15 for Best Practices on promotion and marketing); and information on follow-up activities should be provided. In addition, contact information from all participants should be gathered so that follow-up information can be sent to them at a later date.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs provide alternatives where necessary.

Experiential learning is critical in the trial period of the Hunting/Shooting Participation Classification System (see Chapter 1). Introduced properly, shooting practically sells itself. New shooters want to shoot. If you can't provide a "real shooting" activity for a new participant, then provide a simulated experience. The important thing is to get them shooting as much and as often as possible. Do not overlook the shooting opportunities that archery provides. It often has less political/parental resistance and may lead to sparking an interest to try other shooting sports.

A simulator can be an excellent way to introduce new shooters because of the reluctance of some people (often parents) to "get involved with guns." The simulator allows them to adjust to the new idea gradually. In addition, safety considerations, and noise recoil issues are greatly reduced. A simulator can provide a "soft" and effective introduction to shooting.

Simulators are available from several sources. While their initial cost may seem high, many agencies and organizations set them up as income generators. They usually attract crowds at public venues, and often pay for themselves over time by generating income.

Airgun ranges are another way to provide a "soft" introduction to shooting. They can be very portable, don't take up much room, and don't have noise issues to deal with. These can provide a nice intermediate step between simulators and firearms.

Regardless of what type of alternative shooting experience you provide, be sure to capture contact information from all participants so you can provide follow-up information on other events and opportunities that can help move them closer to becoming lifelong shooters.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs provide information on and promote where to find opportunities

New participants must have multiple trial opportunities before they make the decision to become a lifelong shooter or hunter (see Chapter 1 for information on the recruitment process). Therefore, it is critical that programs take every opportunity to provide information on where participants can find next-step opportunities.

Lapses or lags in providing information on what additional opportunities exist may result in a person losing interest or becoming stuck in the trial stage.

Web site addresses and handouts containing next-step information, such as www.wheretoshoot.org and www.rangeinfo.org are excellent resources. Local retailers may also be sources of information.

It is also important to collect contact information from participants so that follow-up information can be sent at a later time.

A welcoming, family-friendly environment is critical for people to feel comfortable in trying a new activity. One of the reasons people are willing to try hunting and shooting sports is that they are interested in joining this community. Often these first steps on their part are tentative and easily discouraged. Special efforts need to be made to ensure that they feel welcome and reassure them that they could fit into this community. "Cliques," "grumps," "know-it-alls" and "curmudgeons" should not be tolerated in any aspect of your R&R events.

The goal of these events is to welcome new people; actions that detract from that goal (even if unintentional) should be identified and discouraged.

In addition, the facilities themselves should be welcoming and family friendly. They should be neat, clean, well maintained and be able to accommodate the needs of women, youth, disabled and any other group that may choose to participate.

Fun cannot be oversold as the key ingredient. This is true for both kids <u>and</u> adults.

Generally, people become interested in hunting and shooting activities because it looks like something they can successfully do, and it looks interesting and fun. As simple as that is, many programs are designed for moderate skill levels rather than introductory skill levels. This likely will create a skill-barrier for new participants and generate an unnecessary level of frustration for them.

Keep things simple, easy and fun. Hunting and shooting sports activities will sell themselves if the initial activities are designed and implemented correctly.

Initial success is critical in getting new recruits interested in pursuing this activity further. Large, interactive targets are ideal for new participants. Having fun is the most important activity you can provide. Save more difficult and challenging targets for another time. High success rates for new participants are a sign of a well-designed program.

Having age- and size-appropriate equipment is important to ensure success. "Making due" with improper equipment can dampen the experience for even the most enthusiastic new participant.

While people are competitive by nature, it is advisable not to place any emphasis on competition at introductory stages. Instead, reward and celebrate the act of participating. Enthusiastically celebrate every success!

Token awards of achievement can be used as a memento of participating and serve as advertising to people with whom that the participant comes in contact with.

Very few people are "naturals" when they try something for the first time. Having initial success is critical for new recruits to want to try again. Equally important is for them to see some level of advancement in their skills. The activity should get easier the more they do it. Generally, the more students get to "do" rather than "see" or "listen to," the better.

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Token awards of achievement can be used as a memento of participating and serve as advertising to people with whom that the participant comes in contact with.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs provide instruction/training.

Very few people are "naturals" when they try something for the first time. Having initial success is critical for new recruits to want to try again. Equally important is for them to see some level of advancement in their skills. The activity should get easier the more they do it. Generally, the more students get to "do" rather than "see" or "listen to," the better.

The quickest means for both initial success and having the students see improvement is providing effective training and instruction (see Chapter 3 for information on instructors). At this stage, do not equate improvement with being able to hit difficult targets. Improvement should be rated in terms of better form, more fluid motion, being able to more confidently and dexterously handle the equipment, etc. Instructors should point out this type of improvement so that students are aware that they are improving and becoming more skilled.

Being good at an activity does not automatically mean that a person is a good instructor. Being able to hit a target requires a much different skill than being able to teach someone else how to hit a target. It is advisable that instructors obtain qualified instruction on how to teach that skill. Relatively simple train-the-trainer programs are available in most shooting disciplines. The 4-H Shooting Sports, National Archery Association, and National Archery in the Schools programs have excellent training programs. Obtaining this type of instruction will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness with which instructors will be able to transfer the skills to new participants. Being more effective will enhance the learners' experience, skill level and likelihood that they will continue to participate in that activity.

Trainers and instructors need to be personable, enthusiastic and able to provide support for new participants.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs are low cost or free.

In general, the lower the costs of participation, the greater number of new participants you can expect to get. This is especially true for people who are in the trial stage. They have become aware of shooting as an activity they might be interested in, and are prepared to "try it on for size." This is a critical time. If the costs of experimenting with the activity are too high, they may abandon the interest before they ever really find out if they like it or not. Keeping costs low for new participants will also allow for multiple trials, which is critical for advancing to the next step of the adoption model.

Some activities, such as video simulators and airgun ranges, can be very inexpensive to operate once the initial equipment purchases are made. Often, partners can be found within the industry and conservation community to share the initial costs. The equipment can also be shared and used by many organizations at

many different events. If you develop a partnership that shares equipment, be sure to develop written memorandums of understanding and scheduling procedures so that all expectations and obligations are clear.

Industry sponsors can be great partners in these activities. They may directly underwrite the cost of some activities. This is especially important when consumable materials, such as ammunition and targets, are involved. It is important to remember that the sponsors are looking for some return on their investment – often in the form of advertising. Treating your sponsors well, thanking them for their support and reporting on the outcome of the events will help establish a long-term relationship that is good for everyone.

Keeping track of industry (and other) in-kind contributions often will open the door for other sponsors to join in. Some sponsors require some level of matching support. In-kind support and donations usually will qualify for these matches. The more sponsors that you have, the easier it is on everyone.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs partner with private ranges

Effective partnerships are critical for the hunting and shooting sports community to have any meaningful impact on recruitment and retention issues. A natural partnership exists among agencies, conservation organizations, local retailers and private shooting ranges.

Ranges are often looking for new members; and agencies and conservation organizations are looking for facilities to use for fundraising events or for the public to use. In many states, the state wildlife agency makes grant money available to improve private shooting ranges in exchange for a certain number of days that the range would be open for public use. In other cases, conservation organizations use private ranges for fundraising activities in exchange for a share of the funds.

A great "side benefit" of partnering with private ranges is that their members can provide tremendous resources opportunities for training, mentoring and providing social support for new participants.

For all partnership ventures, it is advisable to develop written memorandums of understanding with all partners so that all expectations and obligations are clear.

Obviously, it is important that all partners live up to their obligations. Obligations should include having well-maintained, safe, family-friendly facilities staffed by friendly, courteous, well-trained staffs.

All partnerships should be periodically evaluated to determine which partnerships give you the best return on your investment.

CHAPTER 12: Access

Having a place to go hunting or shooting is critical for people to participate in these activities. Surveys have consistently shown that not having a reasonably convenient place to hunt or shoot is one of the top reasons why people drop out.

For hunting, not only is having a place to go important, but having a reasonable expectation of finding the game that you are seeking is also important. Actually harvesting the game you are hunting has always been identified as a less important motivator; but having a reasonable chance to see or get a shot is important. Simply put, if a person is going to invest their time and money to go hunting, they want to have some potential for a return on their investment.

Access issues on private land are complicated by many factors, including development (urban/suburban sprawl), leasing, the decline of small family farms, liability, and a general loss of connection to the land by a growing urban population.

Access to public land is complicated by all of the issues facing private landowners, plus the competing land uses that public land is trying to accommodate. In addition, public lands may not be convenient to a large portion of the population.

In a similar vein, access to shooting ranges is also an issue in many areas. Ranges may not be conveniently located, may not be open to the public, or may not have the shooting discipline that a person is interested in.

In short, the capacity to accommodate hunters and shooters is limited in many cases. The location, convenience, types of services provided, number of people that can be accommodated in a "quality manner" and other factors limit the shooting and hunting population. In order to increase these populations, the capacity has to be increased.

Sometimes simple changes in access policies can increase the capacity.

The list below contains currently recognized Best Practices for improving access to hunting and shooting opportunities. Following the list, each is explained. Worksheets throughout the chapter help you apply each practice to your own situation.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PROVIDING ACCESS TO SHOOTING AND HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES

Effective programs:

- Provide adequate huntable resources.

- Provide adequate infrastructure.

- Provide access to opportunities close to population centers.

- Provide information on opportunities and areas.

- Encourage public access to private lands.

- Provide information on how to gain access to private land.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs provide adequate huntable resources.

Having huntable game populations is the foundation for establishing a hunting culture. Modern conservation efforts have done a remarkable job enhancing populations of some species. However, this success is not spread uniformly across all species or populations.

A quick look at the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Related Recreation reveals dramatic shifts in what people hunt. The increases in white-tailed deer and Rocky Mountain elk populations has given rise to dramatic increases in deer and elk hunters. On the other hand, declines in rabbit and quail populations have seriously impacted the number of small game hunters. These changes in hunter preferences are pointed out to reinforce that huntable populations are the foundation for hunter effort.

Photo courtesy of Ken Hammond/USDA

Increasing game populations is a complex undertaking; due to population dynamics and reproduction rates, it is something that in most cases can not occur quickly. In addition, wildlife management agencies are juggling multiple management goals on any given area.

However, sometimes the issue is more one of allocation than actual numbers. Agencies should consider implementing quotas, conducting random drawings to assign areas to a limited number of hunters, have multiple opening days, and other strategies to spread the resource out over multiple participants in areas of high interest.

Additional efforts to improve small game populations may also assist recruiting new hunters.

Partnerships between state wildlife agencies and private landowners can be another very effective way to increase huntable resources.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs provide adequate infrastructure

Hunters, like everyone else, require certain basic amenities. These amenities may be less for hunters than other types of recreationists, but hunters still need roads to get where they want to go and may need parking areas once they get there. Both of these needs have to be balanced against the potential negative impacts that they may have on the quality of the hunting experience.

Photo courtesy of RonNichols/USDA

Balancing these often contradictory purposes can be difficult. For example, in many instances it is advisable to close roads or restrict methods of access on public land for management purposes. If so, it is important to communicate to the public why these actions were taken and provide a source of information (such as a Web site) where the status of a road can be checked before a person leaves home. Alternative hunting locations may also be suggested.

Providing information in a clear, simple manner can assist new hunters to become more involved and try new opportunities and areas. Agencies should consider identifying a base-reference map when they identify their hunting units, and provide lists or opportunities in special hunts where landowners are experiencing animal damage or will allow public access.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs provide access to opportunities close to population centers.

An unavoidable fact that the hunting and shooting community must face is that America is becoming more urbanized. The reasons for this are many and complicated. However, it is imperative that hunting and shooting opportunities be created close to urban population centers.

By their nature, hunting and shooting sports are activities that participants desire to engage in regularly and repeatedly during the course of a year. Unfortunately, participants also want to be able to participate relatively close to home, while most opportunities are offered in rural (often remote) areas. Survey research suggests that having to travel great distances (and probably even more importantly, the time it takes to travel those distances) is a strong deterrent to participation among new (especially younger) participants.

Providing facilities close to home allows participants to create the social support networks needed to continue participation. They also provide the opportunity to develop the technical and social skills necessary for people to continue participating, even if that participation is the one "big trip" of the year.

Remember it is important to do more than provide information and materials about opportunities and areas. It is also very important to think about the best strategies for distribution of the information to audiences. Many times agencies create information and fall short when it is time to distribute it to their customers.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs provide information on opportunities and areas.

In many areas, there are access opportunities that are not well known to hunters/shooters. Particularly in today's transient society, where it is not uncommon for hunters and shooters to relocate to entirely new states or regions, making existing opportunities known is especially important.

Recruitment and Retention (R&R) efforts can be directed toward these individuals by providing maps, signs, Web sites, regulations, etc. in a convenient manner. NSSF's www.wheretoshoot.com Web site is an excellent example of a convenient source of information for shooters to use. Some state agencies have similar Internet sites and mapping resources to help hunters and shooters find access.

Many states have well developed access programs that provide opportunities for new hunters to find places to hunt. However, these programs may not be well advertised or well known to someone new to the area or activity. Information on access programs should be included in hunter education material as well as part of the agencies' regulation pamphlet.

Providing information on how and where to participate should be a high-priority aspect of any R&R program.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs encourage participation of private lands.

Approximately two-thirds of the land in the United States is privately owned. This percentage is even higher near urban centers and the eastern portions of this country. As a result, private lands play a key part in the future of hunting and shooting.

Private landowners have legitimate concerns about controlling the use of their property. They are concerned about liability, they don't want people damaging their property, littering, or being disrespectful – and who can blame them? Addressing these issues is critical to recruiting and retaining hunters and shooters.

