

Action Plan – Hunting and Angling Heritage Workgroup

The steering committee is a cross-section of representatives from the Hunting and Angling Heritage Workgroup. The representatives include Craig McMullen, AZGFD; Steve Clark, Arizona Elk Society; Bill Hill; Youth Outdoors Unlimited; Tom Collins, Big Brothers Big Sisters – Yavapai; David Power, Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club; Brain Pinney, Anglers United; Rich Williams, National Wild Turkey Federation – Arizona State Chapter; TBD, Boy Scouts of America – Grand Canyon Chapter; Sean Gray – My Camp USA; and Scott Lavin – Dick’s Sporting Goods.

Purpose

The purpose of the Hunting and Angling Heritage Working Group (HAHWG) is to gather leaders in industry, conservation groups, youth groups, and wildlife management professionals to synergistically preserve the hunting and angling tradition.

Each group brings a critical element to the HAHWG and has a slightly different view of success. Industry benefits from recruitment and retention by increased, perpetual revenue streams; conservation groups benefit by helping solidify the North American model of conservation and by increasing membership in their organizations; youth development groups enhance their programs by becoming involved in programs beneficial to their youth, and the wildlife management agency benefits by solidifying working relationships with partners, and solidifying the future of wildlife conservation.

Desired Future Condition

The desired future condition of the HAHWG is to have increased participation in hunting, angling, wildlife viewing and shooting sports recreation, in order to have a stable wildlife conservation effort for the benefit of all Arizonans. Participation in wildlife related recreation will be matched with broad support and involvement of non-participants who acknowledge the contributions of sportspersons to wildlife conservation.

Current Conditions

Biological - Both the quality and quantity of wildlife habitat is diminishing in Arizona because of impacts of humans. The amount of wildlife is contingent upon the carrying capacity of that habitat. Consequently, the hunting and angling opportunities that Arizona Game and Fish can provide to its constituents is indirectly determined by habitat, particularly big game hunting opportunities.

Participation - There are currently more big game hunters than big game hunting opportunities, as our Department necessarily turns away approximately 44% of the draw applicants. Yet, while small game hunting opportunities are abundant, fewer hunters are taking advantage of them. Participation in hunting and angling has been declining for more than two decades. Declining participation in hunting and angling represents a significant threat to wildlife conservation in Arizona. Finally, this group acknowledges that there is a large contingent of Arizonans, such as wildlife viewers, that benefit from wildlife but do not contribute to its conservation through traditional means, such as the purchase of licenses or hunting or fishing equipment. Although they do not currently pay their fair share of costs, the enthusiasm they have for wildlife identifies them as strong potential allies for wildlife conservation in the future.

Societal - Broad, irreversible societal shifts, such as urbanization, modernization, demographic changes, and disintegration of the nuclear family have negatively affected participation in hunting and angling and outdoor activities. These changes have made people interact with

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wildlife and wildlife conservation very differently than the era under which hunting and angling proliferated. In particular, the youth are separated from nature and outdoor activities for myriad reasons. Today, increasingly more people tend to connect to wildlife on emotional terms, where the rights of animals are similar to the right of humans. This worldview precludes participation in consumptive activities such as hunting and angling that support utilitarian values and attitudes toward wildlife.

Economic - Wildlife conservation has historically been funded by hunting and fishing licenses and excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment. The reduction of hunting and angling participation results in reduced funding for wildlife conservation. Simultaneously, industries that supply equipment to sustain these activities are not realizing potential revenues that could be captured were it not for the reduction in participation. There is a billion dollar industry related to hunting and fishing in Arizona. Hundreds of businesses and thousands of employees can be negatively impacted by declines in participation.

Fundamental Objectives and Associated Activities

To accomplish the HAHWG desired future condition and to overcome the challenges presented by the current conditions, the steering committee suggests adopting the following fundamental objectives to preserve, enhance the hunting and angling traditions:

- 1) Educate nonparticipants
 - a) Integrate the North American Model curriculum into the grade school curriculum
 - b) Utilize the hunting background of those involved in education
 - c) Develop a collaborative public relations program to highlight the role industry, sportsmen, and sportsmen's organizations play in conservation, and keep the majority of people on the positive side of neutral when it comes to hunting and angling.
- 2) Recruit nonparticipants/ increase involvement
 - a) Utilize a peer-to-peer recruiting process that Boy Scouts of America has used effectively to have youth engage other youth.
 - b) Work as an alliance to promote opportunities for people to participate in outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing.
 - c) How to get started program that includes camping, angling, archery and the shooting sports as an introduction to the idea that hunting and angling are fun activity
 - d) Define camp/activity standards
 - e) Mentor program
 - f) Market opportunities to under-represented demographics (specifically recruit a female representative to HAHWG Steering Committee)
- 3) Reduce barriers for new participants
 - a) Define barriers
 - b) Make it easier and more appealing for people to participate
 - c) Make information easier to understand and easier to access.
- 4) Reduce barriers for enhanced retention of existing wildlife recreationists
 - a) Create and promote opportunities for participation
 - b) Recruit for opportunities focusing on small game
 - c) Improve access to places to go hunting and fishing

