

R3 Technical Committee 2023 Annual Report



Recruitment, Retention & Reactivation in
Fishing, Hunting, Target Shooting & Wildlife-Associated Recreation



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Report prepared by Olivia Harmsen, SEAFWA Regional R3 Coordinator, and Justin Grider, Committee Chair.

Acknowledgments – Special thanks to committee members and other state representatives who contributed state reports; and Justin Grider and Brian Clark for reviewing the draft committee report.

A Special Thank You!

Jenifer Wisniewski- Former SEAFWA R3 Committee Chair

Jennifer's journey with the SEAFWA R3 Committee began as a meeting attendee in 2015, evolving into an official committee member in 2018. In 2019, she assumed the role of Vice Chair, then served as Co-Chair and subsequently Chair. Reflecting on her experience, Jenifer expressed gratitude for Brian's leadership and Ross's support during the SEAFWA transition. The committee's involvement in multistate grants, particularly the Locavore Guide, led by Brian in 2016 and revamped in 2019, has been crucial. Since the PR Modernization, the committee has expanded its regional impact through exciting and rewarding multistate grant projects. Jenifer's favorite aspect remains working with the remarkable individuals within SEAFWA, making our region truly outstanding for R3 efforts. *A heartfelt thank you to Jenifer for her impactful work and leadership! Your incredible R3 efforts shaped the foundation of the committee. We are thankful to have your continued support through your new position as Chief Marketing Officer at the National Deer Association!*



Brian Clark - Former SEAFWA R3 Committee Chair



Brian was appointed to serve as Kentucky's representative on the SEAFWA R3 Committee (originally the "Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Recreation Participation Committee") in 2010, then served as chair from 2014-2021, co-chair in 2022, and vice chair in 2023. One of the highlights of his service was proposing and coordinating the committee's first R3 grant, which facilitated a partnership between all four regional associations and multiple industry partners to develop and pilot-test learn to hunt and fish resources for agencies and partners to better reach nontraditional, food-motivated audiences; the 3-year project led to the development of the Locavore.Guide website and tools. He shared that he has greatly enjoyed working with many colleagues over time across the Southeast through his work on the committee and is excited to see a new generation of colleagues stepping up to advance the R3 cause. *Thank you, Brian, for your unwavering leadership and years of dedicated service. Your profound contributions have played a pivotal role in shaping the committee into what it is today. Brian has offered to continue serving as a resource for human dimensions, marketing, or partnership aspects of SEAFWA projects in the future, so feel free to reach out if you have questions or ideas you'd like to bounce off him!*

We Welcome Rachel Crume as SEAFWA R3 Committee Vice Chair

We are delighted to welcome Rachel as our new Vice Committee Chair. Serving as the R3 Branch Manager for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Rachel has been an active participant in committee meetings, demonstrating her commitment to our shared goals across the region. As she steps into the role of Vice Chair, we eagerly anticipate the fresh ideas and innovative thinking she will bring to our committee and region. Rachel's expertise and dedication make her a valuable addition to our committee, and we look forward to achieving new heights together. Welcome, Rachel! (Side note: Rachel is pictured with her blood-tracking dog Sookie!)



2023 Committee Roster

State Agency

Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Georgia Wildlife Resources Division
Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks
Missouri Department of Conservation
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife
Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources
West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

Member

Justin Grider (Chair)
J.J. Gladden
Will Burnett
Tina Johannsen
Brian Clark (Vice Chair)
Rene LeBreton
Jeremy Bass
Eric Edwards
Sandra Bridges
Micah Holmes
Amanda Stroud
Jenifer Wisniewski (Vice Chair)
Jason Mercer
David Hennaman
Zack Brown

U.S. Territory

U.S. Virgin Islands, Department of Planning and Natural Resources

Puerto Rico, Department of Natural Resources and Environment

Affiliate Member

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Wildlife Management Institute, Southeastern Field Representative

The Wildlife Society, Southeastern Section

Representative

Paul Wilkes

Jon Gassett

Ray Iglay



SEAFWA R3 Committee Meeting Agenda
Monday, October 16 3:20-5:20 pm
Corpus Christi, TX

3:20-3:30 pm **Welcome-Justin Grider**

3:30-5 pm

- **Review of Current 2023 Grant Projects:**
 - SEAFWA Non-hunting shooter/firearm owner survey-*Responsive Management- Tom Beppler*
 - How the Public Perceives their State Fish and Wildlife Agency-*Rob Southwick*
 - DJ Case

- **Review of 2024 Grant:**
 - Social Influencers to Drive R3 Furbearer trapping/hunting in SEAFWA States-*Jenifer Wisniewski and Olivia Harmsen*

- **Partner updates**
 - Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation-*Stephanie Hussey*
 - Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports-*Taniya Bethke*
 - SEAFWA R3 Regional Review- *Olivia Harmsen*
 - Corporate Partnership- *AGFC*
 - Open floor

- **2025 Grant Discussion** -*Olivia Harmsen*
- **Additional Involvement** -*Justin Grider*

5:00-5:20 pm **Wrap up-Justin Grider**

- SEAFWA Website – R3 Committee information proofed/updated
- Discussion on additional R3 committee meetings in a year
- Evaluation Tools (Dunfee and Chase; thumbdrive)

2023 Meeting Agenda & Attendees

R3 COMMITTEE

October 16

Committee Members	Name (Proxy)	Present?
Alabama	Justin Grider	YES
Arkansas	J.J. Gladden	
Florida	Will Burnett	
Georgia	Tina Johannsen	
Kentucky	Brian Clark (Brenda Ward Hill)	YES
Louisiana	Rene LeBreton	YES
Mississippi	Jeremy Bass	YES
Missouri	Eric Edwards	YES
North Carolina	Sandra Bridges	YES
Oklahoma	Micah Holmes	YES
South Carolina	Amanda Stroud	YES
Tennessee	Matt Clarey	YES
Texas	Jason Mercer	YES
Virginia	David Hennaman	
West Virginia	Zack Brown	
Affiliate Members		
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Regional Federal Aid Chief	Paul Wilkes	
Wildlife Management Institute	Jonathan Gasset	
The Wildlife Society, Southeastern Section	Ray Iglay	
Other Attendees		
	Name	
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports	Taniya Bethke	
Southwick Associates	Rob Southwick	
Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation	Stephanie Hussey	
National Deer Association	Jenifer Wisniewski	
South Carolina Wildlife Federation	Bebe Harrison	
DJ Case & Associates	Phil Seng	
Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources	Brenda Ward-Hill	
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies	Silvana Yaroschuk	
Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources	Darin Moore	
Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	William Freeman	
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries	Ryan Faul, Anthony Corner, Rene LeBreton	
SEAFWA	Olivia Harmsen	
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	Tom Lang, Janis Johnson, Steve Hall	
Pay it Outdoors	Sam Wells, Sam Pedder	
Responsive Management	Tom Beppler	
Mississippi State University	Vanessa Hoffman	

Minutes

SEAFWA R3 Committee Meeting Notes

Corpus Christi, TX

Review of Current 2023 Grant Projects:

SEAFWA Non-hunting shooter/firearm owner survey-*Responsive Management- Tom Beppler*

- Relatively few non-hunting sport shooters and firearms owners are aware that state fish and wildlife agencies build and maintain public shooting ranges.
- There is low knowledge of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program among non-hunting sports shooters and firearm owners. However, once they learn about it, they overwhelmingly support it!
- The considerable support for Federal Aid among non-hunting sport shooters and firearm owners does not appear to be based purely on self-interest (the provision of shooting ranges by the agencies)
- Wildlife conservation is an issue that virtually everyone cares about, hunters, and non-hunters alike
- An effective messaging strategy may be to emphasize and build on non-hunting sport shooters and firearm owners' pride in supporting wildlife conservation efforts.