Creative solutions to many of these issues have been implemented in various places around the country. Some state agencies offer free or reduced-rate hunting licenses to landowners who make their land available for public hunting. Colorado's Ranching for Wildlife Program and Walk-in Access Program provide both cash payments and liability protection for landowners. Florida's Wildlife Management Area program enrolls private lands – for a fee – as part of their access program.

Conservation organizations or hunting clubs might consider performing a trash clean-up or other service to landowners in return for hunting access.

Don't miss an opportunity to give cooperative landowners recognition. An award banquet or other social function can give landowners the recognition they deserve, and can also help create a social support network for landowners who are willing to open their land to others.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs provide information on how to gain access to private land.

The ability to gain access to private lands is both a technical and social skill that is important for hunters to master. Providing training on how and when to approach landowners will assist hunters in finding new places to hunt. **Tips include:**

1. ***Dress appropriately.*** If possible wear clean street clothes. It's best not to ask wearing camo or combat fatigues.

2. ***Keep all firearms in the vehicle*** while asking; don't have a group of people standing around with guns while you are trying to talk to the landowner.

3. ***Keep all hunting dogs crated*** or in the vehicle while asking.

4. ***Have just one or two people ask for the permission.*** Don't have a large group standing at the front door. However, make sure you are clear on how many people you are asking permission for.

5. ***Ask permission well in advance of opening day.*** Don't knock on someone's door at dawn on opening day.

6. ***Always be polite,*** no matter what the landowner says. To them you are representing all hunters.

7. ***Always say thank you*** and if possible send them a thank you card or small gift after the season.

8. ***If possible ask permission with a clean vehicle.*** Having a truck that's covered in mud or full of trash may discourage them in allowing you on their property.

9. ***Take a young person with you*** and explain that you are mentoring the youngster and looking for a safe place to hunt – then be sure to take that youngster.

Creating directories for private lands that allow public access will also assist participants in locating places to go. Special efforts to provide new hunters with this information may help them expand their participation.

It is important to include common sense guidelines on courtesy and how to treat private lands in training sessions and in landowner directories.

CHAPTER 13: Integrated Department-wide Programs

A comprehensive, integrated, and effective recruitment and retention (R&R) strategy is a complex undertaking, and difficult to implement. The effort will not be easy. However, it can be done if agencies and their partners put their minds to it. Just look at the collective successes the hunting and shooting community has had with other programs that were deemed important (Federal Aid program, hunter education, wildlife restoration examples, etc.).

How important is it to succeed? Some estimates calculate that between 50% and 74% of current hunters will be gone by 2025. It's hard to say just what the future will hold, but all current trends are reason for concern.

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A major potential barrier to success is the lack of focus and attention this issue is currently receiving. It is critical that every person in every agency and conservation organization understand that hunting and shooting R&R is a serious issue that needs to be addressed. Without that level of awareness – and the corresponding and collective commitment to address it – we can only expect to have limited success.

With cooperation, partnerships, and integrated efforts, hunting and shooting R&R can achieve much greater success through creativity, economy of scale, and synergy of effort.

The list below contains Best Practices for integrated, department-wide programs. These are primarily aimed at state wildlife agencies, but many of the concepts are applicable to any organization working in the R&R arena. Following the list, each Best Practice is explained. Worksheets throughout the chapter help you apply each practice to your own situation.

BEST PRACTICES FOR INTEGRATED, ORGANIZATION-WIDE PROGRAMS.

Effective programs:

- Have organization-wide commitment.

- Communicate that hunting and shooting R&R is a serious issue that needs to be addressed.

- Develop a comprehensive, integrated plan that identifies specific goals, objectives, strategies, and resources needed to be successful.

- Assign a staff person to coordinate all activities and ensure that activities reinforce on another.

- Share program results with external publics.

BEST PRACTICE
*Effective programs have organiza-
tion-wide commitment.*

In order to maximize the effectiveness of any R&R program, the entire organization needs to commit to solving it. The solution will take resources, commitment and creative thinking of virtually every member of an agency or organization. To be most effective, specific staff has to be assigned to focus on this issue, but it cannot be considered "someone else's job." It has to be "everyone's job."

In order for this issue to become "everyone's job," it needs the attention and commitment of the highest level of the agency or organization.

Creating a special task force or Blue Ribbon Panel within your organization – that includes top management – as well as a cross section of the organization will demonstrate to the entire organization its importance. Care should be taken to include field staff that includes women and minorities. The goal of this task force is to analyze your organizations' situation and develop effective programs based on research and demonstrated effectiveness to improve the situation.

This group should expect resistance from some people within the agency, but their commitment should not waiver. Soliciting ideas and input from the entire organization will help create a larger "team effort" and put any resistance to change in perspective.

Some states have demonstrated their commitment to R&R efforts by establishing goals and objectives for which the Director's performance is accountable. Others have developed a Hunter Awareness and Appreciation class that is mandatory for newly hired management-level personnel.

BEST PRACTICE
*Effective programs communicate
that hunting and shooting R&R is
a serious issue that needs to be
addressed.*

In order to generate the agency- and organization-wide level of commitment needed to resolve this issue, its seriousness needs to be communicated – both internally and externally. The critical nature of this issue has economic, social, political and conservation implications that cannot be overstated.

In fact, the entire North American Model for Wildlife Conservation may be at stake. If hunters are gone, who will pay for wildlife conservation?

The impacts of declining hunter numbers affect...

- agency and organization funding;

- the ability to manage overabundant wildlife species;

- the political support for conservation and management of wildlife resources; and

- public awareness and recognition of the agency or organization.

Forecasting future license sales and participation rates can be an effective means to reinforce the critical nature of this issue. Based on trends in survey data, rural sociologist Thomas Heberlein (1991) suggested that it was not out of the question that there would be no sport hunting by 2050. Developing sobering statistics using agency- or organization-specific data on the decline of hunters and shooters will reinforce the need for immediate and effective R&R efforts.

The Introduction to this Workbook contains information about the economic and social benefits provided by hunters and shooters – benefits that will be lost if the long-term decline in participation is not addressed.

The old adage that nothing happens without staff and money is only partially true in this instance. There are many activities that are being conducted that will not cost any more money or take any more staff time than they currently do. However, they will need to be refined and be better integrated with other programs to be more successful.

Realistically, in order to optimize their effectiveness, R&R efforts will need to have dedicated funding and staff. Most of this effort will be directed toward planning, coordinating, and evaluating on-going (but refined) efforts, and obtaining and analyzing market research. Several states have created staff positions to focus specifically on hunting and shooting (and fishing and trapping) R&R.

The good news is that, if well done, R&R programs can pay their own way by increasing license sales for agencies and memberships for organizations. As the old advertising principle goes, you have to spend money to make money.

Because these programs have the potential to pay for themselves, it is not unreasonable for agencies to commit start-up funds with the understanding that the program will grow commensurate with its ability to document its success. While license sales are one measure of success, there are many other variables that influence license sales. The overall success of the program needs clear objectives and appropriate metrics to judge its impact.

Success does not happen by accident. Effective R&R efforts are based on comprehensive, integrated plans comprehensive, integrated plan that identifies specific goals, objectives, strategies, evaluation mechanisms and resources needed to be successful. These plans are critical for strategic decision making and evaluating your program's success. Plans should be reviewed, evaluated and revised, as necessary (see Chapter 2 for more information on program planning).

You should not fear the prospect of developing these types of plans. However, you should be cautious about who develops them. The fields of marketing and promotion have as much of a body of knowledge to support them as the biological sciences (see Chapter 15 for more on marketing). You wouldn't ask or expect a marketing expert to write a deer management plan; why would you ask a deer biologist to develop a marketing plan?

Obtaining qualified expertise is critical in plan development. Marketing/outreach experts are knowledgeable about the science and practice of marketing, and will incorporate research-based marketing techniques into any planning effort.

Having a marketing expert on staff would be ideal, but is not a requirement for your initial efforts. All of the expertise you need can be obtained on a contract basis. Try to find marketing/communication firms that understand your agency and hunting and shooting sports.

These experts will be able to provide programmatic advice to every level of your agency or organization at a reasonable cost. Because of the importance of your R&R efforts, it is ill advised to hire a biologist or natural resources professional to manage marketing efforts.

BEST PRACTICE
*Effective programs assign a staff
person to coordinate all activities.*

BEST PRACTICE
*Effective programs share program
results with external publics.*

While R&R efforts need to be an agency – or organization – wide priority, it is important to have a dedicated staff person to coordinate all of the activities that you may have going on. If you try to spread the coordination role over multiple staff positions–all of whom already have more work than they can get done – the chances of success are very slim. Your R&R plan needs a dedicated staff person who is thinking about and working on R&R issues every day. Careful coordination and evaluation of activities is critical for the program's long-term success.

Coordination activities include those within you agency or organization's program as well as those needed to integrate and leverage your program with your partners' programs. Leveraging your activities with the activities of others is the most effective and cost-efficient manner of delivering consistent messages to your targeted audiences.

Weak or non-existent coordination efforts will lead to frustration, lost opportunities and failure.

Sharing your success stories and how you accomplished them is critical to get others involved. Nothing breeds success like success.

Well-documented case studies of the actions you took and your results will greatly assist your R&R efforts by showing others that success is possible and that R&R work is a worthwhile investment. Defining success is a critical part of the planning process. It will likely be different for each agency or organization, but it is critical in order to evaluate you program.

Sharing results is important even if your goals were only partially met. Documenting the steps you took, what you learned and what corrective actions you will be taking to improve your success is important in the learning process. Sharing this learning process with others enhances your credibility by demonstrating your commitment to solving this important issue, and your willingness to apply adaptive management processes to your program.

The key is learning and improving each time you conduct an activity. Also share what you have learned with others. (See Chapter 14 for more information on Outreach).

CHAPTER 14: Outreach and Awareness

Most hunting- and shooting-related agencies and organizations are engaged in outreach and awareness activities all the time, and there are innumerable topics and opportunities they could feature in outreach efforts.

For example, to reach people who don't know anything about hunting and shooting, you need to make them aware of the activities, pique their interest, and persuade them to attempt a trial experience – all as a first step. This is a distinct outreach challenge.

At the other end of the spectrum are the so-called lapsed hunters and shooters – people who already have the social and technical skills (and all of the equipment) necessary to participate again tomorrow. Outreach efforts targeted at this segment will be (or should be) very different from those designed to attract new participants.

The list below contains some recommendations for outreach and awareness. This is not a comprehensive list, and a carefully thought-out and well-constructed action plan (see Chapter 2) should guide you in determining where you should best spend your outreach effort and resources. However, you should consider this list as you develop and implement outreach efforts in your recruitment and retention (R&R) plan.

Photo courtesy of Phil Seng

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OUTREACH AND AWARENESS

NOTE: Items listed to the right cannot truly be called Best Practices, because they have not been tested and proven through careful evaluation. However, they do represent the best professional judgment of experts in the field of hunting and shooting R&R, and should be implemented with careful evaluation to validate effectiveness. There are no worksheets in this chapter.

Effective programs:

- Provide timely forecasts of game populations.

- Consider species-specific skill workshops.

- Provide information about opportunities beyond the program.

- Consider needs of ethnic groups.

- Encourage hunter education in schools.

- Incorporate hunting's role in conservation.

- Communicate the economic impact of hunting and shooting.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs provide timely forecasts of game populations.

Often, only small inducements are necessary to retain or re-recruit lapsed hunters. This target audience already has all of the skills and equipment necessary to participate. For whatever reasons, they have not participated recently. Sometimes these decisions are based – at least in part – on a hunter's perceptions of his/her opportunity for harvesting game.

Reminding them in a timely manner of the current status of wildlife populations and the diverse hunting opportunities that are available may be all the inducement they need to participate again. However, care must be taken that this information is not just perceived as "hype" and that it is based on some credible foundation.

The timing of the release of this information can play an important role in its impact. Obviously, the earlier the better, so vacations can be planned. License application dates should also be communicated.

Agencies could also consider setting up a "citizen science" reporting system where constituents assist in reporting nesting success, forage base, mast crop, fawning rates, etc. While these systems may not meet the scientific rigor of more formal systems, they can serve the purpose of alerting people about the abundance of wildlife populations, and assist in creating additional social support for wildlife management and hunting.

Local retailers should be included in both the collection of forecast information (as a "reporting center") as well as the dissemination of the information once it is completely collected. Keeping them informed and excited about upcoming seasons helps their business as well as R&R efforts.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs consider species-specific skill workshops.

Another inducement to increase hunter participation is to encourage them to try hunting a new species or to use different equipment.

Skills workshops are effective at re-recruiting lapsed hunters as well as providing basic information to new hunters.

The tremendous increase in popularity of and participation in turkey hunting is an excellent example of how existing hunters can be encouraged to try hunting a new species. The role that species-specific skill workshops, such as turkey hunting seminars, played in this rise in popularity should not be ignored.

Many other types and methods of hunting could benefit from this same approach. Some potential skill workshops include: predator hunting, waterfowl hunting, archery hunting, muzzle-loader hunting (big and small game), game calling, etc. These workshops need not be held at large hunting shows or expos. Conducting a workshop at a local school or regional office may be more effective at re-recruiting lapsed hunters because it may be more convenient for a lapsed hunter to attend.

Not only do such workshops encourage additional participation and license sales, but they also help build a social support network among the hunters who attend. If well advertised, they also remind the non-hunting public that hunting is a mainstream activity.

Workshops are ideal situation where agencies and conservation organizations can partner to host workshops for a particular species.

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RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs provide information about opportunities beyond the program.

Planners of R&R events and activities should always utilize their events as a platform for promoting other hunting and shooting opportunities among participants. One of the largest challenges of any R&R effort is how to effectively get the word out. How do you identify and communicate with your target audience?

