

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MINORITY OUTREACH SUBCOMMITTEE FINAL REPORT

on a Nationwide Assessment of the Status of
State Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Efforts to Reach Minorities in Their
Education and Outreach Programs and in Recruitment

September, 1998

INTRODUCTION

By the middle of the 21st century, the "minority" population will almost equal the size of the non-Hispanic white population. As the U.S. population grows, it will become increasingly diverse along many socioeconomic dimensions. This increasing diversity will represent a historic shift in America's racial and ethnic composition. Along with it come long-range implications for how we view racial and other minority issues, how we go about the business of wildlife management, and how we view wildlife-related recreation.

In addition, the oldest baby boomers are reaching retirement age, resulting in the exit of many career fish and wildlife professionals and the entry of many young and diverse employees into our agencies. Increasingly, new employees are beginning to arrive representing demographic backgrounds that depart from the traditional "type": rural-raised, land-grant university fisheries/wildlife/biology-educated, angler/hunter, white, male.

Finally, the need grows for fish and wildlife agencies to broaden their constituent base in the face of decreasing or plateaued hunter/angler participation in many areas and the overall expanding segmentation of the wildlife-related recreation market. At the same time, substantial funding for broad fish and wildlife conservation programs could, and some think will, soon become reality. These changes are imminent, and they directly involve—even require—effectively reaching minorities through education, programming, and recruitment. All that remains is for us to decide, "How?" And then do it.

*"Diversity is not about them;
it's about us!"*

—Terry Owens

BACKGROUND

This report is historical. It is the result of the first initiative of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, or any other organization, to assess the nationwide status of state fish and wildlife agency efforts to reach minorities in both educational/outreach programs and in recruitment. It is, therefore, a major step at helping to improve agency effectiveness in this area.

In September, 1997, at the annual meeting of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) in Phoenix, the Education Committee formed an ad hoc subcommittee to perform an initial probe into the status of minority outreach and other diversity efforts in state fish and wildlife agencies nationwide.

Subcommittee members (list follows) attempted to contact state fish and wildlife agencies in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several regional and national entities to learn what, if anything, they were doing to (1) reach out to minority publics in their educational and other public outreach programs, (2) work with minority youth, and (3) recruit minority staff.

This inquiry was not conducted as a scientific study, nor was a boilerplate questionnaire involved. Subcommittee members handled their state inquiries differently; however, most used a simple four-question probe that was faxed to contacts mostly within state fish and wildlife agencies. Follow-up phone calls helped raise the response rate and clarified questions. However, not all individuals or states contacted responded in this initial effort, resulting in a partial assessment.

The information collected was compiled as received, without analysis or evaluation, and transcribed and edited into a preliminary report. This preliminary report was presented to the Education and Executive Committees at the 63rd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference held in Orlando in March, 1998. The Executive Committee officially changed the status of the Minority Outreach Subcommittee from ad hoc to a formal subcommittee of the Education Committee, and requested that the subcommittee's report be completed to include all states by the Fall, 1998, meeting of the International in Savannah.

During the preparation of the preliminary report, the responses subcommittee members received depended upon (1) the questions asked, (2) the means of contact and level of follow-through, (3) how many levels (divisions, sections, individuals) of the agency were contacted, and (4) who responded (if anyone). For the final report, state fish and wildlife agencies in the 50 states were again contacted, further clarification and approval of the state's submission were sought via phone and fax, and a final report was produced. We acknowledge the difficulty in reaching all relevant staff in each state; therefore, we apologize if we unintentionally missed anyone or their programs.

SUMMARY

Much was discovered from this nationwide probe into the minority outreach and diversity activities of state fish and wildlife agencies that can immediately be shared and built upon. Outstanding from the information collected were a number of observations of interest. The following is a discussion of these observations.

Understanding and Terminology. One observation is that there appears to be no universal understanding of what "diversity" is, or how minority outreach, affirmative action, or EEO are distinct from one another. Thus, the report contains a variety of activities occurring at various levels of the organization, and having various purposes. This lack of knowledge and understanding was fairly prevalent across the country.

Affirmative action is considered the same as "outreach" by some. Hence, it quickly becomes apparent that defining "minority" or "diversity," at least in terms of our profession, may be an important first step in collecting information that is comparable and meaningful to any kind of national status report. Increasing the knowledge and improving the understanding of terms and concepts related to diversity, market segmentation, affirmative action and EEO would be helpful in sharing and building upon others' efforts and in facilitating progress.