How the Public Perceives their State Fish and Wildlife Agency-*Rob Southwick*

- The plan is to survey approximately 10,000 people per state from each of the 3 groups (30,000 individuals per state)
- State-specific questions were added to the survey
- The survey was launched in early October

DJ Case- *Phil Seng*

- Working closely with the Council on the National Hunting and Shooting Sports Action Plan
- Original research on Customer Pathways and Social Listening

Review of 2024 Grant:

Social Influencers to Drive R3 Furbearer trapping/hunting in SEAFWA States

- Use the "[More to the Hunt](#)" platform. Information/pictures will be changed on the website to show trapping instead of hunting.
- State agencies can pick what website to link to the button on the home page to direct traffic to trapping information/trapper education classes, etc.

Needs/Follow Up:

- We need to determine when the majority of states would like to see trapping be promoted through this campaign. The time frame of the grant would possibly focus on Early 2024-November 2024. The early part of 2024 will focus on nest predators.

Partner Updates

Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation-*Stephanie Hussey*

- SEAFWA photoshoot: [freshwater](#) and [saltwater](#) fishing and boating pictures are available on Clearinghouse
- There are 27 mobile-first catch trailers in 22 states
- South Carolina is the first to have a saltwater fishing trailer
- 2024 State Marketing Workshop is February 26-28 in Atlanta, Georgia

Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports-*Taniya Bethke*

- Currently working on 10 case studies
- The revised National Plan will include an R3 Practitioner guide. Currently going through alpha-beta testing now and it will launch during the R3 Symposium.
- Save the date: R3 Symposium will be May 29-June 1 in Mobile, AL

SEAFWA R3 Regional Review- *Olivia Harmsen*

- Completed 15 interviews with R3 practitioners in each SEAFWA state and 14 interviews with Executive Leadership Team
- Top takeaways from R3 practitioners:
 - Professional development: main focus is on program evaluation and data analysis.
 - Increase collaborative support- more regional projects and multi-state grant efforts
 - Lack of personnel
 - Increase regional staff networking.
- We are currently developing an in-person workshop for R3 practitioners. It would be in combination with SEAFWA conference or a stand-alone event. The Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports and with the support of the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, are working with R3 practitioners with 1:1 virtual training.

Wrap up:

- SEAFWA Website – R3 Committee information proofed/updated
- Discussion on additional R3 committee meetings in a year
- Evaluation Tools are available from Matt Dunfee and Chase and Chase Associates evaluation training
- 2025 Grant Discussion (We need to have a virtual meeting to discuss further grant ideas)
- Additional involvement is needed on R3 Grant Committee. Please let Justin or Olivia know if you want to become involved!
- Watch for survey to assess how often to meet moving forward and best methods of communication from the SEAFWA R3 Committee

Adjournment

**APPENDIX A:
STATE REPORTS**



2023 SEAFWA R3 Committee

(Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Recreation Participation Committee)

State/Partner Report

State:

Alabama

R3 Lead:

Justin Grider, R3 Coordinator

Justin.Grider@dcnr.alabama.gov | 334-590-4084



Significant R3 Effort #1: Collegiate Conservation Outreach Program

ADCNR developed a new program designed to increase engagement and involvement with colleges and universities around the state. The Collegiate Conservation Outreach Program is an effort to increase participation in outdoor recreation among college and university students and streamline their career path towards conservation-specific employment. The intent is to provide pathways for students to graduate and immediately enter conservation careers as a means of filling vacant positions with skilled and passionate individuals in Agency roles. Our staff is proactively involved as guest speakers and lecturers on campuses around the state throughout the year. These engagements, along with career fairs and several years of developing partnerships with university faculty and staff, serve as starting points for students' participation in the program. From there, introductory events are planned and focus on consumptive and non-consumptive outdoor recreation activities. After the basic introductory event, additional, more advanced opportunities are provided to enhance students' skills and confidence. Following all these touch points, students then complete professional certifications which include hunter safety instructor, shooting sports instructor, and mentor training. During the entire process, we're able to assist these students with the state job application process and communicate with them about opportunities within the agency. Although the program is in its infancy, it shows strong promise for accomplishing the goal of increasing participation and filling vacant roles with talented individuals.

Significant R3 Effort #2: Marketing, Communications and Education

ADCNR is engaged in recruitment, retention, and reactivation of both hunters and non-hunters through multiple platforms such as social media, email marketing, corporate partnerships, public speaking events, field days, and workshops. Through these avenues, ADCNR has developed brand recognition and public awareness of the department's programs, regulations, and license offerings. Of particular interest is the development of materials and resources that meet the needs of all of Alabama's citizens. Continued

participation and active pursuit of additional partnerships provides opportunities to engage with new audiences and constituents. As a result, we're constantly monitoring and updating the agency website and all other public-facing informational resources to ensure they're meeting the needs of the public. This will be an ongoing project and priority for our agency.

Other R3 Efforts of Interest

- DCNR R3 Experience Days (days where staff can use work time to learn about and participate in R3 activities)
- Collegiate Mentoring program, University First Hunt Program, Academics Afield Program
- Firearms 101 Program
- Internal R3 staff training videos and learning modules
- National Archery in the Schools Program
- Disabled Hunting Trail
- Mentored Hunting Workshops
- Hunter Education Range Days
- Community Archery Development Program
- Shooting Sports Events
- Aquatic Education Program
- Go Fish! Alabama Program
- Community Fishing Events
- Youth and Adult Dove Hunts
- Trapping Workshops (Youth and Adult)
- Adult Mentored Hunting Program
- Special Opportunity Area Hunts

Barriers to R3 Efforts

- Time
- Money



Collegiate Outdoor Outreach: Tuskegee Students



R3 Experience Shooting Sports Event



2023 SEAFWA R3 Committee Meeting

(Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Recreation Participation Committee)

State Report

State: **Arkansas**
R3 Lead: JJ Gladden, Assistant Chief of Education
jj.gladden@agfc.ar.gov; 501-604-3839



Significant R3 Effort #1: Automated R3 campaign focused on anglers

In 2023, we launched a suite of enhancements, including a new webpage, mobile app, license system, and CRM, all aimed at improving the customer experience. As we gradually introduce components of our new platform, we can refine our marketing strategies. For instance, we launched an automated campaign through the CRM in November 2023 with the objective of encouraging fishing license renewals, resulting in 1,763 total purchases including 3,766 individual license products during the trial. Those targeted by automated campaigns showed a 15.94% increase in conversion compared to the control group with no marketing. Over the transition from FY22 to FY23, there has been a noteworthy 11% reduction in the churn rate for fishing license sales.