If you have an established event or program that effectively attracts people from your target audience (be sure to carefully specify your target), be sure to advertise the dates and times other hunting/shooting-related events are coming up – even if your agency or organization is not involved in these future events. People need multiple exposures and social support for the activity in order to make it a lifelong undertaking. Do not miss an opportunity to provide this. The needs of the hunting and shooting sports community far outweigh any petty jealousies, personal egos and inter-organizational or industry competition that might exist. You should also watch out for competition between types of hunters and shooters, such as bowhunters vs. muzzleloader hunters vs rifle hunters; or benchrest shooters vs. silhouette shooters vs. plinkers, etc. Sometimes this competition can be deep-seated and unhealthy. The entire hunting and shooting community needs to put aside differences to address R&R with one voice.

Information on future events and opportunities should be shared as widely as possible with participants of every program you conduct. Some common programs to share include: hunter education, Becoming an Outdoors Woman; Scholastic Clay Target Program, conservation organization events (Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, etc.), mentor organizations (Big Brothers Big Sisters), etc.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs consider the needs of ethnic groups.

Cultural barriers, whether real or perceived, need to be examined closely if R&R efforts are going to be successful. Nowhere is this more important than in outreach efforts. If possible, try to include members of the targeted ethnic group in the outreach and event planning efforts.

Unfortunately, there are some real barriers within some cultures to participating in hunting and shooting activities. One of these is language. Try to have information on your activity or event translated into the language of the target audience. If you do not have this expertise on staff, look for help within your hunting/shooting partners, or from translation services contractors.

More information and Best Practices on working with diverse audiences can be found in Chapter 6.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs encourage hunter education in schools.

All efforts to convey that hunting and shooting sports are mainstream activities will assist R&R efforts. Encouraging hunter education being taught in the school system, either as part of a formal class or as part of an extracurricular activity, will reinforce this message and provide a convenient place for people who have expressed an interest in hunting to obtain this training.

Providing hunter education in schools will likely result in some people who take the course that have no real intention of (or opportunity to) take up hunting after the course. However, their participation can serve to create or enhance the social support network for hunting.

While the main focus of most hunter education classes is firearm safety and not hunting skills, many also provide information on follow-up activities. These activities could include Archery in the Schools and Scholastic Clays Target Program as well as hunting seasons and skills workshops.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs incorporate the role that hunting and shooting play in conservation.

Research shows that many hunters and shooters do not know that their purchases of licenses, firearms, and ammunition contribute to conservation. This information alone likely is not enough to make a person a hunter or shooter, but certainly can reinforce a person's participation.

Communicating the positive links between hunting and conservation is also important to reassure the non-hunting/shooting public that these activities play an important role in the future of wildlife conservation. This is a powerful message that should not be underestimated.

Equipping new participants with this type of information will assist them in "thinking like a hunter/shooter," which is an important step in developing the social identity needed to maintain participation.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs communicate the economic impact of hunting and shooting.

While having a lot of fun, hunters and shooters contribute huge sums of money for wildlife conservation through licenses, fees, and a federal excise tax on the purchase of sporting arms and ammunition. In addition, hunters and shooters buy equipment, travel, lodging, food, and many other items in pursuit of their activities. The economic impact of hunting is closely tied to the message about the link between hunting and conservation. Providing this information to new participants and the public at large provides similar benefits as the message about conservation. This message also has proven to be very effective when directed at politicians, decision makers and business leaders. Providing new participants with this type of information also will assist them in "thinking like a hunter/shooter."

Chapter 15: Marketing and Promotion

Marketing and promotion are fields of endeavor that can have tremendous benefits in hunting and shooting recruitment and retention activities. Unfortunately, most natural resources agencies and hunting and shooting organizations have only a vague notion of what marketing really is or what it can do to help them achieve their recruitment and retention (R&R) goals. Most do not have marketing expertise on their staffs, and

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many do not invest nearly enough thought or other resources into taking advantage of what marketing and promotion have to offer.

The list below contains Best Practices for marketing and promotion that can help agencies and organizations gain a better understanding of marketing and how it can benefit their R&R efforts. Following the list, each Best Practice is explained. Worksheets throughout the chapter help you apply each practice to your own situation.

BEST PRACTICES FOR MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Effective programs:

- Understand what marketing is – and what it isn't.

- Find and hire staff/contractors with marketing expertise.

- Incorporate research-based marketing plans and techniques.

- Identify specific target audiences.

- Establish relationships with local media.

- Establish liaisons with state and local conservation organizations.

- Evaluate marketing efforts.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs understand what marketing is – and what it isn't.

Many people do not understand what marketing is, and it is common to hear the term mar-

keting used interchangeably with advertising, sales, promotion, outreach, etc. So what is marketing, really?

Basically, marketing is learning what your customers or constituents want or need, and then providing it.

Marketing has four basic components (the "four Ps"):

PRODUCT	The object or service provided. In this case, hunting and shooting equipment, licenses, and opportunity.
PRICE	The amount a customer or constituent pays for the product.
PLACE	The physical location where the product can be purchased. (It also can be virtual – as in Internet presence).
PROMOTION	All of the communications that a marketer may use to get the word out about the product in the marketplace.

There are four distinct elements of promotion:

Advertising	All communication that is paid for by the marketer.
Public relations	Public relations are where the communication is not directly paid for and includes press releases, sponsorship deals, exhibitions, conferences, seminars or trade fairs and events.
Word of mouth	Informal communication about the product by ordinary people (satisfied customers, etc.).
Point of sale	Information about the product that appears at the place where the purchase can be made (packaging, tags, website info, etc.).

Marketers are specialists whose role is to provide the product with the right combination of the four Ps to maximize sales or participation. Just like providing the right combination of habitat variables to maximize pheasant or fish production, successful marketing requires training, expertise, and experience to be done effectively.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs find and hire staff/contractors with marketing expertise.

Marketing has an entire body of knowledge unto itself, and millions of dollars are spent on marketing research every year. Much of this specialized knowledge, theory and practice can be applied directly to hunting and shooting R&R.

Why don't the agencies and organizations interested in R&R take advantage of this?

Sometimes, agencies and organizations simply don't know that marketing resources exist. They may know it intuitively, but not specifically. People trained in natural resources sciences usually have never been exposed to the marketing sciences in any substantive way. Consequently, they may recognize that they need to hire "a marketing position," but they often fill that position with a biologist or resource specialist from within their ranks. People who would never consider hiring a marketing specialist as a resource scientist, will move a biologist into a marketing position without a second thought. This is a wasted opportunity.

Other times, agencies believe that they are prohibited by statute or policy from actively engaging in marketing. If this is the case within your agency, consider re-framing the issue to one of working to meet unmet demand for hunting and shooting opportunities for your customers. That's really all marketing is.

In its simplest form, marketing is directing efforts to link your customers (both current and potential) with the goods and services you provide. Keeping this definition in mind and re-framing the issue in terms of meeting unmet demand should assist you in building an effective marketing program.

If you are in the enviable position of being able to hire a marketing position onto your staff, don't squander the opportunity. There always will be "pressure" to bring a long-time summer temp into a full-time position, or to give a job to a current staffer looking for a change, but marketing is best done by marketers. Write a job description that includes specific education and experience in the marketing/promotion area (see Appendix E for a sample job description).

Another option is to hire marketing expertise on a contract basis. There are communications/marketing firms/professionals that do this work for a living. There are not many firms that have experience with hunting and shooting R&R specifically, but try to at least find one that has some experience working in the natural resources arena. It helps a lot if they can "speak your language."

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs incorporate research-based marketing plans and techniques.

Just as in restoring or managing a wildlife population, the most successful marketing

efforts establish specific objectives, create a detailed plan, measure their progress against the objectives and make adjustments in order to improve future success.

One of the most common mistakes that marketing programs make is that they do not know their audience; and they substitute their own beliefs about their audience for their knowledge of it. Imagine if deer or elk populations were managed on the basis of what people thought their reproductive rates, food habits, and mortality were, rather than what scientific investigations revealed.

Obviously, some level of professional judgment is required in interpreting the data collected. However, sound professional judgment is based upon years of analyzing marketing data, which is strong basis for hiring marketing expertise to assist you.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs identify specific target audiences.

Identifying target audiences is one of the elements included in the Best Practice on research-based marketing plans (above). But this element is so important, it was made into a Best Practice all its own.

The more targeted your R&R efforts are, the more efficient, effective and successful they will be. Remember, there is no such thing as the "general public." Everyone is a complex assemblage of skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, culture, etc. As such, we each belong to numerous sub-groups depending on the issue or activity.

In turn, each of these sub-groups may be motivated by different messages and actions. The more tightly we can define the sub-group that we are interested in communicating with, the more likely we will be able to "strike the right chord" with our messages.

A comprehensive marketing plan will contain (at a minimum) the following elements:

SITUATION ANALYSIS	Comprehensive review of everything the agency or organization is currently doing (and has recently done) regarding hunting and shooting R&R. This is an important step so no effort is duplicated, and so it is clear who is engaged in the issue and what resources are available.
GOALS	Why are we doing this program?
OBJECTIVES	What, specifically, do we want to accomplish? Objectives should be measurable, and generally – though not always – are set up on a relatively short timeframe.
TARGET AUDIENCE	Who are we trying to reach with our efforts? The more specifically we can describe them, the more effectively we can target and reach them. You are likely to have different campaigns or actions for different audiences.
KEY MESSAGES	What can we say to our target audience to empower them to take the desired action that will achieve our objectives?
MEDIA	What are the communication channels we can use to best deliver our key messages to our target audiences?
ACTION PLAN	Comprehensive listing of actions to be taken, who is responsible for taking them, target dates for completion of each action, and budget.
EVALUATION	How will we know if our marketing plan was successful? Specify metrics to use to assess performance against objectives. Although listed last, evaluation should begin at the initial development stage of the marketing campaign – when measurable objectives are developed.

The more targeted your R&R efforts are, the more efficient, effective and successful they will be. Remember, there is no such thing as the "general public." Everyone is a complex assemblage of skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, culture, etc. As such, we each belong to numerous sub-groups depending on the issue or activity.

In turn, each of these sub-groups may be motivated by different messages and actions. The more tightly we can define the sub-group that we are interested in communicating with, the more likely we will be able to "strike the right chord" with our messages.

For example, rather than thinking of the broad group "lapsed hunters" as your target audience, you could further define that as lapsed hunters with a particular cultural background, living in a particular zip code, who play golf and own their own home. Modern marketing methods and automated license systems allow that kind of precision.

However, some caution is needed in applying these powerful tools. The most important consideration is to apply these tools strategically, according to specific program goals and objectives.

The simple truth is that some people will be easier to recruit or retain than others. If your goal is to increase license sales, your program should focus on the easier market segments. Marketing specialists can help you identify the "low-hanging fruit" as part of the marketing plan development.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs establish relationships with local media.

Within the jargon of marketing professionals is the term "earned media," that is, media coverage that you don't have to pay for. The way marketers earn this media is by establishing relationships with local and regional media professionals. Mass media advertising is very expensive. Earned media is invaluable for R&R efforts because it is free.

The best way to establish media relationships is to involve media representatives in events and activities. Take them hunting and shooting. Teach them about game calling.

Remember that media representatives are often very busy people, especially those with daily story deadlines. Try to schedule activities in advance and at times that are convenient for the reporter, if possible. Recognize the deadlines they are under, and help them out whenever you can. If a reporter finds you to be a trustworthy, helpful source for stories, you will have a long-term ally.

While you are engaging the media in these fun activities, you can begin to pitch them other interesting ideas for future stories. Establishing personal relationships with media representatives will also assist you in becoming an expert source on other stories related to hunting and shooting.

Tips for Working with the Media

- Develop a relationship before you need the media to cover a story for you.

- Ask reporters what kinds of stories would be interesting to them.

- Ask reporters what format they need (run time, number of words, photos or cover video needed, etc.).

- Offer reporters creative ways to cover stories (field trips, staff interviews, etc.).

- Track media coverage where possible.

When conducting interviews:

- Avoid jargon – use casual language.

- Use examples; tell stories; don't swamp with facts and figures.

- Develop the key messages you want to deliver and stick to them.

- Practice the interview.

- Check your appearance; smile and be friendly.

- Don't ever lie or make up an answer. If you don't know an answer, say so and offer to find the answer for the reporter.

- Should the interview become confrontational, do not lose your temper. Remain calm and stick to your key messages.

"Never fight with a man who buys ink by the barrel."

– Ben Bagdikian, journalist

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BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs establish liaisons with state and local conservation organizations.

Like most things within the conservation field, no one organization or agency has the time or resources to do it all on its own. Partnerships are the most effective means to leverage our collective efforts, and nowhere are they more important than in marketing.

Every effort should be made to coordinate marketing efforts among state agencies, local people, conservation groups and shooting clubs. These are (or should be) natural allies; all have a lot to gain by cooperating. Many of them will have their own internal communication vehicles. Whenever possible, piggyback on what the others are doing and encourage them to join your efforts. This cooperation could extend to having carefully selected representatives from local groups participate in an advisory capacity in the development of the R&R marketing plan. This will give them a better understanding of the "big picture" and make collaboration much more likely in the implementation phase.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs evaluate marketing efforts.

All around the country, agencies and organizations are doing hunting and shooting R&R projects, and most have little if any idea if their efforts are successful. Agencies that would not consider doing a pheasant or trout study without specific objectives, controls, and evaluation, will frequently conduct programs and events in the name of R&R without a thought about evaluation or return on investment. This mentality must change if hunting and shooting are to continue. Everyone interested in R&R should be contributing to the body of knowledge of what works and what does not. To continue to conduct programs with no objectives and no evaluation is wasteful and irresponsible.