Obstacles. It was further observed that a number of factors get in the way of reaching minorities. Some states say they have no products or services targeted to minorities, but their reasons differ: it may be lack of staff or know-how, or it may be that they don't try to distinguish among the populations they serve. Many states have tried a number of strategies to recruit minority employees, have had little or no success, and are left wondering if there's anything else they can do. Or, state hiring procedures may hinder efforts to identify and hire minority candidates. A few states have very small minority populations, and there simply are no minority candidates. Several states report a "leaking pipeline," that is, the loss of strong minority candidates from their agencies or from any potential applicant pool to better paying employment elsewhere. As expected, a lack of funding (for staff, programs, materials, dedicated time) is a common roadblock to effectively reaching minorities.

Another observation relates to the previous section, Understanding and Terminology. In many cases, there is an agency-wide and explicitly stated paradigm or guiding principle expressing the value to the agency of reaching and including minorities. Yet effectively reaching minorities may be seen differently between divisions or sections within the same agency.

Diversity Implementation. It becomes apparent that uncertainty exists as to how to bring about, first, an *attitude that values diversity* in the workforce and in outside agency constituents, and second, an actual *increase in the numbers of minority constituents*, both externally and internally. How and when should such efforts begin? Do the efforts differ among the different minority groups? Is bringing about these changes into fish-and-wildlife ways of thinking any different from bringing about such changes in other types of professions and work cultures?

A few states mention that such efforts must commence early, beginning with elementary school children. One felt that programs, to be successful, must be youth- or youth/mentor-driven. Some states have naturally diverse populations, while others are overwhelmingly Caucasian. Further, opinions vary as to the value added in targeting minority audiences. A few approach the diversity issue simply by trying to be inclusive in all programs. Others report that to be general or "inclusive in all programs" can be compared to "not having a leg to stand on and winding up standing for nothing."

The degree of outreach, which may be driven by any or all factors mentioned in this summary, varies considerably. In more populated states, fish and wildlife agencies recruit at Urban League meetings and seek help from minority caucuses; others stick to more traditional college fairs. Many states provide Hunter Education courses in communities with underserved populations (commonly Asian, Native American, or Hispanic) using local community leaders or other residents as trainers—and the courses may be given in the primary language. Hawaii, having a significantly cosmopolitan population, prints Hunter Education tests in seven languages besides English. Other states have great success recruiting women and focus primarily on that.

A lack of money and staffing stymie efforts in some states where they want to reach out, but feel they haven't the resources to do so. When combined with uncertainty as to *how* exactly to reach out, one might erroneously assume that the state doesn't value diversity. During the course of obtaining this information it was apparent that some state contacts, who can see the need to recruit minorities, were frustrated at not having been able to do so successfully.

Benchmarking. There *are* some effective things happening out there. Although no benchmarking exists, perhaps there could be. For example, Colorado has addressed the needs of the Spanish-speaking community not only by translating the Project WILD materials, but by training bilingual facilitators in school districts, who in turn can train other bilingual teachers. Puerto Rico produced Spanish Aquatic WILD materials. California, New Mexico, and other states use these Spanish translations for their Project WILD and Aquatic WILD programs. Language is not trivial; many states (especially Minnesota and Hawaii) offer Hunter Education material and tests in numerous (mostly Asian) languages and Spanish, and other states are moving that way with their outreach. Georgia is even providing Spanish lessons for conservation officers working in counties with large Hispanic populations. And on a national level, for example, Project Learning Tree materials are now available in Spanish.

Arkansas works closely with the minority groups and schools in the state to actively recruit into conservation careers, starting as early as junior high. In Kentucky, the agency creates specific mentoring programs for minority students interested in careers in biological sciences. Wisconsin, Washington, Minnesota, Hawaii, and others have strong internship programs that have led to hires. Virginia has had good success using a culturally sensitive assessment instrument as part of the testing portion in hiring minorities and women.

Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, and Texas are examples of states with a wide variety of efforts working conjointly and at many levels to expand minority involvement with the agencies (and vice versa). Maryland and Indiana, through their *Adopt-a-School* and *Project 180*^o programs,

integrate fish and wildlife staff with the communities within which they work. Missouri and Michigan make it a point to highlight the “many faces” of their states on their published materials and other media. Becoming an Outdoors-Woman ropes in legions of women to fish and wildlife pursuits of all kinds in most states. Some of those same states (Tennessee, Louisiana, Iowa) are beginning to target single moms and others who can’t afford the time or cost of an entire weekend away; some (Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana) gear programs to entire (one- or two-parent) families at one site.