The implementation of these new systems enables us to gain a deeper understanding of how specific campaigns, programs, and offerings impact license purchases. Currently, we are in the process of integrating a volunteer and event management system that seamlessly works with existing components. This integration not only enhances the user experience but also significantly contributes to R3 efforts in Arkansas, while providing a higher level of program evaluation.

Significant R3 Effort #2: Andy Simmons Outdoor Skills Farm

The Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation was gifted the property we call the Andy Simmons Outdoor Skills Farm to create a place where people learn to enjoy wildlife recreation. As part of his estate, he left almost 270 acres of land separated into several parcels, including a 3-bedroom house and shop. As part of the deed, he included the following restriction: this property should be exclusively used for the education of those new in their pursuit of hunting and angling. After intensive planning, renovations, and land preparation, we are completing our first waterfowl season with plans for fishing activities in the spring. This property provides the perfect opportunity to implement those skills learned in classes taught

throughout the year. With lodging available, educators from around the state can utilize this property to provide field experience to those new to the outdoors. This season groups include Becoming an Outdoors Woman, Our Immersive Conservation Agency Training group, Youth Shooting Sports, and Academics Afield. The future of this property is still being shaped, but its potential for Arkansas hunters and anglers is immense.

Other R3 Efforts of Interest

- New license, website, mobile app launched
- Adjusting measurement tools to capture data
- Partnerships and Sponsorships to increase funding
- Development of R3 mentor programs
- Integration of disparate customer data sources.
- Increase in multi-day fish camps
- Brand identity consolidations
- Diversify demographic targets of participants to include more young adults
- Immersive internal conservation training program
- Sponsorship Marketing
- Retail marketing partnerships
- Fishing photoshoot including diverse participants
- Leased hunting opportunities
- Adding new cities for urban deer hunting and fishing
- Volunteer Coordinator position created
- Academics Afield relationships and college community is built for hunting
- Education Division strategic plan aligning R3 plan with the Agency 5 year plan
- Incentivized fishing and hunting on your own activates
- Hunter/Boater Education approved curriculum in schools

Barriers to R3 Efforts

- Delayed launch of Volunteer and Event Management System
- Program evaluation and pivoting to what is working
- Technological assistance is extremely high value - not enough IT staff to accommodate requests to move to a digital world
- Bugs in the license system identified post-launch complicated license purchases and user onboarding
- Call center limitations
- Funding for marketing





2023 SEAFWA R3 Committee Meeting
 (Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Recreation Participation Committee)

State Report

State:

Florida

R3 Lead:

Brandon Stys

Brandon.Stys@MyFWC.com | 850.617.6012



Significant R3 Effort #1: Hunting and Shooting Sports Education

In October 2023, FWC held the agency’s Deer Hunting 101 workshop in partnership with the University of Florida. The program was designed to increase participation in hunting among a diverse college age audience. Participants learned about whitetail deer biology, laws and regulations, basics of whitetail deer hunting, basic equipment needed, tree stand safety, and how to safely use a crossbow. Total participation included thirteen participants that attended the workshop and eleven participants that attended a deer hunt in November. Of the eleven participants nine harvested a deer.

Significant R3 Effort #2: Freshwater Fisheries Education

TrophyCatch is FWC’s citizen-science, data collecting and promotional program for largemouth bass in Florida. This program focuses on retaining active anglers. We ask anglers to provide photo/video documentation of all bass weighing 8 lbs. or heavier and release the fish afterwards. The largest prize awarded for the 2023 TrophyCatch program was a Phoenix bass boat.

In fiscal year 2022-2023 the School Fishing Club Program accepted 50 schools for the program. The program was designed for students interested in learning how to be effective, conservation-minded anglers. FWC works with each school, providing the curriculum, knowledge, and funding opportunities to run a successful fishing club. In September of 2023, we accepted 50 schools into the program, working to continue fishing engagement across Florida.

FWC continued our efforts in the Vamos a Pescar (Lets Go Fishing) program, completing our seventh year. In 2023, we had four returning partners and brought on one additional new partner to help increase our effort to reach and recruit Hispanic anglers. In addition to Miami-Dade County, Pasco County, Fishing’s Future and Tampa Bay Kayak Anglers, Manatee County joined the program.

Significant R3 Effort #3: Marine Fisheries Education

Catch a Florida Memory (CAFM) is FWC’s saltwater angler recognition program that is designed to recruit and retain anglers. CAFM provides recognition and rewards to anglers who submit photos of qualifying catches to three categories. These incentives help attract new anglers to the program and encourage current anglers to diversify their catches to reach new achievements. This program provides a unique way for FWC to engage with stakeholders.

Over the past year, FWC ran a highly successful marketing campaign titled the Triple Threat Throwdown that challenged anglers to participate in all three categories of CAFM and submit photos during a specified time-period. This campaign reached over 3.5 million individuals and resulted in 67% increase in participation in the program as a whole and a 38% increase in Triple Threat Club members who had qualifying catches in the three CAFM categories. This astounding success has inspired the CAFM team to continue utilizing diverse marketing strategies to ensure continued recruitment and retention of anglers.

Other R3 Efforts of Interest

- Standardizing Data Analysis and Evaluation
- Improving Internal R3 Communication
- Create a manual for Aquaculture in the Classroom, a joint effort from marine and freshwater fisheries
- Coordinate and consolidate agency event tracking
- Update inventory management for educational publications

Barriers to R3 Efforts

- Funding
- Staff Resources



2023 SEAFWA R3 Committee Meeting
(Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Recreation Participation Committee)
State Report

State:

Georgia

R3 Lead:

Jennifer Davison
Program Manager, Hunter Development
Jennifer.Davison@dnr.ga.gov



Significant R3 Effort #1: (Example 1)

WRD utilizes multiplatform marketing strategies in order to reach target demographics, promote R3, and boost license sales. Digital advertising, automated e-mail campaigns, short form promotional video, social media, and social influencers move the needle forward with targeted and like-minded audiences.

Significant R3 Effort #2: (Example 2)

WRD continues to provide financial support for a full time R3 coordinator housed by the GA Wildlife Federation and in partnership with SCI, NWTF, and DU. This partnership is in its 8th year.

WRD plans on significant evaluation efforts this year as there is a long-term participant tracking with programs coordinated by the Hunter Development Program.

Other R3 Efforts of Interest

- Hunter Development Program staff conduct numerous R3 programs and events annually, including hunter education, beginner and intermediate shooting events, and hunt and learns. Of significant interest is our introductory shooting program, where 60% of our participants from 2017-2019 purchased a license the following year.

Barriers to R3 Efforts

- Within agency – dedicated staff for evaluating programs that define R3. Staffed shooting ranges are important to our customers, and programming offered at ranges is highly desired. However, attracting and retaining Public Affairs and Hunter Development staff is challenging.