It is important to view evaluation as a mechanism to determine how well you are doing, rather than some sort of "pass/fail" process. Evaluation should be designed as a mechanism to make whatever you are doing become more efficient and effective. The best evaluations are iterative processes that facilitate mid-course corrections and adaptive management. Formal evaluations, where efforts are measured against pre-determined benchmarks, are only one mechanism to determine how well your program is doing. Informal evaluations can also serve important feedback loops. Effective marketing plans constantly ask where a participant heard about your effort; clip news stories and critique them to determine what the "hook" was that got the writer to write the story; and follow-up with media contacts to determine if there are other angles on the story they are interested in writing.

Simply put, evaluations should be designed to find out what it is about your program that works so you can continue to do it successfully.

See Chapter 5 for more information and worksheets on evaluating your program.

CHAPTER 16: Maximizing Opportunities

Being creative and progressive is an important element in developing recruitment and retention (R&R) programs and activities. Creating an environment where new ideas can be tried, tested, evaluated, refined and/or discarded without fear of negative consequences is an important foundation for creativity.

However, being creative and progressive does not always mean doing something "new." Sometimes, stepping back and taking a hard look at existing policies and regulations – and then evaluating them against your current goals – is the most important thing you can do. Just because you have always done something in a certain manner does not mean that you should continue doing so.

Creating an environment where different approaches to R&R activities is encouraged – with appropriate evaluation and performance measures in place is important to advancing solutions to this critical issue.

In every effort that you undertake, it is important that you remember that the people you are contacting are current or future customers. Friendly interactions at convenient times with a consistent, helpful demeanor are critical for these customers to feel welcome. Making them feel welcome is an important first step so they can begin to identify with shooters and hunters as a group.

NOTE: Items in the following list cannot truly be called Best Practices, because they have not been tested and proven through careful evaluation. However, they do represent the best professional judgment of experts in the field of hunting and shooting R&R, and should be implemented with careful evaluation to validate effectiveness. There are no worksheets associated with these recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAXIMIZING OPPORTUNITIES

Effective programs:

- Make R&R friendly, consistent, and convenient.

- Evaluate license/fee structure.

- Encourage apprentice opportunities.

- Allocate opportunities to new hunters.

- Consider implementing hunter education deferral program.

- Track new participants over time to assess participation.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs make R&R friendly, consistent, and convenient.

In developing R&R programs it is important to keep your eye on the target (see Chapter 2 for Best Practices on setting goals) and understand the various steps of the Hunter/Shooter Classification Model (see Chapter 1). These two elements (goals and stages in the Classification Model) should serve as filters by which virtually every agency or organization activity is screened to determine if it is a barrier to recruitment and retention. If an activity is deemed to be a potential barrier, it should be given further examination to determine if there is a different means to accomplish its intended purpose (assuming its intended purpose is still valid).

Hunters and shooters are customers, and every effort should be made to make their interactions with your agency or organization as friendly and convenient as possible. While agencies may have a near-monopoly on regulating hunting, our current and future customers have many other choices on how to spend their recreational time. In order to keep them as repeat customers (or create new customers), we need to treat them right at every opportunity.

Efforts to simplify regulations, expand hours of operations, create more convenient license buying options, creating a friendly atmosphere at the shooting range and incentives such as youth, sportsmen and family license packages, etc., are worth considering.

Creating license packages is not just a mechanism to increase agency funding. License packages also create a greater investment from the user. This, in turn, should stimulate them to get a greater return on their investment. The mere act of buying a package license may stimulate them to become a more active participant, which reinforces their commitment to the activity. In addition, a package license may encourage more impromptu trips that may not have been even contemplated if separate licenses had to be purchased before the trip. Having a package license eliminates one small barrier that may have prevented them from going.

Making special efforts to market license packages is also important to encourage a greater investment on the part of the customer.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs evaluate license/fee structure.

As mentioned throughout this Workbook, becoming a hunter or shooter is a long-term process that involves many stages. Some of the most critical stages are the earliest ones where a person's interest moves them to the trial stage. Reducing barriers at this stage can pay big dividends during the later stages.

Studies have shown that creating multiple opportunities to have people experience hunting as an observer or apprentice before they actually hunt helps them develop the technical and social skills, as well as the social support network necessary for their long-term involvement. Often, the mentors who take them during this period retain this important position in their lives for many years, even well after the person has become an independent hunter.

Agencies should consider evaluating their license structure to encourage as many apprentice experiences as possible. Remember, apprentice experiences are not age dependent, but are based on the stage of the person involved. While this may complicate efforts, agencies should consider providing R&R opportunities for people of all ages.

Creating a hunter education deferral program that includes older recruits may have a high potential for R&R programs. Expecting an adult person to take a hunter education course before trying hunting may prohibit that person from ever moving from the interest stage to the trial stage. These adults also may not have the social support network that would allow them to participate as an apprentice observer like a young person may have. Creating opportunities for adults to have these apprentice experiences while enhancing opportunities for their sponsors to become more formal mentors reinforces the existing social support network. Strengthening this network may be the spark that is needed for both the recruit and mentor to advance along the Participation Model.

The cost of a license is only one factor to consider. Multiple year licenses, the age at which a license is first required, and licenses that last 365 days (verses the calendar year) are also items to consider in your R&R efforts.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs encourage apprentice opportunities.

The most logical place to create additional apprentice opportunities is for recent hunter education graduates. Special "new graduate" (as opposed to youth only) hunting days and hunting opportunities may be viable options.

In developing these events it is important to do so in a manner that enhances the apprentice/mentor relationship. Remember to include pre- and post-event social/networking opportunities when you plan apprenticeship programs.

These events could include developing certificates of participation, writing and photo contests for participants (if possible, encourage dual submissions from both the apprentice and the mentor) and post-hunt gatherings.

In order to implement these events, it is important to create a database of hunter education graduates. This database can be used to notify eligible people of these opportunities, track their participation and evaluate each event's success.

This database also can be invaluable when conducting follow-up marketing surveys and longitudinal studies of program participants, to help determine what aspects of the program are most effective.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs allocate opportunities to new hunters.

Optimizing opportunities for people to hunt as often as they can is a frequently overlooked element in R&R programs. It can be especially important for new hunters.

Consider allocating time afield and a portion of the wildlife resource specifically for new/apprentice hunters. Special seasons and locations for mentored hunters, where mentors can focus on the needs of apprentice hunters rather than their own hunting opportunities, can become an important event in the initiation of new hunters.

Care should be taken to ensure that people provide contact information, in the form of obtaining a special permit (even if at no cost) or registration of some type, prior to participating in these events. Having contact information is critical in evaluating the event and alerting participants to other opportunities.

Not having time to hunt is regularly cited as a reason for people dropping out of hunting. Extending the time frame that seasons are open is one management action that should be considered as long as the wildlife resources can support the added pressure. Extending the time frame includes extending the season length, opening and closing times of the day, as well as eliminating restrictions on Sunday hunting.

In addition, providing multiple tags for multiple seasons should be considered if wildlife populations can support it. Equipment restrictions should also be reconsidered as well.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs consider implementing hunter education deferral program and provide follow-up support.

Several states have recently instituted a hunter education deferral program where new participants can purchase a one-year hunting license

without having hunter education certification. The license is only valid when the new participant is hunting with another properly licensed adult hunter (see Chapter 8 for Best Practices on hunter education programs).

Deferral programs should be available for new hunters of all ages. Essentially these programs are a form of "try before you buy" marketing. They allow people to try hunting under the guidance of an experienced mentor before they invest time in taking a hunter education course. This is a similar process that many older hunters participated in when they were allowed to hunt as an apprentice with their parents or relatives before hunter education was a formal program.

These programs are relatively new, so full evaluations have not yet been completed. However, most of these programs have implemented follow-up contacts with participants to track their participation and remind them of additional hunting opportunities as well as the availability of local hunter education courses.

Pre- and post-hunt social/networking activities should be encouraged to strengthen the interest in going hunting and assist participants in moving to the next level in the Hunting/Shooting Participation Classification Model.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs track participants over time to assess participation.

Collecting contact information and storing it in a database that can be searched and cross-tabbed is critical in developing future contact programs. It does little good to collect information and then not have it in a useable form that marketers can access to develop additional marketing programs.

Once data are collected, it is imperative to use it in developing programs. Agencies often have considerable information on their clients, but have not "mined" it in a manner that provides marketing insights into the behaviors of their customers. Managing and maintaining databases can be a difficult chore. However, having this information in a useable format is critical in developing effective R&R programs.

Several states have used data from their automated licensing systems to track and identify lapsed hunters. Once they have identified these lapsed hunters, special marketing efforts have successfully re-recruited them back into the rolls of active hunters. These efforts have reversed or stabilized previous years of license declines.

CHAPTER 17: Shooting Sports In Schools

Studies have indicated that as many as 50 percent of high school aged students have an interest in shooting sports. Taking advantage of this interest through any and every available mechanism is strategically important. However, conducting these activities under the umbrella of the formal school system has several advantages.

The success of the National Archery in the Schools Program is an example of the power of the school system and the volume of the unmet demand for this type of recreation.

Conducting these activities in the school systems brings the activities to where the students are, and also reinforces the notion that these activities are mainstream recreational activities. Both of these elements assist in building the social support networks necessary for new participants to move through the various adoption stages.

Unfortunately, many school systems have adopted a "no tolerance" policy rather than a "let's learn together" position on firearms in and around schools. This is a major obstacle for bringing these activities into the school system. However, several successful programs have been developed where the school serves as an affiliate supporter and the actual shooting activities are conducted off of the school properties. The school system is used as part of the social support and networking mechanism, and allows many adjunct activities such as meeting rooms to tabulate scores, coordinate schedules, physical training and coaching, etc.

When approaching school systems, it is important to frame the shooting sports only as a mechanism to teach other life skills rather than an end to itself. The 4-H Shooting Sports Program has developed a wealth of information on the life skills supported by shooting sports. These should be reviewed prior to approaching any school system.

NOTE: Items in the following table cannot truly be called Best Practices, because they have not been tested and proven through careful evaluation. Many are currently being evaluated, but results were not yet available when this Workbook went to press. However, they do represent the best professional judgment of experts in the field of hunting and shooting recruitment and retention (R&R), and should be implemented with careful evaluation to validate effectiveness. There are no worksheets in this chapter.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHOOTING SPORTS IN SCHOOLS

Effective programs:

- Consider implementing programs with an established track record.

- Encourage college courses on hunting/shooting for credit.

- Encourage the creation and/or continuation of conservation clubs.

- Implement hunter education within schools systems.

- Encourage shooting as a varsity sport.

- Encourage collaboration between school board and agency.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs consider implementing programs with established track records.

Nothing breeds success like success. Numerous programs already exist that are looking to expand. These programs include: National Archery in Schools Program, 4-H Shooting Sports program, 4-H Shooting Sports Teen Ambassador Program, Scholastic Clay Target Program, and Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow.
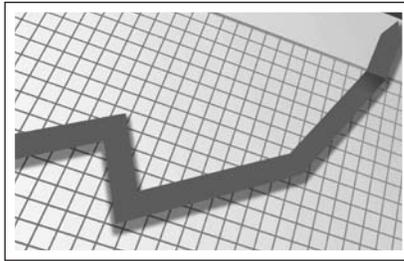
Piggy-backing on their success has several advantages, including: already having a successful model to emulate; a training program for instructors; and an evaluation process to measure your success. These programs may also have additional resources such as start up funds, equipment, and access to facilities that may be useful.

In addition, these programs have an established track record that can be independently verified if there are any questions. The power of a school administrator being able to call a peer to check on the safety record, qualifications of instructors, and student outcomes of an established program being successfully implemented in another area of the state cannot be overstated.

In most cases, the first step to begin implementing spin-offs of these programs is a simple phone call to their coordinator. However, while these coordinators want to assist and expand their program, the more homework you do in advance and the more resources that you can bring to the table in terms of interested coordi-

nators, potential students, potential facilities, etc., the more likely you will be in establishing a win-win partnership with these programs.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs encourage college courses on hunting/shooting for credit.

The unmet demand for programs on hunting and shooting extends into college and beyond. Implementing college level elective courses may be easier than trying to do so in high school. Colleges are generally more receptive to courses that encourage students to explore their interests. College students also often have a less structured life that allows greater flexibility with their time.

Courses offered in college help create the notion that these activities are mainstream recreational activities and develop the social support system necessary for long-term adoption.

Taking advantage of college students' natural curiosity of new ideas and opportunities can be an important strategy for R&R efforts. However, because students are only in the environment for a relatively short period of time, it is also important to teach them how to establish social networks once they leave school and set out on their own career.

Studies have indicated that the transient nature of our society has become a barrier to long-term participation in the shooting sports because of the difficulty in re-establishing a social network in the new area that they have moved into. Knowing where to go, when to go and who to go with can be daunting tasks to a person new to an area. Developing "welcome hunter/shooter kits" for new residents, including new students, can assist in lessening this barrier.

Lab fees often can be collected to help off-set the costs of the program.

Establishing a course for credit often is best accomplished by someone within the college system. Each college has its own process that is best negotiated by an insider. However, finding willing professors to undertake this task is well worth the investment.

Successful programs have been developed at Clemson University, West Virginia University, as well as by the Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow program, which available to many universities via the Wildlife Management Institute and McGraw Wildlife Foundation.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs encourage the creation and or continuation of conservation clubs.

Conservation clubs within formal education institutions, either at the high school or college level, are natural places to focus recruitment efforts. Even if they have a broader focus than hunting or shooting, they are still fertile grounds for guest presentations on the role of hunting/shooting in conservation as well as field trips to local ranges. As recommended in other places, it is important to plan follow-up activities and collect contact information so that interested new participants can be contacted later with information on additional opportunities.