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- d) Make information easier to understand and easier to access.
 - e) Specifically market information to lapsed hunters and anglers, winter visitors, and new Arizona residents
 - f) **New for 2012-13--Recruit for and provide predator hunting opportunities to enhance retention of hunters who are not drawn for big game**
- 5) Collaborate amongst stakeholders and leverage relationships / partnerships (1-12-12: Amended #5 to clarify and provide more details)
- a) **Improve event efficiency and attendance of participants through partnering, sharing resources, manpower and outreach efforts with interested partners.**
 - b) **Increase event interest to a wide-range of participants by offering multiple outdoor-related activities by partnering with multiple organizations with different areas of expertise.**
 - c) **Provide a support system and pathway to help new partners with conducting events that meet their objectives, capacity and interests.**
 - d) **Build a communication network through a multitude of platforms from meetings, direct one-on-one, social networking, central repository of activities, and other means in a way to keep connected, energized and building on successes.**
 - e) **Motivate sportsmen, industry and sportsmen's groups to educate legislature on conservation issues through participation in the legislative process.**
 - f) **New for 2012-13--Recruit females to HAHWG member organization boards/leadership to enhance HAHWG ability to understand how to communicate with and recruit females into hunting and angling**

Measures of Success

The Adoption Sequence (Adapted From NSSF Best Practices)

Literature has attempted to define the sequence of events that occurs when a person adopts a new activity. This is sometimes referred to as the adoption sequence. The HAHWG recognizes that making a non-hunter or angler into a hunter or angler does not occur at the same pace for every individual. But generally, each person follows a process similar to the one outlined below. The HAHWG will provide wildlife recreation programs, products and services that fulfill the stages included in the adoption sequence from awareness to proponent including programs focused on retention of existing hunters and anglers. In general to become a hunter or angler, a person must have more than one positive experience in order to become fully recruited and retained.

Stage 1: Awareness

Individuals recognize that hunting, or angling, or wildlife viewing is an acceptable recreational activity.

Stage 2: Interest

Individuals develop positive thoughts associated with the outdoor activity that relate to the potential for personal involvement in the activity.

Stage 3: Trial

Individuals decide to investigate further, acting on a desire to acquire more knowledge and/or skill in the activity.

Stage 4: Continuation with support

Individuals have enough trial experiences to view themselves as a hunter, shooter, angler, or wildlife watcher, but do not consider their level of knowledge adequate to support participation in the activity without support.

Stage 5: Continuation without support

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Individuals feel confident in their knowledge and skills and expect themselves to be competent to participate in the activity without support.

Stage 6: Proponent

Individuals strongly support the activity both socially and politically.

Stage 7: Temporary Cessation

Individuals temporarily lose their connection with the activity for a variety of reasons, but intend to participate in the future.

Possible Targets at which the HAHWG Can Aim

Following is a list of measures and targets for a successful recruitment and retention program.

- Maintain the percentage of Arizona residents who support regulated hunting at 76 percent.
- Increase the percentage of Arizona residents who recognize the Department's responsibility to manage wildlife from 41 percent to 61 percent by 2020.
- Increase general or combination resident hunting license sales by 20 percent by 2020 (34,000 licenses).
- Increase general or combination resident fishing license sales by 20 percent by 2020 (55,000 licenses).
- Increase Urban Fishing license sales by 200 percent by 2020 (135,000 licenses).
- Increase Urban Fishing participation by 200 percent by 2020 (180,000 individuals).
- Increase the percentage of residents who participate in recreational shooting to 25 percent by 2020 (currently 20 percent participation).
- Maintain existing and identify new partners within the HAHWG with sportsmen's groups, industry, and youth development organizations.
- Decrease the percentage of lapsed anglers by 25 percent.
- Decrease the percentage of lapsed hunters by 25 percent. (1 in 5 buys a license every year)
- Establish a recognizable hunting or angling recreational opportunity within 30 minutes of each resident in Arizona.
- Increase participation in small game hunting by 20% by 2020

The HAHWG will know that we have achieved success by seeing a fundamental, lasting reversal of trends in participation, and the general public of Arizona accepting of hunting and angling.

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For reference: The key areas of focus under “Fundamental Objectives and Associated Activities” for the first year of the committee are 1C, 2B, 2C, 2D, 3B, 3C, 4A, 4B, 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D and 5E as indicated by yellow highlighting.