2023 SEAFWA R3 Committee Meeting

(Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Recreation Participation Committee)

State Report

State: **Kentucky**
R3 Lead: Rachel Crume, R3 Branch Manager
rachel.crume@ky.gov
502-892-4404



Significant R3 Effort #1: Kentucky State Fair

At the Kentucky State Fair, the KDFWR's R3 Branch showcased a Fish Filleting Demo on the Farm to Table Cooking Stage. The hour-long program, led by the Field to Fork Coordinator and a Cooperative Extension Agent from the University of Kentucky, featured a bluegill filleting demonstration and an Oven Fried Fish recipe demo, with samples available to viewers. Approximately 50 attendees participated, with additional passersby stopping in during the fair. The event also included a booth manned by KDFWR's Marketing Division, where R3 programs were highlighted. This outreach opportunity allowed the agency to engage with a large audience of over 599,000 fair attendees, and plans are underway to host another program in 2024.

Significant R3 Effort #2: Kentucky Cooperative Extension Agent Training

Our team provided training to empower 36 new Kentucky Cooperative Extension Agents. These sessions focused on equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively host Cook Wild KY, Field to Fork, and Hook and Cook programs within their respective counties. Building on our ongoing efforts, this initiative marks a significant milestone as it brings the total number of trained Cooperative Extension Agents in Kentucky to an impressive 181 since 2020. Through these collaborative endeavors, we aim to expand our reach and impact across the state, fostering a culture of outdoor engagement and culinary statewide.

Other R3 Efforts of Interest

- Launched Annual Statewide Hunter Education Day – 756 certifications
- NASP State Tournament – 8,226 bullseye shooters, 2,328 3D shooters
- Opening of HQ Archery Range
- Launch of Range Map created and available on the website
- Small game processing demo at Elk Fest

Barriers to R3 Efforts

- Limited funding poses challenges for R3 staff and programs.
- Our staff are tasked with managing multiple programs simultaneously, stretching resources thin.
- Priority initiatives requiring extensive collaboration or regulatory adjustments face significant delays due to bureaucratic obstacles and administrative inefficiencies.
- Convenient access to obtain license and customer data.



2023 SEAFWA R3 Committee Meeting

(Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Recreation Participation Committee)

State Report

State:

Louisiana

R3 Lead:

Rene LeBreton, Public Information Director, 504-286-8745



Significant R3 Effort #1: Implemented an automated Drip-Style Email Platform to Reduce churn and increase Reactivations

LDWF received a \$100,000 grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation to implement Klaviyo, an automated drip style email platform to reduce churn and increase reactivation of our license holders. Though this platform took a couple months to integrate with our licensing database, it has been up and running for roughly 6 months. Nearly \$1.2 million of revenue has been generated directly from this new platform. Because our licenses are 365 day, an automated system for reminding licensing holders when each of their licenses expires, was critical. A full analysis of churn rates has been completed, but we anticipate positive results.

Significant R3 Effort #2: Louisiana Youth Bow-hunting Challenge

Developed in an effort to increase recruitment of bowhunters from the thousands of Archery in Louisiana Schools participants. Open-style 3-D trail tournaments utilizing International Bowhunting Organization rules and scoring. Two tournaments were held in 2023 with high participation rates and we plan to continue this offering in 2024.

Significant R3 Effort #3: Expansion of Hunting 101 classes

LDWF continued to offer introductory hunting courses for squirrel and wood duck, and expanded offerings in 2023 to include Bowhunting 101 and Waterfowl Management 101

Significant R3 Effort #4: Archery in Louisiana Schools

This program continues to be our largest and most successful shooting sports program. Participation increased slightly in 2023 with more than 19,000 archers enrolled in the program, and 3,988 student archers competing in 4 regional and state tournaments.

Significant R3 Effort #5: Fishing Course Series

The Department launched several courses through the Fishing Course Series targeting beginner, intermediate, and experienced anglers with a short, 1-hr instruction followed by 1-hr of fishing with

instructors. Courses included Intro to Fishing, Beginner Rainbow Trout Fishing, Beginner Catfishing, Beginner Bass Fishing, and Intermediate Catfishing. Approximately 45 classes were held for participants of all ages with a near 100% attendance rate of 10 participants per class. New course options will be added in the future.

Other R3 Efforts of Interest

- [Aquatic Volunteer Instructor Program](#)
- [Becoming an Outdoors Woman Workshop](#)
- [Beyond Becoming an Outdoors Woman Deer Hunt](#)
- [Families Understanding Nature Camp](#)
- Youth Hunter Education Challenge
- 4H Shooting Sports
- [Get Out and Fish Pond Stocking](#)
- [Fishing 101 Workshops](#)
- [Women’s Fishing Workshop](#)
- [Trapper Education Workshops](#)

Barriers to R3 Efforts

- Lack of ability to cross-reference or track ALAS participants within our licensing/event system to assess recruitment success and create/modify programs and marketing to target this demographic.
- Lack of dedicated R3 coordinator



Louisiana ALAS



Beyond BOW



BOW Alligator Cleaning



FUN Camp



Youth Hunter Education Challenge Group



Fisheries biologist, Joshua Porter, teaches participants tips on landing fish during one of LDWF's fishing courses.



Women's workshop Participants prepare lines for noodle fishing during the summer Toledo Bend weekend workshop.



2023 SEAFWA R3 Committee Meeting

(Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Recreation Participation Committee)

State Report

State:

Mississippi

R3 Lead:

Jeremy Bass

Director of Marketing and Communications

Jeremy.bass@wfp.ms.gov

601-432-2218



Significant R3 Effort #1: Fishing Rodeos – Recruitment, Retention

One of our R3 recruitment initiatives focuses on introducing fishing to over 3500 participants annually, aiming to cultivate responsible, licensed anglers and environmental stewards. Our events offer a blend of educational activities centered on fish, fishing, and environmental opportunities, all within a controlled and secure environment. Participating ponds, abundantly stocked, ensure participants enjoy successful catches. The program emphasizes knowledge sharing through Fisheries Technical staff, biologists from the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, and volunteer anglers. Boating safety information from our Law Enforcement Bureau completes the comprehensive approach, creating a community dedicated to lifelong fishing passion and responsible environmental stewardship.

As a whole, our Wildlife and Fisheries Biologists play a pivotal role in retaining interest in outdoor recreation by actively engaging communities through school districts, wildlife organizations, and strategic partnerships. In collaboration with school districts, our biologists integrate wildlife conservation into curricula and organize field trips, ensuring that the younger generation is not only aware of our efforts but also inspired to become lifelong stewards of nature.

Partnering with wildlife organizations, our biologists participate in community events, workshops, and seminars, sharing insights into ongoing conservation projects. By actively engaging with wildlife enthusiasts and local communities, we create a shared responsibility for the preservation of our natural resources. Strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations, businesses, and community leaders expand our reach and reinforce the importance of sustainable outdoor activities. These collaborations not only amplify the visibility of MDWFP's conservation efforts but also create a network of support that promotes outdoor recreation.