Conservation clubs can also be created within local communities outside of the school systems. Sponsors within local service clubs may be obtained or clubs can be established as part of the local shooting club. When considering conservation clubs, it is important to remember that they may have a much broader focus than hunting or shooting. Attempts to employ any "hard sell" tactics should be avoided. However, they may still be well worth your effort because they have pre-screened people by their interest and likely contain a high percentage of people who may be interested in the shooting sports R&R efforts.

In addition, working with established clubs also assists in creating the notion that hunting and shooting are mainstream activities. While you may not convert many of the club's members, you can gain an advantage by lessening current or future opposition to the hunting and shooting sports by being seen as a responsible shooter or hunter.

As in other situations, conservation clubs also can assist in developing and strengthening the social support network needed for new participants.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs implement hunter education within schools systems.

Many states and many school districts have included hunter education as part of a school curriculum. These states and local areas have a tremendous advantage in implementing R&R efforts because they already have access to a primary target audience. These jurisdictions also likely have an existing social support network. However, it is a mistake to believe that their job is done. Providing follow-up information on other opportunities and creating additional social support networking activities is critical to maintaining this advantage.

Remember that only a few short years ago many more jurisdictions likely offered hunter education in schools. The reasons why these jurisdictions stopped offering these classes are numerous. However, some generalities that can be made is that the decision-makers no longer valued what these courses offered, had time restrictions on what had to be taught, or perceived that there were greater risks associated with offering these courses.

Ensuring that your hunter education classes offer value-added information to all students is an important lesson to learn when approaching decision makers about re-instituting these courses in the school systems (see Chapter 8 for Best Practices on hunter education courses).

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs encourage shooting as a varsity sport.

Many school jurisdictions are offering shooting as a varsity course. Programs like the Scholastic Clay Target Program and National Archery in Schools Program are expanding each year. Both are looking to expand even further.

It is important that these programs not only teach technical skills but also teach "life skills." Emphasizing the development of life skills is important when approaching decision makers about implementing new programs in schools. The 4-H Shooting Sports Program contains excellent material on teaching life skills that can easily be transferred to school varsity programs. See Appendix F for a description of a college course that includes clay target shooting.

When developing a shooting sports program, it is important that all interested people get a chance to participate. While competition is an important part of a varsity sports program, it is important to remember that shooting sports is a life-long recreation that is best enjoyed by competing only with yourself.

Discouraging participants by overemphasizing the competitive aspects of the varsity program may only recruit participants who are already from families that shoot. This does little to recruit new shooters. A balanced approach where all shooters get to shoot, but only the best get to compete is often difficult to establish. However, it is critical that the competitive shooters welcome and encourage new shooters to learn new technical, motor skills. Cliques can kill R&R programs, at whatever level they may appear, by inadvertently discouraging the less skilled from trying and participating. Everyone needs to be welcomed and valued as a participant.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs encourage collaboration between school boards and agency personnel.

Currently there is a lot of interest within the education community in "nature deficit disorder," where children are discouraged from engaging in unstructured play in the out-of-doors. Several studies have documented adverse impacts in children from the lack of this type of outdoor play-time.

Natural resource agencies should capitalize on this interest as a means to engage school boards about developing conservation clubs and hunting/shooting programs for credit. Hunting was one of the first unstructured outdoor activities and still retains many of the characteristics that people desire from outdoor experiences. Skills, such as developing and refining observation skills, piecing together observed phenomena and projecting future behavior from it, and developing an appreciation for the full spectrum of natural events are frequently utilized in hunting situations. These same skills may be applied in many other life-situations and are important for children to learn.

Engaging school administrators in a dialogue about life-skills associated with hunting and shooting can demonstrate the benefits of these activities, as well as the benefits of having children establish a caring relationship with a responsible adult (mentor). All of these benefits assist in maintaining hunting and shooting as mainstream activities.

CHAPTER 18: Special Events/Hunts

Special events and youth hunts have been a core part of the shooting and hunting communities' recruitment and retention (R&R) efforts for many years. The role that these activities play in R&R activities is critical. However, when viewed in context of the overall R&R picture, their effectiveness – as most are currently run – is questionable.

While this may seem to be an overly harsh criticism, the fact remains that thousands (probably hundreds of thousands) of people of all ages have participated in special events during the past few years. Yet (with a few exceptions), the participation rates in hunting and shooting are flat or declining.

An obvious question is, "Where do all of these participants go after they finish one of these events?"

Clearly, many of them do not become hunters and shooters.

The list below contains Best Practices and Recommendations for special events/hunts. These are designed to clearly define the proper role that special events should play in hunter/shooter R&R.

NOTE: The first four items in Table 18 are Best Practices. The remainder cannot truly be called Best Practices, because they have not been tested and proven through careful evaluation. However, they do represent the best professional judgment of experts in the field of hunting and shooting R&R, and should be implemented with careful evaluation to validate effectiveness. There are no worksheets associated with these recommendations.

BEST PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIAL EVENTS

Effective recruitment and retention programs:

- Don't rely on events alone.

- Align activities with the various stages in the Hunting/Shooting Participation Classification Model and make sure all stages are targeted.

- Identify objectives and expectations.

- Evaluate against objectives.

- Make events experiential.

- Provide loaner equipment.

- Make it fun!

- Put activities in social context.

- Build in follow-up.

- Encourage range days and outdoor skills workshops.

Effective recruitment and retention programs do not rely on events alone.

It is critical to understand that becoming a shooter or a hunter is a complicated process that involves several stages and requires a social support system in order to succeed. Special events play an important role in that process. They are usually well planned and implemented; attract scores of people; and provide participants with a memorable experience. And this experience can play a critical role in enhancing awareness, interest, and meeting some of the needs of initial trial experiences.

However, special events are only part of the R&R process. Because this process involves many steps, it is important that the hunting and shooting community also have many steps in their R&R programs. In the big picture of R&R, special events must not be the only tool in the community's R&R tool box.

An important step in defining the role of special events is to understand their place in the Hunting/Shooting Participation Classification System (see Chapter 1). Generally, special events are effective during the Awareness, Interest, and Trial stages of this Classification System. Based on the number of people who participate in these events, they can be effective in this role. However, rarely do they contribute to moving participants to the more advanced stages of Continuation with Support (Apprentice), Continuation without Focused Support (no longer apprentice), or Continuation as a Hunting Proponent parts of the adoption process.

Once you understand both the adoption process and the place that special events occupy along that process, it is easy to see why the majority of participants who enjoy special events each year do not become life-long participants. The hunting and shooting community has not typically provided the next steps necessary for people to continue along the adoption process. Some organizations legitimately choose to focus their resources and expertise on special events and/or other efforts that address isolated segments in the Classification System. But it is critical that these be part of a comprehensive, strategic R&R effort.

BEST PRACTICE

Effective programs align activities with the various stages in the "adoption process" and make sure all stages are targeted.

As explained above, one-day, special events can be very effective at reaching people in early stages of the Hunting/Shooting Participation Classification System (adoption process). Unfortunately, they have not proven to be very effective at moving people into the later stages of the adoption process. Careful consideration of all of the steps in the adoption process is critical in the planning an implementation of a fully integrated and successful R&R program (see Chapter 1 for Best Practices on the adoption process).

One often overlooked element is the social support network that is needed for new participants to advance to the more advanced stages in the adoption process. This network can be enhanced within the family structure or by developing an external support structure. Assisting both structures is preferred and will likely have greater results.

It is important for all special event planners to continually ask themselves "What is the next step for participants in this event?" Not asking this question–and finding and answer to it–will almost automatically relegate most of the participants in your program into the un-retained category of participants. They attended, had a good time, but went away without being able to act upon their new found interest. You may be able to get them back next year, and for several years after, but you have done little to move them to the next level along the adoption continuum.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs identify objectives and expectations.

Chapter 2 identifies important steps in planning and goal setting. These steps are critical for both identifying what you are trying to accomplish and evaluating whether you accomplished it. Setting realistically goals, objectives and expectations will also assist in establishing budgets, staffing and time-lines so that everyone has a clear picture of what is needed to implement the program.

An important goal of every recruitment program is to expand the base of new participants. Truly new participants likely will come from outside of the current participant base. Focusing efforts on recruiting people who likely are going to be recruited anyway because of their strong social support systems likely will not meet the goals of recruiting new participants.

Who you market to will largely determine who will attend your event. If you only market to family members of known participants, you will not likely get many new participants.

This is not to say that no effort should be directed at recruiting people who will likely become shooters and hunters. However, directing all of your effort to this end will not expand the base of new participants. It is important to remember that getting a large turn-out of participants who are the sons and daughters of existing participants or having everybody "feel good" is a very different objective than getting new license buyers or new lifelong shooters.

Setting specific goals and objectives will help you measure whether your current efforts are being directed appropriately. See Chapter 2 for worksheets.

BEST PRACTICE
Effective programs evaluate against objectives.

Measuring the success of a hunting trip is very easy compared to measuring the success of R&R efforts. Did I get the animal I was after? Did I see or hear one? Did I take a shot? Did I see sign that will allow me to be in a better spot next time I go?

Each of these questions is a mini-evaluation that will allow your hunting efforts to improve the next time you go out. The biggest reason that they will assist you in your next hunting outing is that you had a clearly defined goal to measure your progress against. Without goals you will not be able to evaluate your efforts.

Chapter 5 contains Best Practices regarding evaluating programs. However, evaluation efforts will be meaningless if realistic objectives are not established as part of the planning process. Both setting objectives and evaluating your program outputs against them are critical if the hunting and shooting community is going to be successful in R&R efforts. See Chapter 2 for worksheets.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs make events experiential.

Getting to participate in new activities is one of the strongest motivators people have to try something new. This motivation, when coupled with the power of experiential learning, makes the shooting and hunting sports sell themselves. The key is letting people become involved rather than watch.

Active involvement allows people to learn at their own pace and use all of their senses. This creates a positive, long-term, educational feedback loop that reinforces the lessons learned and provides even greater enjoyment of the activity.

In order to allow for hands-on, experiential learning, planners need to ensure that adequate equipment and well trained instructors are provided. Instructors should be prepared to facilitate learning and guide the new participants. Lectures and demonstrations should be kept to a minimum. A goal should be to get the new participants actively involved as soon as you safely can.

Safety protocols should always be defined and adhered to. Instructors should be familiar with all of the equipment used and be prepared to have the new participants feel, touch, handle and use the equipment as part of the learning experience. Training procedures used to train new instructors should emphasize this aspect by having the trainees be participants in active learning and hand-on activities as part of their training (see Chapter 4 for more information regarding instructor training).

Use of simulated live-fire, and shoot/don't shoot training scenarios may be substituted in urban areas or schools which do not have adequate space to incorporate live-fire activities. However, it is important to note that these are simulations. Follow-up live fire activities should be planned as soon as possible to make sure there is no lapse in interest.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs provide loaner equipment.

Having an adequate supply of equipment for new participants to use is critical to the success of any event.

Capital equipment, such as guns, target throwers, bullet traps, etc. can often be borrowed from manufacturers, organizations and agencies. The equipment should be sized to fit the target audience (youth models, both right and left handed models, etc.). Consumable equipment, such as eye and ear protection, targets and ammunition may also be supplied by sponsors or may have to be purchased. Having "extra" equipment, such as hat, gloves, sunscreen, sweatshirts, rain gear, water and other items that will make the day more pleasant, should also be included in the planning process.

Event planners should also consider the availability of equipment beyond the event itself. Remember, recruiting and retaining new participants is a process.

Planning for follow-up events and social support is critical. Having additional equipment for new participants to use during these follow-up events is also part of the process.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs make it fun!

It goes without saying that having fun is one of the reasons that people try new activities. Obviously, planners need to incorporate as much fun into their planning as possible.

Photo courtesy of Sharon Ruston

Generally, this means keeping activities simple, completing them in a reasonably short time frame, and designing them to maximize their potential to be a successful, positive learning experience.

Numerous examples of successful, fun-event planning can be found in NSSF's STEP OUTSIDE® Planning Guide, Becoming an Outdoor Woman's Program Manual, and 4-H Shooting Sports Training Guide.

All of these documents stress the importance of having fun and simplifying activities to

maximize the participant's chance of success. Simplified activities include fix target presentations, such as straight-away or incoming flying targets; presenting still targets closer to the firing line or stocking pen-raised birds for hunting activities.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs put activities in social context.

As stated numerous times in other places, becoming a hunter or shooter is a long-term process that requires a social support network. Event planners need to incorporate social support mechanisms into the event wherever possible.

If possible, parents or other mentors should be required to attend the event with the new participant. They should also be encouraged to participate as well.

In addition, planners should provide time for new participants to reflect on their actions, and share their successes and other important parts of their involvement with others. New participants should be encouraged to continue this social interaction after the event is over and share their success with their friends and colleagues. After-event get-togethers, such as dinners, pizza parties, game dinners, etc. should be encouraged and planned.

RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs build in follow-up.

In order to build follow-up support, it is imperative that contact information be collected for all participants during every event. Care must be taken to re-assure the participants that their information is secure and will only be used to contact them regarding additional, similar-type events.

Even before an event is completed, the event planners need to plan for follow-up activities or plan on providing information on follow-up activities that other organizations or agencies are hosting.

Creating shooting teams, clubs, and camps that encourage the continuation and social support of hunting and shooting sports are important steps that are often overlooked in R&R efforts.
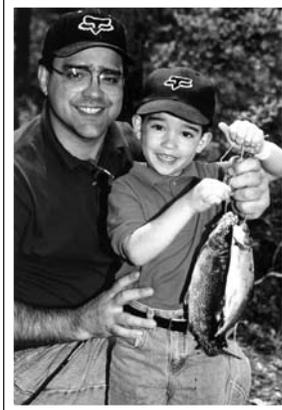
RECOMMENDATION
Effective programs encourage range days and outdoor skills workshops.