This report contains many other good examples (a sampling is listed below) of successful outreach and recruitment efforts to reach minorities. We hope that the findings from this probe can serve as a resource to help agency personnel network with each other and share good ideas, concerns, different approaches, even hope—and that this interaction inspires further dialogue and increased opportunities for addressing states’ diversity issues.

SOME EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL STATE EFFORTS

In the Final Report, you will find that states have developed many innovative and effective means of attracting anyone and everyone to the fish and wildlife recreation/appreciation arena. A number of programs were common to many states; others were unique. Following are a *sampling* of the efforts in each category.

Programs commonly used for minority outreach:

- ▶ Becoming an Outdoors-Woman
- ▶ Project WILD (Spanish and English)
- ▶ Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs
- ▶ Urban fishing programs and clinics
- ▶ Free fishing days
- ▶ Special hunts for youth or the physically challenged
- ▶ Internships for minority students in biology/natural resource programs
- ▶ Youth work/internship opportunities

Some targeted programs and activities of individual states:

In Maryland, the *Adopt-a-School Program* brought together agency personnel and schoolchildren in a personal, multi-level way that transcended recruitment “business” alone—with such success that the agency is expanding the program into other communities.

In Indiana, *Project 180* ° has a similar impact in integrating agency staff into the target (inner-city) communities.

Earth Angels, a volunteer group of about 150 St. Louis children who work to *clean up the city and develop natural areas*, are partially funded by the Missouri Department of Conservation. The group has received two national awards for their efforts.

In California, *Project WILD* coordinators are partnering with *Project Learning Tree* and *Project WET* to conduct workshops that emphasize using the associated environmental education materials to teach language arts—to *help students to become more proficient in English*.

Go FishIN(diana) is a fishing club for secondary school students; crew captains are trained and given Aquatic Education materials to take to schools; older kids mentor younger ones.

Kentucky is working with officials at Kentucky State University, a predominantly black college, to *establish a scholarship funded by the agency* to fund the education of a student majoring in biological sciences, in return for an agreement with the student to work for the agency for a specified period of time after graduation.

In Maryland, the *Urban Spaces Team* (an interdisciplinary team of DNR staff) worked in a pilot project to turn a trashy inner-city vacant lot into a landscaped park with picnic tables. The community went on to obtain more than \$200,000 in grants for continued community restoration. The team has expanded and will now operate statewide.

[The] Urban Spaces Team is deeply committed to meaningful community involvement. They really want to be involved!

The *Minority Business Enterprise Program* in Maryland increased participation from 3.5% to 14% in one year by forming an advisory committee, spearheading a vendor fair, and training staff.

In Minnesota, a *summer internship program* for college/voc ed students that targets minorities, women, and disabled folks initially attracted mostly females; so, the agency is *diversifying into other work areas* besides natural resources, e.g., fiscal, computer, engineering, drafting capacities. "We've done better as a result."

Montana purchased two portable shooting centers (the *DART system*). These interactive hunting simulators provide a fun way to teach about safety, shot placement, and hunter ethics and responsibilities. They are used extensively during public events and fairs at city, county, and state levels, and provide *a great opportunity to reach nontraditional audiences*.

Nevada's plans include (1) *expanding their multi-lingual abilities*, especially in Angler Education, and (2) continued cooperation with the State Department of Personnel, following the Governor's policy with regard to hiring under-represented groups, and (3) *raising the agency's level of awareness of the need and benefit of a diverse work force*.

New Mexico, a state whose eclectic population (52%) is reflected in their applicant pool, works through the *Minority Outreach, Education and Employment (MORE)* program, a consortium of federal and state natural resource agencies and educational institutions whose objectives are to increase college enrollment and graduation rates of minorities and to employ them in natural resources-related jobs in a multi-state area. (For information, please contact John Montoya, NRCS/USFS, 505-761-4405.)

New Mexico's use of the *Spanish editions of Project WILD and Aquatic WILD* has increased their *English as a Second Language* component in Conservation Education.

North Dakota, whose 1990 census shows a 0.053% minority population (80% of whom are Native Americans), has taken their *youth education* (Project WILD, Aquatic WILD, Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs, etc.) *to reservation schools*, with the support of tribal leaders and school board members. In 1997 agency staff conducted seminars for 352 Native American students, and reached 156 youth through fishing programs. Hunter Education is also conducted on the reservations by Native American instructors.

It's apparent that with BOW, a real need is being met.

Oklahoma holds a "*Sensory Safari*" for kids and adults who are visually impaired, using adaptive teaching techniques to enable participants to experience wildlife and learn adaptively.