Our biologists utilize diverse communication channels, including social media, newsletters, and community forums, to inform and excite the public about MDWFP's focus on enhancing outdoor recreation. By sharing success stories, project updates, and opportunities for community involvement, we aim to create a lasting connection between individuals and the outdoors.

Significant R3 Effort #2: Email Marketing - Reactivation

In an R3 reactivation initiative, we employ email marketing to engage lapsed license holders, strategically employing data segmentation for targeted outreach. Through meticulous data analysis, we identify and categorize individuals based on their historical participation, allowing us to tailor our communication for maximum impact.

Our email campaigns are crafted with personalized messaging and compelling value propositions to reignite interest in outdoor activities among lapsed participants. Emphasizing the unique benefits of license renewal, we highlight the joy of outdoor experiences, the positive impact on well-being, and the integral role they play as stewards of our natural resources.

To streamline the reactivation process, we integrate exclusive offers, incentives, and information about upcoming events, making the return to outdoor pursuits both enticing and seamless. Interactive elements, such as surveys and feedback forms, are incorporated to gain insights into the reasons behind lapses, enabling us to refine our strategies continually.

Our approach is data-driven, allowing us to create a dynamic and responsive reactivation strategy. By analyzing recipient interactions and feedback, we adapt our messaging to address specific concerns or preferences, enhancing the overall effectiveness of our outreach.

Other R3 Efforts of Interest

- Creation of new website in February 2024
- Expanding educational outreach to segway specific youth demographics into the phases of life with an emphasis in conservation and license acquisition.
- Integrate conservation principles into joint projects to reinforce the connection between outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship.
- Incorporate interactive surveys and feedback forms to gain insights into reasons behind lapses.
- Form additional strategic partnerships with organizations, businesses, and community leaders aligned with outdoor recreation goals.
- Continuously analyze participant data to identify trends and preferences.
- Use insights to refine and adapt R3 strategies.

Barriers to R3 Efforts

- Limited awareness about outdoor recreational opportunities and their benefits.
- Potential participants may view hunting or fishing as complex activities, leading to hesitation or avoidance.
- Busy schedules and time constraints may prevent individuals from dedicating time to outdoor recreational activities.
- The cost associated with licenses, gear, and travel can pose significant barriers, especially for lower-income individuals or families.
- Absence of relatable role models or mentors in outdoor activities can impede interest and participation.
- Lack of knowledge about the benefits of outdoor recreation and how to engage in specific activities can be a significant barrier to participation.



2023 SEAFWA R3 Committee Meeting
(Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Recreation Participation Committee)

State Report

State:

Missouri

R3 Lead:

Eric Edwards, Hunter & Angler Marketing Specialist
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Significant R3 Effort #1: Code Complexity Project

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) hired Lambert to conduct a comprehensive study of how Missourians understand the *Missouri Wildlife Code*, including how the regulations are presented in the 2022 Fall Deer & Turkey booklet. The purpose of the study was to determine barriers to recruitment of resident hunters, and if the regulations for hunting and managed hunts are easy to understand, how residents are obtaining regulations, what could be provided to make the regulations easier to understand, and their perceptions of the Deer & Turkey booklet. Examining the perceptions of Missourians was key to the research process.

Significant R3 Effort #2: Missouri R3 Plan Revision

The original Missouri R3 Plan was created in 2018. The latest revision, which was completed in early 2023 is much more strategic in our actions. This revised plan was the effort of our multi-branch R3 working group. The focus of this plan is to set attainable numbers for each recruitment, retention, and reactivation section of R3. Our R3 sub-working groups of programs, communications, data, barriers, partners, and mentoring then set the strategies and tactics to attain our desired measurable outcomes.

Other R3 Efforts of Interest

- Currently out for bid is a R3 programs inventory and evaluation. This project will better help us to understand if our educational efforts are meeting the goals of R3 as well as help inform decisions on future development and delivery of educational programs.
- Our marketing campaigns are increasing in productivity. This year our campaigns grew in size with 1,362,363 campaign members. Attribution for our marketed campaigns for the year are \$1.2m and our lift is 11.69%

Barriers to R3 Efforts

- Reaching program scale and redundancy to be beneficial to SMART objectives.



2023 SEAFWA R3 Committee Meeting State Report

State:

North Carolina

R3 Lead:

Sandra Bridges, Wildlife Education Division
Operations and Program Development Manager
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Significant R3 Effort #1: Pathway to Wildlife Relevancy Project Next Steps

During this period the Wildlife Education Division continued the *Pathway to Relevancy* project. The original intent of this project was to assess whether its programs and classes were fulfilling the agency’s mission, meeting the division’s educational goals, and promoting the relevancy of the agency to broader constituencies in North Carolina. The evaluation emphasized data-driven decision making, incorporated an array of stakeholder input from both within and outside the agency, and produced a Division Action Plan, which offers a framework for establishing WED as a current and future driver of NCWRC relevancy initiatives. The plan was presented and approved by the Commission’s executive board in December 2022.

The next steps for this project, which began in July 2023, have been to create Programmatic Action Plans within each of the main WED program areas: Angler Engagement, Conservation Initiatives, Hunter Engagement, and Shooting Sports Engagement. Planning teams were developed with representatives from nearly all WRC divisions to ensure that relevancy is recognized as an agency-wide mission and that all divisions have the opportunity to contribute and understand their roles. The groups have met at least monthly since the project began to review existing plans and perform gap analyses of current programs. Once these gap analyses are complete, the teams will begin to brainstorm ideas to meet the identified gaps and create a list of action items that will address the needs. The specific areas currently being assessed, beyond the R3 topics addressed in the ORAM, are target audience, geography, and metrics for evaluation.

Significant R3 Effort #2: Development of the Operations and Program Development Team

NCWRC’s Wildlife Education Division formed the Operations and Program Development Team during this period. This team is responsible for angler engagement, conservation initiatives, hunter engagement, partnerships and curriculum development, and shooting

sports engagement. In each of these areas, the assigned staff design, develop, deploy, and evaluate WED offerings to ensure WRC is meeting its ultimate goal of providing relevant and effective programming to its constituents. This team focuses on statewide programs, like the Tackle Loaner Program, “Learn to Hunt”, and National Archery in Schools Program, is available to assist others in the department with developing educational and outreach presentations, and serves as internal points of contact for specific subject matter questions.

Other R3 Efforts of Interest

- Cross-training of new Engagement Program Specialist team to expand programming opportunities and recruit new program volunteers.
- Engagement Program Specialists held individual district level meetings, inviting district staff from all agency divisions to present on their current projects, efforts, etc., which encouraged open dialog for R3 efforts across the agency.
- Opened Fly-casting Instructor Academy to the public and have had a variety of people and organizations sign up to effectively help increase the agency’s reach beyond normal operations.
- GO LIVE of the Brandt system in July, which now allows tracking of all WRC customers, program participation, and license purchases.
- The North Carolina Youth Hunter Education Skills Tournament had 3,708 participants representing 309 teams compete.
- The National Archery in Schools Program recorded 16,730 active participants, and the NC Bullseye Tournament had 1,182 student participants from 50 schools.
- Completed an evaluation of the Tackle Loaner Program cooperator sites to improve support to their programs.
- Completed Shooting Range User Survey to better understand motivations of range users and ensure future decision-making meets customer needs.
- Piloted “Top Shot Rifle Challenge” and “.22 Challenge” at various WRC-managed ranges. These are themed target shooting programs for individuals to challenge themselves with various calibers. This program encouraged a lot of positive engagement from the public and, with some modifications based on participant feedback, will continue in 2024.
- Streamlined process for receiving Event Requests and evaluating if they should be attended and by whom in the agency.
- Began process of evaluating BOW program, which led to establishing a monthly meeting of BOW coordinators nationwide.