Activities, such as range days and outdoor skills workshops that encourage continued social support, skill development and fun should be considered as part of the R&R adoption process. These kinds of activities keep new participants involved while improving their skill sets and assist in establishing their social support network.

While it is often best if these activities are related to shooting and hunting, they do not have to be. Any reason to stay connected to their new-found network may be valid. Social activities, such as habitat improvement projects or stream-side litter clean-ups can play an important role in maintaining their social support network, as well as adding a sense of responsibility toward the environment.

Financial grants to support this extension of R&R activities may also be available. The critical element in developing these types of potential funding mechanisms is to link the follow-up activity to the initial trial activity. This makes collecting contact information at the initial event (and every other event) critical.

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Appendix B: **Worksheets**

Worksheet 2-A
Relevance to the agency/organization mission (p. 32).

_____

_____

_____

List the mission, goals, objectives, and issues of your agency or organization that need to be addressed through educational programs.

Agency/organization mission: _____

_____

_____

Goal 1: _____

Objective:_____

Objective:_____

How does/will your program help achieve this goal/objective?

Goal 2:_____

Objective:_____

Objective:_____

How does/will your program help achieve this goal/objective?

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 2-B
Program educational purpose (p. 33).

_____

_____

_____

Given the mission, goals and objectives of your agency or organization (as you described them in the previous worksheet), describe for your education program:

_____

_____

_____

Mission (what is its reason for being?):

_____

_____

_____

Goal 1 (why are we doing this program?): (e.g., increase participation in hunting)

_____

Objective (what, specifically, do we want to accomplish): (e.g., have 1,000 people attend a weekend hunting clinic; have 350 people hunt again within six months of attending a clinic; train 200 volunteer hunter education instructors, etc.)

Objective:_____

Objective:_____

Goal 2: Objective (what, specifically, do we want to accomplish): (e.g., have 1,000 people attend a weekend hunting clinic; have 350 people hunt again within six months of attending a clinic; train 200 volunteer hunter education instructors, etc.)

Objective:_____

Objective:_____

Worksheet 2-C
Plan for program evaluation (p. 34).

Complete a program logic model like Figure 2 for your program (see Worksheet 2-C in Appendix B). If you are just developing a program, consider starting with the long-term outcomes you want and working backward. If you have a program already, complete the model and review how the pieces fit together and where there might be holes.

FIGURE 1: Conceptual Logic Model for Program Development and Evaluation

Inputs	Throughputs			Outputs	Outcomes		
Resources	*Activities*	*Participation*		*Counts/Feedback*	*Short-term*	*Medium-term*	*Long-term*
					Learning	Action	Conditions

INFLUENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND ASSUMPTIONS

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 2-D
Adequate support, resources, and staffing to become sustainable (p. 37).

Based on your needs assessment or program logic model, list areas of support you need from your agency/organization.

For each program area that needs support:

Program 1: _____

Type of support needed (funding, staffing, etc.): _____

_____

Source of needed support: _____

Specific ways you might seek additional support: _____

Partners or other stakeholders who can assist you (other divisions within your agency/

organization or partners from outside): _____

_____

Program 2: _____

Type of support needed: _____

Source of needed support: _____

Specific ways you might seek additional support: _____

Partners or other stakeholders who can assist: _____

_____

Program 3: _____

Type of support needed: _____

Source of needed support: _____

Specific ways you might seek additional support: _____

Partners or other stakeholders who can assist you: _____

_____

Worksheet 2-E
Experienced, well informed, prepared staff (p. 38).

What staff positions impact your education program?

_____

For each position, rate the person who currently holds that position in terms of potential to successfully implement the program (poor, moderate, good, excellent):

Knowledge _____

Skills_____

Behavior _____

For each staff position that you did not rate as excellent, what would it take to help that person achieve an excellent rating?

How will you work to help them improve the rating? _____

_____

In what ways will (do) you provide ongoing professional development for your staff?

_____

Is education part of your organization's strategic planning process? _____

_____

How? _____

_____

How would you rate the support that education receives in your organization? (poor, fair, excellent).

_____

What would it take to improve that rating? _____

_____

How do you communicate agency/organization goals and objectives to your staff?

_____

(Duplicate for each staff member involved in each individual program)

Worksheet 2–F
Frequent and sustained educational opportunities (p. 38).

Given the stated goals and objectives of your program, list the different ways you currently reach your target audience with your messages.

List as many opportunities as you can for expanding your reach (and your effectiveness).

Goal _____

_____

Objectives _____

_____

Current efforts _____

_____

Formal (in-school) _____

Non-formal _____

Partnerships_____

Opportunities _____

Formal (in-school) _____

Non-formal _____

Partnerships_____

(Duplicate as needed)

Worksheet 2-G
Involve stakeholders and partnerships (p. 39).

In what specific ways can stakeholders assist you? _____

_____

_____

What do you and your program have to offer them? _____

_____

_____

Who are the end users for your program? _____

_____

_____

What groups should be represented on your team? _____

_____

_____

What individuals should be represented on your team? _____

_____

_____

What are the specific roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders? _____

_____

_____

Who can act as a facilitator for the team? _____

_____

_____

Worksheet 3-A
Consider delivery systems and involve stakeholders (p. 44).

Where will your program be delivered? _____

Who will deliver the program? (List all possibilities for each category)

Schools_____

4-H _____

Camps _____

Scouts _____

Youth organizations _____

How have you involved stakeholders in planning for program delivery? _____

_____

How will you involve stakeholders you have not involved already? _____

_____

What characteristic attributes are linked to self-perceptions as a hunter or shooter?

_____

_____

How are they produced through particular events and activities (rites of passage)?

_____

_____

How can you and your partners facilitate these rites of passage?

_____

_____

Worksheet 3-B
Relevance to sponsors and educators (p. 44).

Make a list of potential partners and how your program is relevant/beneficial to them.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 3-C
Align curricula with accepted standards (p. 45).

List the education standards and guidelines you have reviewed to incorporate into your program.

National _____

State _____

District _____

School _____

International Hunter Education Association (www.ihea.org) _____

_____

North American Association of Environmental Education guidelines (www.naaee.org/npeee/)

_____

National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (www.nasbla.org) or related national

boating education standards _____

_____

National Academy of Sciences-Science Education Standards (www.nationalacademies.org)

_____

_____

Other _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 3-D
Review existing materials before creating new ones (p. 46).

Program Objective #1:

List kinds of tools that can be used to meet objective:_____

_____

Existing tools/packages/materials that help you meet the stated objective: _____

_____

First choice of potential existing tools: _____

_____

Audience/agency/organization needs not addressed by first choice of existing tools: _____

_____

Resources you have to develop tools to fill these holes (or develop entire set of tools if none exists that meets your needs): _____

_____

Final choice of existing tools or description of what will be needed to meet the objective:

_____

Program Objective #2: (repeat)

List kinds of tools that can be used to meet objective:_____

_____

Existing tools/packages/materials that help you meet the stated objective: _____

_____

First choice of potential existing tools: _____

_____

Audience/agency/organization needs not addressed by first choice of existing tools: _____

_____

Resources you have to develop tools to fill these holes (or develop entire set of tools if none exists that meets your needs): _____

_____

Final choice of existing tools or description of what will be needed to meet the objective:

_____

_____

Worksheet 3-E
Present accurate and balanced information (p. 46).

Who assisted you with risk management assessment of your program?

_____

What were/are the greatest areas of risk associated with your program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How are you addressing these risks? _____

_____

_____

_____

How are you communicating about safety to potential program participants?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 3-F
Create opportunities to build skills (p. 48).

What opportunities do you provide for learners to:

Define an issue: _____

Determine if action is warranted: _____

Identify others involved in the issues: _____

Select appropriate action strategies: _____

Create and evaluate an action plan: _____

Implement the plan and evaluate the results: _____

Outline the opportunities for each step: _____

What parts of your program provide opportunities for your learners to build skills in:

Oral and written communication? _____

Decision-making? _____

Conflict resolution? _____

Leadership? _____

Worksheet 3-G
Make program learner-centered to provide collaborative learning (p. 49).

How does your program incorporate collaborative learning and critical thinking skills?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you assess your learners' knowledge on your subject areas before instruction?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How have you incorporated active, experiential learning into your program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 3-H
Use multiple teaching methods (p. 52).

To what age group(s) is your program targeted? _____

How have you incorporated the four major learning styles into your instruction?

_____

What elements of your program incorporate hands-on techniques?

_____

What elements of your program incorporate cooperative learning techniques?

_____

What opportunities have you given your learners to access information interactively?

_____

Where have you made your curriculum a partnership with learners, or helped them design the

curriculum themselves?   _____

_____

How have you made your program learner-centered instead of teacher-centered?

_____

How have you incorporated fun into your program? _____

How have you transformed your instructors from transmitters of information to facilitators of the

learning process?_____

_____

Worksheet 3-I
Using different activities and styles in your program (p. 53).

What communities or groups do learners belong to? _____

_____

What are the primary social influences on learners? _____

_____

_____

How can you enlist these influential groups to help? _____

_____

_____

What is important to families that overlaps with hunting/shooting? _____

_____

How have you incorporated small group activities into your program?_____

_____

_____

How have you incorporated peer activities into your program? _____

_____

_____

How have you incorporated action learning into your program? _____

_____

_____

Worksheet 3-J
Making lists of lessons or activities (p. 54).

Make a list of lessons within your program and how they include or how they can be modified to include the building of assets or life-skills.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

List activities you will conduct in the field or incorporate into later classroom activities.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 4-A
Establish goals and objective (p. 56).

List goal(s) for your instructor training. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

List specific objectives for your instructor training. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

For each objective, list how you assess whether it is achieved or not. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 4-B
Involve partners to reach a broader audience (p. 56).

List partner organizations you work with to increase your instruction capabilities.

_____

_____

_____

For each, how does the partnership benefit your program?

_____

_____

_____

What must you do to maintain the partnership? (What will it cost to keep the partner happy?)

_____

_____

_____

How might the partnership be improved? _____

_____

_____

List other organizations that might be willing to partner with you.

_____

_____

_____

How might you pursue these new organizations?_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 4-C
Provide several layers of training (p. 57).

List the kinds of training you currently provide your instructors (include workshops, newsletters, social events, updates, etc.). _____

_____

_____

_____

Do these provide different layers of training (basic, in-depth, new areas, etc.)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

List additional levels of training that would help increase instructor effectiveness.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 4-D
Recruit experienced instructors (p. 57).

Identify potential instructors, teachers, volunteers, or others who have experience in:

Hunting (specific disciplines) _____

_____

_____

Shooting (specific disciplines) _____

_____

_____

Natural Resources Management and issues _____

_____

_____

Worksheet 4-E
Train instructors in educational theory (p. 59).

List instructors who do not have any training in educational theory.

_____

_____

_____

List instructors who do not have any training in hunting and shooting.

_____

_____

_____

How can you provide the appropriate training to them? _____

_____

_____

Worksheet 4-F
Model effective teaching methods (p. 59).

List the topics to be covered in your training sessions. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

For each topic, identify the method to be used in the training. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

For each method, identify whether it is instructor-centered or participant-centered (strive for
more participant-centered activities so you model the way you expect them to teach).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

List ways you emphasize process over content. Create a brief agenda that shows what you will
cover in your training.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 4-G
Incorporate social support (p. 60).

How do you provide social support for your instructors? _____

_____

_____

_____

List your instructor recognition efforts. _____

_____

_____

_____

List the opportunities for end user social support. _____

_____

_____

_____

What type of social support do you require your teachers to incorporate into their teaching?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are there other ways you could provide support? (Ask instructors!) _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 4-H
Safe and appropriate learning environment (p. 60).

List learning settings where you conduct instructor training. _____

_____

List other settings that would be appropriate. _____

_____

What are the barriers to using these settings? _____

_____

What steps are necessary to make use of these settings? _____

_____

List areas of your teacher instruction where you stress the importance of providing hands-on
teaching methods in a variety of settings, particularly outdoors.

_____

_____

How do you address safety/liability issues? Do you model use of appropriate safety measures? Do
instructors understand their liability? _____

_____

Worksheet 4-I
Appropriate approaches to evaluation (p. 61).

How do you ensure that instructors understand the importance of tying assessment to learning?

_____

_____

_____

How do your instructors incorporate assessment into their programs?

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 5-A
Base evaluation on program goals and objectives (p. 58).

What is (are) the goal(s) of your program (immediate and long-term)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What are the specific, measurable objectives of your program (immediate and long-term)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How will you measure each objective? _____

_____

_____

_____

How will you determine whether you have met your objectives and achieved your goals (specific behaviors, knowledge base, indicators of success)? _____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 5-B
Make evaluation systematic and ongoing (p. 58).

List the ways that you evaluate your program:

During the planning stage: _____

_____

_____

_____

During implementation: _____

_____

_____

_____

Upon completion: _____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 5-C
Administrative and financial support (p. 59).

Is evaluation included in your program every year? _____

Do you include funding for evaluation in your annual program budget? _____

What administrative support do you have for your program? _____

_____

_____

_____

Do program administrators actively support and encourage the inclusion of and proper budget-
ing for evaluation in funding proposals you submit?_____

List the program partners (such as university faculty and graduate students) who might assist
with evaluation. _____

_____

_____

_____

Where is administrative support lacking? _____

_____

_____

_____

How might you address this lack of support?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 5-D
Assessing Program Outputs (p. 60).
A good way to assess program outputs is through use of pre- and post-program surveys

PRE- AND POST-PROGRAM SURVEYS

PRE-PROGRAM SURVEY

1. Who brought you to this program? Please give relationship, not name (friend, mother, teacher, by self, etc.): _____

2. Have you ever been target shooting before?

   ❏ No - skip to Question 5.   ❏ Yes - go to Question 2 below.