South Carolina is striving to *link outreach/educational programs directly to long-term career/recruiting efforts*. They are also in the process of establishing a Tuition Assistance Program and a Mentoring Program. Both should enhance outreach and recruiting efforts.

South Carolina's Division of Conservation, Education and Communication (CEC) *Animal Program* (a wildlife education program taken to schools and taught by DNR staff using live animals) is so popular it's backlogged; they are reaching 60-80,000 students per year, including those in schools with large minority populations.

The *Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps* offers year-round hourly paying jobs to young adults ages 18 through 25. Patterned after the federal Civilian Conservation Corps of the Depression era, its two primary goals are to (1) improve and protect Michigan's natural resources, and (2) offer constructive work experience and training to economically disadvantaged young men and women to increase their ability to secure unsubsidized employment. The program is dynamic

and adjusts to meet the needs of the participants. Recently added enhancements are paid time for educational pursuits, limited scholarship monies, incentive pay, and leave accrual time.

A new fishing program in Tennessee, "*SMART*" (*Single Mothers as Reel Teachers*), is serving to acquaint women heads of household with angling skills to pass on to their children. The program is in its first year and has been well received by participants.

Louisiana's *FUN camp* (Families Understanding Nature) is an *outdoor education camp for single parents and children* (4 per year: father/son, father/daughter, mother/son, mother/daughter).

Several *primary-level intervention programs* in Texas are designed to reach diverse school-age populations and create interest and awareness in conservation issues. *Goals: reach new constituencies, create applicant pools for the future.* Examples: Exploring Texas; Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs; Growing WILD; Project WILD and Aquatic WILD; Adopt-a-School partnerships; Blazing New Trails summer camp.

Texas also sponsors *multicultural events that celebrate the cultural diversity of staff.* Agency employees become acquainted with the customs and contributions of the various cultural and ethnic groups on the workforce, and the events promote the Department's position regarding the *organizational value of a diverse workforce.*

Virginia's Law Enforcement Division has solved a historical recruitment problem by changing their test for hiring to one that is not culturally bound. They hired a firm to develop a "*bio-data*" test—a valid, noncognitive instrument for women and minorities that they now use and have had success with. It has *qualified more women and minorities* in the selection process that led to hires.

Washington State has *internships (funded by an endowment) for EEO-candidate college students nearing graduation* (one intern per several sections, e.g., Education, Enforcement, Urban Wildlife). Currently they have an African American working on multicultural outreach. Projects vary according to the intern, and usually try to incorporate Nature Mapping (citizen-based data collection wherein folks learn about wildlife) where possible.

[We're] using interns and minority employees to train kids and work with audiences to motivate and engage youth. Communities love it!

Washington also is *networking with Asian Pacific Island community leaders* to encourage a healthy and sustainable harvest of shellfish. Training will be focused on their neighborhood group leaders to educate their respective groups. Group leaders will then train DFW enforcement officers in *more effective engagement of this cultural group.*

Washington DFW plans and runs a one-week *Natural Resources Youth Camp* in which one-third of the students are inner-city teens on scholarship. This has led to hiring: at least one student studied natural resources in college, graduated, and came back to the agency.

Wisconsin has two major programs to recruit minorities: (1) the *WABSE (Wisconsin Association of Black State Employees) partnership*, and (2) the *Minority Internship Program* that targets 10th-graders for long-term internships that can lead to employment. MIP has been in place since 1986.

...Attracting minority applicants...should improve as we learn to do effective minority outreach in general.

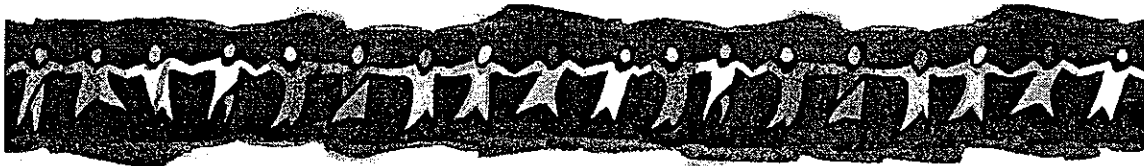
One parting thought for states: As all state fish and wildlife agencies develop and implement diversity efforts, they should remember that *industry, conservation organizations and other entities also have or are developing a wide variety of outreach programs, most of which open the door to building effective partnerships with states*

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

During the process of collecting the information presented in this report, several questions emerged relating to fish and wildlife agencies' reaching minorities that invite additional consideration and further exploration.