Barriers to R3 Efforts

- Consistent tracking and evaluation of all public programs and classes due to various divisions participating and offering events.
- Patience to adhere to the long term R3 process.
- Training and understanding of the new Brandt system for both staff and volunteers.
- Identifying overlaps in programming and how to best deal with those for the benefit of the agency.

- Ongoing need to balance staffs' personal ownership in programming with the agency's programmatic perspective and needs.
- Access that allows new anglers to go fishing with a reasonable expectation of success at a place that is clean, allows them to feel safe, and is within 30 minutes from their homes.
- Lack of mentorship programs, both internally and with partner agencies.



2023 SEAFWA R3 Committee Meeting
(Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Recreation Participation Committee)
State Report

State:

Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation

R3 Lead:

Micah Holmes

Assistant Chief of Communication and Education

(405)521-3855

[Micah.holmes@odwc.ok.gov](mailto:micah.holmes@odwc.ok.gov)



Significant R3 Effort #1:

The agency is actively developing a Hunting R3 Action Plan that tightens the focus and goals of R3 activities. Key pieces of the plan include increased emphasis on programs targeted at adult-onset hunters and also consideration for an agency mentorship program.

Significant R3 Effort #2:

Significant progress is being made on renovations and new construction on shooting ranges across the state. A new range is complete at Kaw Wildlife Management Area in north central Oklahoma and a new range is also open at Packsaddle Wildlife Management Area in western Oklahoma.

Other R3 Efforts of Interest

- Other R3 efforts of interest also include a special controlled hunt for women and their families.
- Continuation of marketing efforts including automation to increase license sales.
- Planning is underway for the annual Rack Madness event, a retention effort where hunters can bring their antlers into the ODWC headquarters to get scored and to celebrate the end of deer season.

Barriers to R3 Efforts

- The agency will be working with the state legislature to consider a restructuring of our state's numerous and sometimes complicated license structure. A more modern and streamlined list of licenses at reasonable rates will make it simpler to attract and keep hunters and anglers in the state.

Kaw Wildlife Management Area Shooting Range





2023 SEAFWA R3 Committee Meeting

(Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Recreation Participation Committee)

State Report

State:
R3 Lead:

South Carolina

Amanda Stroud,
Director of Outreach and Education
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Significant R3 Effort #1: Education Task Force Strategic Planning

The SCDNR Education Task Force was created in 2022. This task force is made up of education staff from across the agency working to find solutions for problems and hurdles that each has historically faced independently. This collaboration affords more resources and staff available for finding solutions to issues facing everyone’s programs. In April 2023, SCDNR Education Task Force authored a three-year strategic plan guiding all agency recruitment and education programs with the goals of improving internal communication within the programs, as well as expanding their external reach.

To achieve these goals, the agency education programs continue to work on the adoption of uniform registration, volunteer management and evaluation methods. Additionally, a centralized location for education and outreach materials has been developed.

Significant R3 Effort #2: SCDNR Web Refresh

During the fall of 2023, SCDNR completed an audit of the top 100 webpages (accounting for 84% of visitation) of the agency’s website. This included verifying or updating all information on the top 100 visited pages, as well as ensuring all were branded appropriately, responsive in design and dated material was removed. Identifying the top 100 pages, determining a program owner for each and ensuring they are accurate and up to date will allow us to begin transition on to a content management system platform in the future.

Other R3 Efforts of Interest

Education and outreach programs within the agency continued to implement successful programming. A sampling of accomplishments include:

Aquatic Education

- Several Family Fishing Clinics were offered throughout the state.
- Continued to provide rods and reels, and basic how-to material through statewide Tackle Loaner Program sites.
- Continued implementation and promotion of the Bass Slam program which encourages anglers to fish throughout the state as they seek the four bass species found in SC.
- Worked with TU on the implementation of the Trout in the Classroom program to several schools primarily in the Upstate of SC where trout can safely be stocked.
- The 11th annual SCDNR Youth Bass Fishing Championship was held in March 2023.

Community Engagement Program

- The CEP worked in coordination with external partners as well as with other agency recruitment and education managers to host or cohost outdoor recreation programs, awareness programs and educational activities, reaching more than 780 Latinx and more than 260 Black individuals.
- On a smaller scale, the program hosted (or cohosted) various nature walks, two property tours, a camping program, and a field day reaching 155 participants from underrepresented audiences. The team hosted two virtual presentations for partner organizations, highlighting the CEP goals and services.
- Continued collaborating with the MINRC Committee for the recruitment of underrepresented candidates in the conservation field to attend the SEAFWA Annual Conference. Since the establishment of the Committee in 1990, this was the first year South Carolina received multiple applications.
- Participated in a multi-state Community of Practice project aiming to promote wildlife viewing and other non-traditional uses of SCDNR public lands.
- For a second year, produced the agency's Spanish printed version (10,000 booklets) of the *South Carolina Hunting and Fishing Laws and Regulations*. Available in a digital format as well: <https://www.eregulations.com/southcarolina/cazar>

Law Enforcement Education and Outreach

- Conducted 4 clinics which included 55 participants. The clinics included adults which were first time hunters who purchased licenses.
- Held 21 youth hunts for 83 participants who hunted the following species, deer, turkey, hog, dove, duck, and squirrel.
- Held 3 trailer events with over 70,740 people in attendance.
- Taught 236 in-person boater and 285 Hunter education classes as well as the internet option with a total of 6,957 students certified in boater education and 14,394 students certified in hunter education.
- The Boating Simulator was used at 32 civic and school events with more than 2,900 participants.
- Conducted Trap Open with 482 shooters, conducted Skeet Open with 481 participants, and Conducted Sporting Clay Shoot with 543 participants.
- Held Skeet Championship with 175 participants, Trap Championship with 180 participants, 2 4H training sessions with 11 new coaches.
- Held 5 NASP qualifiers with 3135 bullseye archers and 1524 IBO/3D archers.
- The State Bullseye and IBO tournaments invited the top 10 teams and 40 additional top-scoring individuals 784 bullseye archers and 503 IBO archers.
- Conducted 14 Basic archery instructor classes with 136 new instructors.
- There were 5 basic handgun safety classes with 17 participants.

Saltwater Education and Outreach

- In 2023, SCDNR Saltwater Outreach Staff and 59 Certified Fishing Instructors interacted with over 10,000 members of the public.
- SCDNR staff and volunteer instructors held 34 fishing clinics including clinics designed to reach underrepresented groups.