3. How many years have you participated in target shooting?

   ❏ Less than 1 year   ❏ 1-2 years   ❏ 3 years or more

4. Who taught you to target-shoot? (friend, relative, learned yourself etc.):

   _____

5. What are two of your other favorite hobbies or sports?

   _____

6. Do you know if there are target shooting opportunities near your home?

   ❏ No   ❏ Yes

7. Do you belong to any groups that promote target shooting?

   ❏ No - skip to Question 8.   ❏ Yes - go to Question 7a below.

7a. Which one/s? (fill-in) _____

   _____

   _____

8. Do you consider yourself a target shooter?

   ☐ No   ☐ Yes

Why or why not?_____

9. What do you think are the characteristics of a target shooter?

   _____

10. What characteristics are you missing that you are still working on?

   _____

11. What do you need to help you further develop these characteristics?

   _____

12. Name two older people who are important influences in your life. Please give relationship, not name (coach, grandmother, teacher, etc).

Name _____ Relationship _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

POST-PROGRAM SURVEY

1. Do you think that you are going to target-shoot again?

   ❏ No   ❏ Yes

2. Are you going to join an organization that promotes target shooting?

   ❏ No   ❏ Maybe   ❏ Probably   ❏ Definitely

3. Do you consider yourself a target shooter?

   ❏ No   ❏ Yes

   Why or why not?_____

   _____

4. What do you think are the characteristics of a target shooter?

   _____

5. What characteristics are you missing that you are still working on?

   _____

6. What do you need to help you further develop these characteristics?

   _____

7. Do you want our shooting club to mail you information about the next class or project?

   ❏ No   ❏ Yes

   If yes, please provide your contact info below: _____

   _____

   _____

8. Would you be interested in target shooting with a mentor from our club?

   ❏ No   ❏ Yes

Worksheet 5-E
Evaluation as a learning tool (p. 61).

What information do you collect through evaluation that can help you in the program decision-making process? _____

_____

How do you incorporate evaluation results into decisions about your program?

_____

_____

How often do you use evaluation results to guide decisions about your program materials?

_____

Delivery system? _____

Other? _____

Worksheet 5-F
Identify program outputs (p. ?).

Activity/event: _____

Date: _____

Location: _____

Number of participants: _____

Cost of event: _____

Cost per participant: _____

Participant satisfaction exit surveys: _____

List other program outputs you collect: _____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 5-F
Short-term learning outcomes (p. 61).

What are the short-term outcomes you want from your program?

(Refer to your program logic model.) _____

_____

_____

_____

What methods do you use to accomplish this assessment?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 5-G
Long-term benefits and impacts (p. 61).

What are the possible long-term outcomes of your program?_____

_____

_____

What are the long-term outcomes you want from your program? (Refer to your program logic

model.) _____

_____

_____

Potential survey questions you could ask your program graduates after completion:

Have you hunted/participated in target shooting, participated in a stewardship activity (cleanup

day, recycling, advocacy, planted wildlife/conservation cover, etc.)? _____

Have you bought a hunting license? _____

Have you purchased your own equipment? _____

Have you joined a hunting, shooting, or conservation organization? _____

Worksheet 5-G
Multiple and varied assessment methods (p. 61).

Check each method you plan to use and identify what you will assess with each.

❑ Surveys (describe) _____

❑ Testing (describe)_____

❑ Focus groups (describe) _____

❑ Ethnographic method (describe) _____

❑ Longitudinal studies (describe) _____

❑ Experimental methods (describe) _____

❑ Other (describe) _____

❑ Have you discussed evaluation procedures with a professional in this field? _____

Worksheet 6-A
Involve minority population in planning (p. 76).

Identify your minority target audience. _____

_____

Identify key representatives from this target audience. _____

_____

Invite representatives to serve as advisors to help plan and implement programs.

_____

Define what you want to accomplish. _____

_____

Define what each target group wants to accomplish. _____

_____

Establish meeting dates. _____

_____

Worksheet 6-B
Barriers to access (p. 76).

What barriers constrain access for each of your target audiences? _____

_____

How will you address each barrier? _____

_____

Does your minority target audience have economic barriers? _____

_____

If lack of funds is a barrier, how will you address:

Equipment needs at the event _____

_____

Long term-use by participants _____

_____

Transportation needs to get to the event _____

_____

Long term access needs of participants _____

_____

Other program costs _____

_____

Worksheet 6-C
Reflect the culture (p. 77).

What are the cultural factors you must address to better meet the needs of your target audience?

_____

_____

_____

Norms _____

Beliefs _____

Value Systems _____

Socialization practices _____

How can you modify your program to make it more meaningful to the culture of your target audience?

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 6-D
Network of social support (p. 78).

What individuals or groups could provide social support for your target audience beyond our

program? _____

_____

_____

What will you do to involve that support group in your program?_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 6-E
Address the barriers (p. 76).

What boundaries, barriers, or constraints prevent your program from achieving maximum effectiveness with your audience? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What steps can you take to overcome these? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 6-F
Make them feel welcome (p. 79).

Who are the individuals with whom your participants are likely to come in contact as a result of your program? _____

_____

_____

_____

How will you sensitize these individuals to make sure your participants always feel welcome?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 6-G
Positive role models (p. 79).

List some positive role models for your target audience. _____

_____

_____

_____

When and how will you invite them to participate in your program? _____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 6-H
Instructionally sound (p. 79).

Who is your target audience? _____

_____

What instructional strategies work best with your target group? (If information is not available,

incorporate suggestions from members of the target group about how they like to learn.)

_____

_____

_____

What instructional strategies can you incorporate into your program?

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 7-A
Involve persons with disabilities in program design (p. 82).

Do you have persons with disabilities on your planning team? _____

Do you have individuals who work with persons with disabilities on your planning team?

_____

If not, list people you can recruit to help. _____

_____

_____

How can you enhance their involvement in the planning process to make people with disabilities

feel welcome in all of your programs? _____

_____

_____

Worksheet 7-B
Make program inclusive (p. 83).

How does your program:

Celebrate diversity?_____

Respect differences? _____

Promote interdependence? _____

Foster participation and cooperation?_____

Foster supportive relationships? _____

Foster friendships? _____

Go beyond integration and accessibility? _____

_____

How might you better incorporate the principles of inclusion in your program?_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 7-C
Treat them as people first (p. 84).

How does your program treat people with disabilities as people first? _____

_____

How does your instructor training sensitize your instructors to this issue? _____

_____

Is language in your program materials humanizing? _____

Do you incorporate a discussion of humanizing language into your training? _____

What changes are needed? _____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 7-D
Eliminate or lessen constraints (p. 85).

How does your program address attitudinal barriers for persons with disabilities?

_____

_____

How does your program address resource barriers (finances, transportation, knowledge and skills, etc.)?

_____

_____

What might you include in program materials/training to help persons with disabilities overcome or eliminate barriers? _____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 7-E
Make accessible to all (p. 86).

Are your hunting and shooting activities accessible to people with disabilities?

_____

_____

What changes are you going to make to enhance accessibility? _____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 7-F
Conform to appropriate legislation (p. 86).

Have you reviewed federal, state, and local regulations regarding accessibility?

_____

_____

_____

List the changes needed in your program to meet these mandates.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 7-G
Provide instructor training (p. 88).

How does your staff and instructor training for working with persons with disabilities include:

Communication techniques _____

_____

_____

Information on adaptive devices _____

_____

_____

Interaction skills _____

_____

_____

Worksheet 7-H
Provide appropriate instructor ratio (p. 89).

Have you provided guidelines to your staff for determining appropriate staff-to-student ratios

(i.e., determine participants' ages and type and severity of their disabilities)? _____

_____

What resources might staff utilize to determine appropriate ratios of instructors/helpers to students?

_____

_____

_____

Who might staff recruit to assist with presentations/activities to ensure appropriate staff-to-student ratios?

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 7-I
Accessibility information in promotional material (p. 89).

List the promotional materials you distribute for your programs.

_____

_____

_____

_____

For each, list changes you can make to make the materials more welcoming to persons with disabilities. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 8-A
Skills graduates will possess (p. 92).

What are the knowledge, skills and behaviors you want your hunter education graduates to possess?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 8-B
Goals and objectives for courses (p. 93).

What are the goals and objectives of each of your hunter education courses?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What important information must be included in each course? (develop a course outline.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

If you are offering a hunter education course for certification, does it meet the IHEA standards?

_____

If you are offering a general hunter education course, list the safety information that must be
incorporated. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 8-C
Formatting the course (p. 94).

How many different formats do you offer your hunter education course in?

_____

_____

_____

What would it take to offer additional formats?_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 8-D.
Program delivery evaluation (p. 95)

Where are your programs delivered?

Classroom _____

Field-based _____

Self-study _____

On-line _____

Who delivers the programs?

Staff _____

Professional contractors_____

Volunteers _____

Partners (other organizations, camps, etc) _____

_____

How could you expand your course offerings? _____

_____

_____

Worksheet 8-E
Promotion of courses (p. 95).

How do you promote/advertise your hunter education courses?_____

_____

_____

What additional methods could you use to promote your courses? _____

_____

_____

Worksheet 8-F
Creating and maintaining partners (p. 96).

Make a list of potential partners and how your program could be relevant to their missions.

_____

_____

_____

List how the partnership can benefit your program:

_____

_____

_____

List the costs of maintaining the partnership:

_____

_____

_____

What are the next steps for pursuing partnerships with appropriate groups?

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 8-G
Social influences on hunters (p. 98).

What communities or groups do learners belong to? _____

_____

What are the primary social influences on learners? _____

_____

How can you enlist these influential groups to help? _____

_____

How have you incorporated small group activities into your program? _____

_____

How have you incorporated peer activities into your program? _____

_____

How have you incorporated action learning into your program? _____

_____

Worksheet 8-H
Offering specialty courses (p. 99).

What advanced hunter education courses do you currently offer? _____

_____

_____

How could you offer additional specialty courses? _____

_____

_____

List the hunting and shooting opportunities available to your hunter education participants.

_____

_____

How can you provide this information to participants before they leave your program?

_____

_____

Worksheet 8-I
Regulation inventory for new hunters (p. 100).

Do regulations in our state allow new participants to try hunting before having to invest time and money in hunter education or licenses? _____

How could we provide for "try before you buy" experiences?_____

_____

What aspects of our regulations present unnecessary barriers to potential new hunters?

_____

_____

Worksheet 9-A
Importance of research (p. 106).

How do you emphasize the importance of research to your staff?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 9-B
Familiar with research (p. 106).

List the ways that you make your staff aware of research relevant to their programs.

_____

_____

_____

_____

List the ways that you enable your staff to become familiar with research relevant to their programs.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 9-C
Incorporate research (p. 106).

How do you encourage your staff to incorporate research findings into:

Program design? _____

_____

Program development? _____

_____

Program implementation? _____

_____

Program evaluation (before, during, and after implementation)? _____

_____

Worksheet 9-D
Professional development (p. 106).

What opportunities do you provide for staff to gain greater knowledge and understanding of

research processes? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 10-A
Adding mentors (p. 110).

In what parts of your program do you use mentors? _____

_____

Where else can you add them? _____

_____

List the attributes and minimum standards you want in your mentors. _____

_____

_____

_____

List organizations in your area from which you might recruit mentors. _____

_____

_____

List organizations in your area from which you might partner with to screen and train future mentors.

_____

_____

List the roles and situations where mentors may specifically be utilized. Ensure the training and background checks conducted are appropriate._____

_____

_____

Read Chapter 4 and complete the appropriate worksheets.

Worksheet 10-B
Locating mentors (p. 110).

How do you work in the local community where your program is delivered to find and engage mentors?

_____

_____

How could you expand these efforts? _____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 10-C
Developing relationships (p. 111).

Does your program provide multiple contacts between participants and mentors?

_____

How might you increase the number of contacts between a given mentor and participants?

_____

_____

Has your program been designed to provide a progression of technical skills and social competencies?

_____

_____

Has your program been designed to logically lead to subsequent steps in the adoption model?

_____

_____

Worksheet 10-D
Mentor training and education (p. 112).

How do you currently train mentors for delivering your program? _____

_____

_____

Are your training objectives clear? _____

_____

_____

Have you developed standards and can you clearly articulate your expectations to potential mentors?

_____

_____

Do you have follow-up training or continuing education? _____

_____

_____

Worksheet 10-E
Mentor evaluation (p. 113).

Does your program have mentor evaluation procedures in place? _____

Does your program have mentor remedial training procedures in place? _____

Do you have a well-described termination procedure?_____

Worksheet 10-F
Youth mentoring organizations (p. 113).

How does your program recognize mentors and other volunteers? _____

_____

Has this program become formalized? _____

How can this recognition program be improved? _____

_____

Have you asked your mentors what kind of recognition they would most appreciate?

_____

Worksheet 11-A
Shooting range access (p. 118).

List the shooting ranges in your local area that allow public access. _____

_____

_____

_____

Have you checked to make sure that all of these ranges are listed in www.wheretoshoot.org and

local and regional telephone directories? _____

_____

Do they have signs on major roads? Answering machines? Web pages? _____

_____

_____

How many of these ranges do you partner with to help deliver your Recruitment and Retention

(R&R) program? _____

_____

How can you increase the number of opportunities available to your participants?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 11-B
Alternative shooting experiences (p. 119).

What types of alternative shooting experiences do you offer? _____

_____

What types of alternative experiences could you add to your repertoire? _____

_____

Have you partnered with other agencies/organizations to provide alternative shooting opportunities?

