

RBFF State R3 Program Grants Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife- Field Staff R3 Engagement Project

Overview

ODFW strives for recruitment, retention and reaction (R3) efforts to be an agency-wide endeavor. While we have made great progress towards enhancing/expanding our R3 outreach efforts and have invested heavily in R3 infrastructure capacity (Customer Relationship Management System, opportunity-focused website, Participation Scorecards, staffing, etc.), we had yet to achieve a true “agency-wide R3 effort”. To address this, we developed a training program, targeted to fisheries field staff, that focuses on four key themes with the goal of developing an “R3 mindedness” that will help shape their resource management decisions.

Partners

Internal agency partners included: Fish Division, I&E Division, West and East Regions, as well as several Watershed Districts.

Benefits

Decisions made by field staff have direct impact on both an angler’s access to fishing as well as the quality of the experience that they encounter on the water. Engaging field staff in an agency’s R3 efforts will result in several benefits:

- Resource management decisions that fully consider impacts to participation
- Development of mitigation measures when biological considerations necessitate actions that adversely impact participation
- An enhanced ability to pro-actively drive participation by leveraging resource and customer knowledge of field staff

Results

Six trainings were held throughout the state that were attended by 106 fishery biologists and other field staff directly responsible for making resource management decisions.

As suspected, field staff did not have a good base of knowledge about R3 and the agency’s R3 efforts. Many field staff have been contributing to various R3 efforts, but did not recognize that it was “R3”. Post training, over 75% of staff reported feeling that they had a good or very good understanding of R3.

The survey also showed that the trainings succeeded in fostering an understanding of the important role that anglers and hunters have, and continue to have, in conservation efforts. In fact, 99% of attendees feel that anglers and hunters are critical to our conservation mission.

Finally, 88% of attendees agreed that R3 was an important agency priority and 74% felt that they can contribute to R3 within their current positions.



Fisheries biologists spend most of their time working with fish, like these White Sturgeon, and their management actions have a direct impact on angler participation.



Support

“This project is an important continuation of our agency’s R3 efforts and moves us closer to a true ‘agency-wide’ R3 effort.” Curt Melcher– Director, ODFW



Lessons Learned & Future Plans

- We were correct in our feelings that field staff were not as engaged in R3 as we need for them to be.
- Field staff are making significant contributions to R3 even if they don’t know it.
- Many management decisions are made that negatively impact fishing participation that could have been either avoided or mitigated.
- The cultivation of an “R3-Mindedness” throughout the agency is achievable.
- Field staff can provide valuable insight into an agency’s R3 efforts, above and beyond considering R3 implications while managing our fisheries. Staff were highly engaged in our R3 conversations and provided a lot of thoughts on R3 tactics that the agency should consider. Leveraging our field staff will contribute significantly to our overall R3 efforts.



Native steelhead present significant management challenges and R3 impacts.



Methodology

We conducted 6 trainings that focused on:

The history of wildlife conservation in North America. To build an appreciation for the role that anglers and hunters have played in conservation, we cover the history of conservation in North America from the time that Lewis & Clark made their historic journey across the west in the early 1800’s through current times.

The North American and Oregon conservation funding model. To build the case for R3, we look at how anglers, hunters and recreational shooters have, and continue to contribute to the funding of conservation and how declining fishing and hunting participation threaten the agency’s ability to meet its conservation mission.

Basic tenets of R3 and ODFW R3 strategies and tactics. We’ve built the case for the agency’s investment in R3, and here build awareness of the agency’s current R3 efforts.

How field staff personnel contribute to R3 through their core positional duties. We look at examples of management actions that have positively and negatively impacted participation, and then work in small groups to discuss other examples and potential mitigation measures.



Put and take trout fishing is a major driver of Oregon’s fishing participation.



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