- A series of fishing rodeos reached over 200 youth anglers.
- SCDNR was awarded the nation’s first saltwater-oriented First Catch Center from RBFF. The trailer has been wrapped, outfitted, and used in several fishing education events so far. The First Catch Center is expected to simplify logistics and allow for more programming during 2024.

Marketing

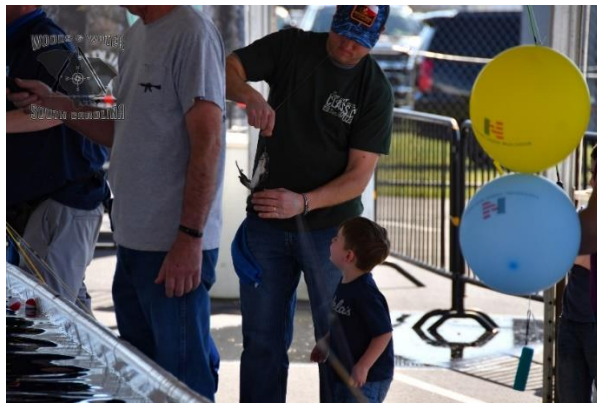
- Continued delivery of onboarding emails.
- Through ACI grant funding, implemented our first digital marketing campaign in nearly 10 years.
- Participated in annual RBFF lapsed boating mailer.
- Delivered several marketing species and/or season specific emailed through the Brandt system.

Barriers to R3 Efforts

As with several other states, SCDNR faces barriers to the full implementation of R3 efforts. Such barriers include:

- Lack of one centralized R3 coordinator.
- Outdated, hard to navigate website.
- Lack of dedicated funding for retention or reactivation.
- No method to track education participants through license holder.
- Access to clinics or fishing activity in near targeted audiences is limited.
- Transportation for participants in underserved communities.
- Bilingual instructors for events and education offerings.

Palmetto Sportsmen’s Classic Fishing Pond



Take One Make One Deer Hunt





2023 SEAFWA R3 Committee Meeting

(Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Recreation Participation Committee)

State Report

State:

Tennessee

R3 Lead:

Matt Clarey, R3 Coordinator

Matt.clarey@tn.gov 615-781-6645



Significant R3 Effort #1: New R3 Coordinator

In June 2023, I was hired as the new R3 Coordinator for TWRA. The goals set forth were to finish the R3 plan by July 1, 2024, develop an R3 Team, and update the division. In August of 2023, Jenifer Wisniewski, my boss, took a new job with the National Deer Association. After her transition, our division made some changes and added the Hunter Education Division along with our Hunter Education Centers/Ranges. These changes will help our Hunter Education Division and Centers with good direction and streamline the federal aid portion of our budgets.

Significant R3 Effort #2: Partnerships/Retention

- Granted funds to Outdoor Women of Nashville to continue work with women in the outdoors.
- Granted funds for a mentor pledge campaign with Quail Forever.
- Granted funds to Artemis with the NWF to help procure a hunting lease for women.
- Granted funds to Univ. of Tennessee's 4-H program to get youth involved in shooting sports.
- Granted funds to Tennessee Wildlife Federation for the 6th year where they were able to put over 2000 people through some form of the Hunting and Fishing Academy whether in person or virtual.
- Partnered with Brotherz Outdoorz where we stocked fish and provided our Fishing 101 trailer and staff for a large family fishing event in Memphis where over 300 participated.
- Granted funds to SCTP to help run the program

Other R3 Efforts of Interest

- Granted equipment to University of the South's archery program.
- Started a NASP certification program at Tennessee Technological University
- Provided fishing licenses for FFA and 4H campers across TN.
- Provided two more Fishing 101 trailers for regions 3 and 4.
- 101 Classes at our hunter education centers

Barriers to R3 Efforts

- Statewide buy-in
- Access to hunting lands
- Incentives for lapsed hunters
- Communication with underserved groups

Staff and volunteers at our Buffalo Ridge Refuge Outreach Facility





2023 SEAFWA R3 Committee Meeting
 (Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Recreation Participation Committee)

State Report

State:

Texas

R3 Lead:

Jason Mercer, R3 Coordinator,
 Jason.mercer@tpwd.texas.gov, 512.705.6265



Significant R3 Effort #1: Female & Veteran R3 Staff Development Program

Female & Veteran staff members, with managerial approval, are allowed to attend R3-related programming to learn more about R3 and the activities involved with the hopes of bolstering knowledge and support of R3 initiatives while introducing them to hunting, fishing, boating and shooting sports and building social networks with staff.

Significant R3 Effort #2: Female Retention Program

Developed a retention marketing campaign targeting female anglers with a special focus on Hispanic women that was funded through a \$25,000 grant from RBFF and utilized messaging aligned with their national “Find Your Best Self on the Water” campaign. Tactics included digital video ads in both English and Spanish and an email series that concluded with a survey of female anglers. Key survey results show women who fish: 1) connect with their deeper selves and get relief from stress when they fish, 2) don’t feel represented in advertising and 3) would like free online classes/webinars and more info on lures/baits and the type species in different waterbodies. The Facebook and Instagram online campaign saw overwhelmingly positive feedback with over 107,000 engagements from Texas women.

Other R3 Efforts of Interest

Shooting Sports Marketing Campaign- In 2023, TPWD was awarded a \$50,000 grant from ACI to develop a statewide shooting sports communication program. Campaign goals were to grow awareness and participation in shooting sports and communicate the value of shooting sports as outdoor recreation. To establish the new “Texas Shooting Sports” community, we created a new TPWD Shooting Sports landing page, Facebook page, and launched a quarterly e-newsletter. Digital ads were optimized on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and X (Twitter) to drive traffic to the new sites and build a subscriber list for the e-newsletter. We complimented the campaign with acquisition emails to our list of hunters and social media posts to our current customers. By early November 2023, we had a total of 4,554 e-newsletter subscribers, 1,579 Facebook followers and 1,151 Facebook likes.

Expanded Texas Paddling Trails – Current Coverage: 81 Trails, 647 Miles, 144 Access Sites - Three paddling trails were added to the Texas Paddling Trails (TPT) Program at Inks Lake State Park. Adding over 11 miles of new trails to the network, the Inks Lake Paddling Trails were launched in July 2023 as

part of the Texas State Parks Centennial celebration. New trails expected to come online within the next year include several trails on Lake Lewisville (potential of 41 launches, 61 trails, 147 total miles), the Ron Smith Memorial Paddling Trail on Oso Bay, and the Powderhorn Lake trail system.

Media Productions – Has put a major emphasis on R3-related topics in our PBS show such as; out State-of-The-Art Flounder Hatchery Facility, wild fish/game cooking content, urban kayaking, kayak angling, Mentored Fishing Program, etc. All in hopes of inspiring the next generation to get outdoors.

Special Olympics Texas & TPWD Host Successful Fishing Tournament - Special Olympics of Texas (SOTX) joined forces with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to host the Second Annual SOTX Fishing Tournament at Sea Center Texas. Over 100 enthusiastic participants cast their lines in the hatchery ponds, experiencing the thrill of angling and camaraderie. The day proved to be a resounding success, with participants reeling in impressive 15-20lb redfish throughout the tournament.