1. Would benchmarking, captured and documented in a formal way, be useful to state fish and wildlife agencies?
2. How can states find a better forum for sharing ideas, common concerns and problems, and successes? Are regional association committees an avenue, or might some other type of distance-friendly network be viable? Is the Minorities in Natural Resources Committee initiated by the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies a model that other regional associations should know more about, or be encouraged to emulate? When and how?
3. Is the information collected in this report adequate for making decisions and planning future efforts to help states with their diversity efforts? What other information might be needed?
4. How might states be helped to gain a better understanding of the concepts and terms related to diversity, EEO, affirmative action, etc.?

5. How might states be helped to see the value added of reaching out effectively to minorities in programs and in recruitment and moving past an "affirmative action, getting-in-the-numbers only" view of minorities in agency workforces?
6. Is there a need to help states see the importance of marketing in their public outreach efforts and perhaps the connections between public involvement, outreach products, and agency credibility and support?
7. Is there a benefit to state fish and wildlife agencies working collaboratively with federal entities to develop a model for diversity/minority recruitment programs? If so, how might this be accomplished?
8. How might agencies best be helped to learn innovative, nontraditional recruitment approaches?
9. How might fish and wildlife agencies be helped to see the importance, timing, and relationship of effectively reaching minorities, broadening the constituent base, and the passage of appropriations that will fund broad fish and wildlife conservation programs?
10. What resources are available to help states move forward in their minority outreach work?
11. What should be the next step for the International?



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many individuals helped to collect the information found in the Minority Outreach Report. In addition to the Minority Outreach Subcommittee members (list follows), MAT staffers Kris Parker, Kristie Buddenbaum, Debi Reep, and Sari Keilman faxed and called contacts in the states to extract what each state was doing; Juliette Wilson also worked with states and compiled and edited the preliminary and final reports and this summary.

We also wish to express our deep appreciation to the Washington Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Federal Aid, for their sincere support in helping agencies move forward in their diversity work.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Anyone interested in learning more about reaching minorities is invited to contact subcommittee co-chairs Dr. Sally Angus-Guynn, Management Assistance Team, and Chris Chaffin (Vice Chair, IAFWA Education Committee), National Shooting Sports Foundation.

Copies of the Final Report can be obtained from:

Bob Miles, Resource Director
International Assoc. of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
444 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 534
Washington, DC 20001
Phone (202) 624-7890
Fax (202) 624-7891
E-mail: iafwa@aol.com

Management Assistance Team
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of Federal Aid
1201 Oakridge Drive, Suite 300
Fort Collins, CO 80525
Phone (970) 282-2000
Fax (970) 282-0095

IAFWA Education Committee, Minority Outreach Subcommittee Members

Sally Angus-Guynn, Co-Chair
Management Assistance Team
1201 Oakridge Drive, Suite 300
Fort Collins, CO 80525
Ph: (970) 282-2011
Fax: (970) 282-0095
Email: sally@mat.fws.gov

Jim Miller
National Program Leader, Fish and Wildlife
USDA-CSREES/NRE
Rm 829 Aerospace Center, AG Box 2210
Washington, DC 20205-2210
Ph: (202) 401-6602
Fax: (202) 401-1706
Email: jmiller@reeusda.gov

Chris Chaffin, Co-Chair
Director of Conservation Partnerships
National Shooting Sports Foundation
11 Mile Hill Road
Newtown, CT 06470-2359
Ph: (203) 426-1320
Fax: (203) 426-1087
Email: cchaffin@nssf.org

Ira Palmer, Chief
Environmental Control Division
District of Columbia Fisheries Management Prog.
2100 M.L. King, Jr. Ave. SE, Suite 203
Washington, DC 20020
Ph: (202) 645-6064
Fax: (202) 645-6105

Kathy Love
Missouri Dept. of Conservation
2901 W. Truman Blvd.
Jefferson City, MO 65102
Ph: (573) 751-4115 ext. 246
Fax: (573) 751-2260
Email: lovek@mail.conservaion.state.mo.us

Joe Starinchak (formerly of)
Future Fisherman Foundation
1033 N. Fairfax St., Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
Ph: (703) 519-9691
Fax: (703) 519-1872
Email: amsportfish@delph.com

Rob Manes
Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks
512 SE 25th Ave.
Pratt, KS 67124
Ph: (316) 672-5911
Fax: (316) 672-2972
Email: robm@wp.state.ks.us

Christine Thomas
University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point
College of Natural Resources
Stevens Point, WI 54481-3897
Ph: (715) 346-4185
Fax: (715) 346-3624
Email: cthomas@uwsp.edu

