R3 for Hunters and Recreational Shooters

IWLA’s Role in Implementing a National Strategy

April 25, 2017
Overview

• What is “R3?”
• What’s the problem?
• Why a national plan?
• What’s the plan?
• What’s IWLA’s role?
• Why does it matter?
What’s R3?

- **Recruitment**
  - Recruiting new participants into the sports
  - New demographics key

- **Retention**
  - Keeping participants engaged over time

- **Reactivation**
  - Bringing lapsed hunters and recreational shooters back to sports
What's the problem?

- Number of hunters steadily declining for decades, aging, little diversity
- Participation in recreational shooting is more stable, but little diversity
- Hunters and recreational shooters fund conservation in America
- License fees and excise taxes account for 75% of state wildlife agency budgets
Hunter numbers declining

Source: USFWS 2007b
Should We Expect This to Change?

• Experts looking at hunter trends all point in same direction – downward

• Wildlife Management Institute evaluated nearly 500 R3 programs nationwide. Conclusion: programs haven’t been trying to make more “hunters”; they’ve been trying to make more people who look like traditional participants:
  • middle age white men
  • focused on recruiting their sons and daughters – many of whom would have participated anyway

• Country getting more ethnically diverse, more urban every year – but our focus often fails to capture that
National R3 Plan

- Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports

- States; firearms and archery industries; hunting, shooting sports, conservation groups
  - League member

- Plan based on extensive evaluation of problem, effective R3 strategies

- Adopted by Council in June 2016

- View plan at www.nationalR3plan.com
Key Elements National Plan

- **Increase R3 Capacity**
  - Dedicated R3 staff in state agencies
  - Modern tools to communicate with, track participants

- **Grow and Better Connect the Community**
  - Improve communication between all parties
  - Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports provides coordinating, info-sharing hub

- **Develop and Implement Proven Strategies**
  - Agencies must have a plan
  - Focus on expanding/diversifying audiences
  - R3 programs must target impediments to participation; utilize proven, measurable R3 tactics
Keys to Success

• **Diversify audiences!**
• Break mold of past programs, including hunter education
  • One-size fits **doesn’t** fit all
  • Recognize different motivations among audiences
• State agencies have dedicated R3 staff
Keys to Success

- Places to learn and experience sports
- Skilled mentors
  - women
  - younger people
  - different ethnic backgrounds
- Active partnerships between state agencies, industry, and NGOs
Opportunities for IWLA to Support Plan Implementation

• Chapters provide the places
  • In suburbs, urban communities closer than ever

• Members are the mentors
  • Playing this role today, foundation to build on
  • Widespread delivery hunter education

• Strengthen or initiate partnerships w/ state agencies, with broader R3 coalitions emerging in states

• Divisions might help fund R3 position in state agency
  • State agencies can’t afford new staff
  • Can receive outside financial support
  • State hires, administers dedicated positions
  • NGOs already contributing in several states
Critical Next Steps for League

• Determine specific role(s) to play in engaging new participants
  • Awareness/Interest - Reach out to potential new participants
  • Trial – Provide opportunities for people to initially experience activity, improve skills
  • Continued support – Mentoring participants to sustain participation, become more engaged and committed

• Communicate and broaden awareness among chapters
  • Shooting Sports Conservation Committee leadership role

• Proactively engage with state agencies
  • National office can help identify opportunities through Council, facilitate engagement with specific states
League Can Lead

- Clear nexus between problem and League – at chapter, division, and national levels
- League’s community base is a unique asset
- Only doing what doing now -- isn’t enough
- Future of hunting, shooting sports, and conservation important
Thank you for all YOU do!

Questions / Comments?