House Bill 1728 Partnership – Bill Passed. Allows selected Non-Profit Partners to provide hunting and fishing opportunities for veterans without a license. Pioneered and Launched, by WL Division, Small Game Program.

Sharelunker - During the 2023 Toyota ShareLunker collection season (January- March), there were 18 Legacy Class fish (13+ pound Largemouth Bass) shared for a selective spawning program from 4 different reservoirs. Nearly 180,000 ShareLunker offspring were stocked in public waterbodies in Texas. Anglers submitted nearly 500 qualified entries (8+ pound or 24+ inch Largemouth Bass) caught from 89 public throughout the year to the Toyota ShareLunker program. The total media reach was 3,454,995,902 for Dec. 27, 2022 through Oct. 11, 2023.

Text Messaging to Lapsed Anglers – In 2023, we applied and won an RBFF grant for \$10K to help us increase renewals among lapsed Year-From-Purchase (YFP) fishing license holders in Texas. Along with the email reminders we typically send to this audience to encourage renewal, we used the grant funding to send 400,869 text messages encouraging renewal of YFP licenses, and generated over \$184K in revenue, for an ROI of 18.4.

TPWD & TSBVI - Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) joined forces with the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) to offer an enriching program for students. This unique partnership provided visually impaired students with the opportunity to explore kayaking and angling activities in a safe and supportive environment.

The Texas Parks & Wildlife Magazine has devoted an R3 section with hunting, fishing, and boating content every month. The magazine has increased relevancy by meeting people where they are and has been intentional about featuring underrepresented audiences as story subjects in print, social media and video content. Our media team has put a focus on developing and maintaining a database of new content creators; writers, photographers, producers and influencers.



2023 SEAFWA R3 Committee Meeting

(Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Recreation Participation Committee)

State Report

State:

Virginia

R3 Lead:

David Hennaman

R3 Coordinator

David.hennaman@dwr.virginia.gov | 804-763-9741



Significant R3 Effort #1: Hiring a new R3 Coordinator

- The R3 Coordinator position was filled by David Hennaman
- Implementation of the Becoming a Virginia Hunter Program: A beginner level program aimed at non-hunters to give them the skills and knowledge to hunt deer.
- Utilization of targeted, paid marketing to attract hunter/angler adjacent outdoors people to try hunting and angling.

Significant R3 Effort #2: Creating and filling a Hunter Outreach Coordinator position

Virginia DWR continues to grow the Hunting Mentor Program by creating a position to manage the mentor program. Cierra Strickland was hired to fill this position. She is revamping the manual process for connecting mentors and mentees to keep pace with the more than 150 requests for mentors in 2023. A few initiatives DWR expanded or started to continue to grow the mentor program included the following:

- Continued partnership with Outdoor Access. DWR added additional mentor memberships and implemented a rotation of properties (6 total) to provide mentors with exclusive opportunities while hunting with a mentee. Outdoor Access (<https://outdooraccess.com/#/>) allows members to “lease” private land by the day. Our partnership provides up to 100 mentors a free membership and six (6) properties where DWR mentors have exclusive reservation rights if a mentee signs up with them.
- DWR continues to provide training for new and existing mentors through webinars and virtual meetings.
- Initiated a partnership with the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) to match new hunters in VA with experienced hunting mentors through their new interactive website (<https://www.learnhunting.org/>)

Other R3 Efforts of Interest

- Continue to expand our partnership with the USFWS and the James River National Wildlife Refuge to offer hunting opportunities for mentors and new hunters, to include Delta Waterfowl’s University Hunting Program. These partnerships are critical for R3 because it provides a safe environment for teaching hunting and promotes a stronger partnership between Virginia and other state and federal agencies.
- Updated DWR’s website to help new hunters and anglers find places to hunt and fish. The website now includes all DWR’s and partners properties that are open to hunting and/or fishing with searchable fields for species and “best bets.”
- Initiated a digital version of the hunting and fishing regulations. The digital version will allow individuals to search by location, species, or date to easily find hunting and fishing regulations. Complexity of regulations is consistently listed as a barrier for new hunters in Virginia.

Barriers to R3 Efforts

- Little connection to the shooting sports in VA
- Inability to analyze program data in a meaningful way (participant tracking and engagement) due to event registration system being separate from the license system.
- Volunteer Instructor engagement – lack of meaningful opportunities for volunteers to provide assistance.
- Need a comprehensive list of potential partners / NGOs that DWR can partner with to help expand efforts to promote hunting and fishing.



2023 SEAFWA R3 Committee Meeting
 (Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife Recreation Participation Committee)

State Report

State:

West Virginia

R3 Lead:

Kayla Donathan, Outreach and Education Program Manager
 Kayla.M.Donathan@wv.gov | (304) 558-2771 ext. 21040



Significant R3 Effort #1: NASP/WV Archery in the Schools

The WVDNR continued to strengthen its efforts to recruit, retain, and reactivate hunters, anglers, boaters, shooting sports enthusiasts and wildlife viewers. The WVDNR has continued to find new ways in its implementation and expansion of programs to help in our R3 recruitment, retention, and reactivation of our customers.

The Archery in the Schools State Tournament has been expanded, finding a home at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center. The space provided has allowed the program to introduce vendors like into the State Tournament. Plans are underway to bring more vendors and partnering programs from around the state to the tournament each year to help encourage program growth and to further introduce people to the outdoors. More than 25,000 students participated for the first time in Archery in the School’s curriculum during the 2022-2023 school year. Twenty more public/private schools were added to the 300 schools that are already a part of this program.

During FY2023, WVDNR hosted thirteen Basic Archery Instructor Training courses during the first half of 2023 adding an additional 90 instructors to the program. More training courses are scheduled to take place throughout 2024.

Significant R3 Effort #2: WV Celebration of National Hunting and Fishing Days

West Virginia’s Celebration of National Hunting and Fishing Days is still growing and evolving. The event was held at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in Glen Jean on Sept. 10-11, 2022.

The event provided the public with many hands-on learning opportunities and demonstrations including: deer and squirrel field dressing, taxidermy, and casting.

The annual Outdoor Youth Challenge provided youths 18 and under the opportunity to participated in multiple activities, from muzzleloader and shotgun shooting to casting for

accuracy and archery. The hands-on activities encouraged youths to gain knowledge and experience about wildlife, hunting, fishing, firearms safety, and outdoor recreation. A lifetime hunting and fishing license and other hunting and fishing-related items were prizes awarded. This year, there were 200 participants in the event.

Other R3 Efforts of Interest

- National Hunting and Fishing Days Celebration
- Special youth hunting opportunities
- Gold Rush trout stocking
- Fishing education events
- Hunter Education courses
- Boater Safety courses
- Non-resident student lifetime licenses
- School outreach through Outdoor Classrooms
- Citizen Science initiatives

Barriers to R3 Efforts

- Proper program evaluation
- Communication between wildlife office and communications office
- All paid advertising must be created and approved through WV Division of Tourism which causes some delays
- Population decreases