_____

How do you capture participant contact information and follow up with them?

_____

_____

Worksheet 11-C
Providing shooting opportunities (p. 119).

Do you offer low- or no-cost shooting opportunities in your program?_____

_____

How can you increase these opportunities? _____

_____

List partners you currently work with to provide shooting opportunities.

_____

_____

_____

Have you thanked and reported on the outcomes of your program to the sponsors?

_____

List three additional partners you could approach to help expand these opportunities.

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 11-D
Information distribution (p. 119).

Where do you currently distribute information on shooting opportunities? _____

_____

_____

List five additional places where you could provide this information and who will be responsible
to distribute it. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you currently train your staff to look for opportunities to share information?

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 11-E
Facilities maintenance (p. 120).

Rate your facilities for family-friendliness: _____

Clean _____

Flush toilets with hot and cold running water _____

Wheelchair accessible_____

Loaner equipment (firearms, archery equipment, eye and ear protection, etc._____

_____

Consumable material for sale (ammunition, targets, etc.) _____

Adequate parking _____

Refreshments _____

Shelter _____

Worksheet 11-F
Program ease if use (p. 120).

List ways that you can make your programs easier and more fun for beginners.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 11-G
Instructor training (p. 121).

List all the ways your program provides instruction to participants. _____

_____

_____

Are your instructors qualified? How are they trained? _____

_____

_____

How could you improve the instruction you offer? _____

_____

Worksheet 11-H
Approaching private ranges (p. 122).

List the private ranges that you currently partner with. _____

_____

_____

List the private ranges in your area that you do not partner with. _____

_____

_____

List the next steps required to approach these ranges for potential partner opportunities.

_____

_____

_____

Develop memorandums of understanding with partners that spell out obligations and expectations.

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 12-A
Increasing game resources (p. 126).

How is your agency or organization working to increase huntable game populations?

_____

_____

_____

Are there ways you could do more?_____

_____

_____

Are there ways you could improve access to existing huntable resources? _____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 12-B
Creating hunting/shooting opportunities (p. 127).

List your hunting and shooting opportunities that are located near population centers.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What would it take to create additional opportunities in these areas? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 12-C
Publicizing access (p. 127).

List the ways in which your hunting and shooting access points are publicized.

_____

_____

_____

Does your staff know about these resources? _____

Have they been trained to be able to direct newcomers to them? _____

_____

Worksheet 12-D
Landowner concerns and recognition (p. 128).

What programs does your state have to open private lands to hunting? _____

_____

What are top concerns of landowners regarding public access to their land? _____

_____

How can your program address these concerns? _____

_____

How can you improve your landowner recognition program?_____

_____

How are you evaluating the success of your access program? _____

_____

Worksheet 12-E
Information distribution (p. 128).

How can you distribute information on how to successfully contact landowners to hunters?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How/where does your program provide private landowner access information to hunters?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 13-A
Commitment to R&R (p. 132).

How does your agency or organization demonstrate commitment to R&R? How could this commitment be improved? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What areas of your agency or organization are resistant to R&R efforts? How can you lessen this resistance? Who can help you? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 13-B
Importance of R&R (p. 132).

How does your agency or organization communicate the importance of R&R, both internally and externally? How could it do more? _____

_____

_____

_____

What locally-based information could you use to make the message more impactful?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 13-C
Assigning an R&R coordinator (p. 134).

Who is the staff person assigned to coordinate R&R activities? _____

_____

If there isn't one, what is the next step needed to move in that direction? _____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 13-D
Communication about R&R (p. 134).

How does your agency or organization communicate results of your R&R efforts to external publics?

_____

_____

_____

List media or information outlets that you can use to share results. _____

_____

_____

_____

List other outlets that you can pursue with future success stories._____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 15-A
(Marketing plan, p. 139).

Do you have a marketing plan? _____

If yes, when was the last time it was updated? _____

_____

If not, how would you benefit from having one?

_____

_____

_____

Who are your target audiences? _____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 15-B
Marketing expertise (p. 140).

List the staff person or contractor on your team who has marketing expertise.

_____

_____

If none, what is the next step for acquiring marketing assistance?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 15-C
Target audiences (p. 142).

List the target audiences you want to focus on (list from the "low-hanging fruit" to the most difficult to recruit or retain). _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 15-D
Media contacts (p. 143).

List the local media with whom you have established a working relationship. _____

_____

_____

_____

List other media you could approach with R&R stories. _____

_____

_____

_____

List story ideas (creative ways to deliver your key messages). _____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 15-E
Conservation organizations to work with (p. 144).

List conservation organizations with whom you have a working relationship.

_____

_____

_____

List other organizations with whom you could develop partnerships. _____

_____

_____

List ways you could better cooperate with existing partners. _____

_____

_____

Worksheet 18-A
Special events (p. 160).

List all the special events/hunts you conduct as part of your R&R efforts.

_____

_____

_____

_____

List all other R&R activities that are not related to special events/hunts.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Worksheet 18-B
R&R efforts (p. 160).

List all the special events/hunts you conduct as part of your R&R efforts.

_____

_____

_____

_____

List the stages of the Hunting/Shooting Participation Classification System that these events

address._____

_____

_____

List other R&R efforts you conduct that help move participants into later stages of the

Classification system. _____

_____

_____

What other efforts could you develop to help fill in the gaps?_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C: Sample Volunteer Instructor Application

Mandatory Boater and Hunter Education Programs
Volunteer Instructor Application

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department • 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744 • www.tpwd.state.tx.us

MUST CHECK: ☐ Boater Education ☐ Hunter Education ☐ Bowhunter Education

Please complete application and give to your local game warden: _____
If you do not know your nearest game warden, please call your local TPWD office or (800) 792-1112.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

Name: Last _____ First _____ Middle _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ County _____

Date of Birth _____ Gender ☐ M ☐ F

Drivers License number _____ Social Security number _____

Phone: home (_____) _____ work (_____) _____ cell (_____) _____
Home phone will be used with scheduled course information unless otherwise notified.

E-mail: _____

Occupation _____ Employer _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

OPTIONAL: ☐ White ☐ Hispanic ☐ Black ☐ American Indian/Alaskan ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander

---

PLEASE CHECK ONE: (**Note:** Must have passed a state-certified student course to be accepted.)

I have **NOT** passed a state-certified ☐ Boater ☐ Hunter ☐ Bowhunter Education student course.

I have passed the Texas certified ☐ Boater ☐ Hunter ☐ Bowhunter Education student course.

I have passed another state's certified ☐ Boater ☐ Hunter ☐ Bowhunter Education student course.
(Please attach a photocopy of certificate.)

I have been a ☐ Boater ☐ Hunter ☐ Bowhunter Education Instructor in _____ (state).
(Please attach a photocopy of certificate.)

I fully understand that a game warden will complete a background check on me prior to my appointment as an instructor. If appointed, I will contribute the necessary time to the TPWD Mandatory Education Program(s) for which I am applying. I accept my responsibility as a certified instructor and will not knowingly certify any person who has not met the minimum age and training requirements.

WARNING: Knowingly making false certifications or false student documentation may constitute a 3rd Degree Felony under the penal code punishable by fine not to exceed $10,000.00, confinement not to exceed ten years, or both fine and confinement.

Applicant Signature _____ Date _____

You will receive a computer-assigned Instructor ID Number upon certification.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department maintains the information collected through this form. With few exceptions, you are entitled to be informed about the information we collect. Under Sections 552.021 and 552.023 of the Texas Government Code, you are also entitled to receive and review the information. Under Section 559.004, you are also entitled to have this information corrected.

PWD 733 J0300 (9/05)

APPENDIX D: Sample Shooting Sports Instructor Job Description

Arizona Game and Fish Department
Shooting Sports Instructor
Job Description

Job Title: Shooting Sports Scholastic Clay Target Program Instructor

Responsible to: Lead Instructors, SCTP Instructor Team and the Arizona Game and Fish Department Shooting Sports Coordinator.

Job Description: Instructs students ages 9 years and older in the Shooting Sports Scholastic Clay Target Program as prescribed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Teaching topics to include:
- How to demonstrate and use essential safety procedures, demonstrate and use a variety of effective teaching strategies and tool to communicate successfully with students, instruct on proper shotgun handling (proper mount, stance, etc.), demonstrate a fundamental knowledge of the operations of shotguns and ammunitions, demonstrate creativity (problem solving skills) in finding solutions to student's problems in hitting targets, exhibit the interpersonal skills of observation, communication and motivation.

- Assists other Lead Instructors, Shooting Sports SCTP® Instructors and Shooting Sports Coordinator in conducting SCTP Programs.

Qualifications:
- Applicants for the position of Shooting Sports Scholastic Clay Target Program Instructor:
- Must be at least 21 years of age
- Must complete a Volunteer Instructor Application Form and Form 9016
- Must have high integrity
- Must be in reasonably good health
- All new and existing instructors must submit to a State level fingerprint background check. The Department must provide fingerprint cards and the results of all background checks must be approved by the Shooting Sports Coordinator prior to becoming an active volunteer.

Special Skills:
- It is highly desirable that instructors have:
- Teaching or public speaking experience.
- Experience working with special needs individuals and groups.
- A desire to help others and work with youth to learn shooting skills.
- Experience with firearms and the safe use of firearms.

Participation Required:

Must teach or assist in youth shotgun-training classes throughout the year endorsement and receive an endorsement by the Lead Instructors or Shooting Sports Coordinator.In-service

Training:

Instructors are required to complete at least 8 hours of Department approved in-service training or instructor workshops every 3 years. In-service training may also include participation in Department "Ride Along" programs, attending Environmental Education Workshops or participation in other Department approved educational activities.

Evaluation:

Periodic monitoring will involve other instructors, Lead Instructors, the Shooting Sports Coordinator and evaluation forms completed by SCTP program participants.

Expectations:

All instructors with the Arizona Game and Fish Department are expected to adhere to the procedures outlined by the Shooting Sports Coordinator and follow the Instructor Code of Conduct. Instructors must also notify the Shooting Sports Coordinator of address, phone number and email changes

Credential Renewal:

Providing the participation and in-service training requirements have been met, Basic Instructor credentials will be automatically renewed for the following year. An instructor who hasbeen inactive for a period of 3 years, or who has had his/her volunteer status suspended or revoked, shall attend a new instructor certification course at a cost to the individual, prior to reinstatement.

I have been given a copy of the Shooting Sports Scholastic Clay Target Program Instructor Job Description.

Print Name:_____

Volunteer Signiture:_____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E: **Sample Marketing Professional Job Description.**

The language used in this document does not create an employment contract between the employee and the agency. This document does not create any contractual rights or entitlements. The agency reserves the right to revise the content of this document, in whole or in part. No promises or assurances, whether written or oral, which are contrary to or inconsistent with the terms of this paragraph create any contract of employment.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JOB TITLE:	Program Manager II
JOB STATUS:	Full-time permanent
WORK SCHEDULE:	8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday - Friday
LOCATION:	OSS-Columbia
BAND RANGE:	$
HIRING RANGE:	$

JOB DESCRIPTION

Responsible for the creation and execution of a yearly marketing plan that supports the agency's vision for the future. A successful marketing program positively impacts revenue streams of the agency to include sales of licenses, permits, tags, boat titling/registration, magazines/products and the agency's flagship outreach event - Palmetto Springs Sportsmen's Classic. Position works with constituent groups, media, all divisions of the agency and other government entities.

MINIMUM EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

A Master's degree and four years of related experience, or a bachelor's degree and five years of related experience.

OTHER PREFERRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

- Ability to apply marketing and/or communications methodology to drive and impact business results.
- Strong knowledge of grammar, composition and style.
- Excellent organizational skills.
- Ability to handle multiple projects under minimal supervision.
- Ability to continually develop knowledge of existing and emerging natural resources trends.
- Proficient in the use of multiple Microsoft programs
- Some travel required.
- Knowledge of state policies and procedures preferred.
- Certified public manager credential preferred.

APPENDIX F: **Texas Agriculture Science 381 – Clays Trap Program**

This new program will introduce Clay Target Shooting to students who participate in "Wildlife and Recreation Management," Ag. 381. It is designed to enhance the "Recreation Management" portion of this course by developing skills that may be carried on throughout a lifetime of enjoyment of the outdoors. Ag. 381 curricula has specific hours which may be extra curricular time and this activity could be accomplished during this course.

During the past fourteen years, TPWD has participated in "youth shooting days" at several wildlife management Areas, e.g. Neasloney WMA, Chaparral WMA, Matador WMA and Nails Creek WMA. These events provide opportunity for students to complete their hunter education course by participating in live-fire exercises and hunter skills trail activities.

During these events, most students gravitate back to the shotgun area and want to continue to participate in this specific activity. Numerous comments are made by students who ask, "Why don't we do this (Shot gunning) as a "team event?"

Several students, females in particular, have stated they could not do this activity, yet when they tried and succeeded, they were hooked and did not want to end the session. These youth are looking for an opportunity to continue shooting and develop skills, and especially, self esteem.

SUMMARY
- Open to all schools with Ag. 381 Programs.
- Open to all students enrolled (or previously enrolled) in Ag. 381.
- Must complete Hunter Education certification.
- Must maintain UIL grade requirements. (no pass, no play)
- Teams will consist of five (5) individuals. (No limit to number of teams)
- Teams may be male, female or mixed gender.
- Female teams will compete in same division (class) as males.
- Female teams will also compete in their own division. (Females only)
- Shot guns may not be larger than 12 gauge.
- Students may use own firearms if maintained in operable and safe condition.
- Schools responsible for supplies, e.g. ammo, clay birds, etc.
- Schools responsible for providing adequate ranges locally, (public or private).
- State shoots will be held in early May.
- As program grows, may host "District Shoots" prior to state shoot.