



# Welcoming Diverse Audiences to the Water

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT & WHERE TO START



RECREATIONAL  
BOATING & FISHING  
FOUNDATION

# Agenda

01 – Introduction

02 – State Agency Perspective

03 – New Angler Perspective



**What is diversity?**



## **DIVERSITY**

The practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds.

## **EQUITY**

The fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people.

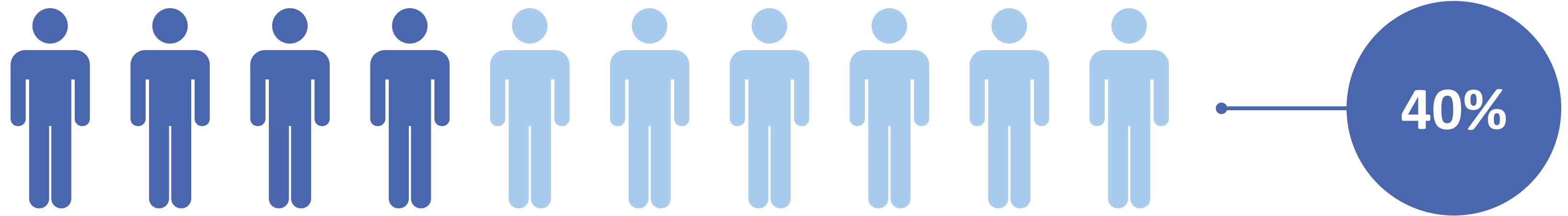
## **INCLUSION**

The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be – and feel – welcomed.

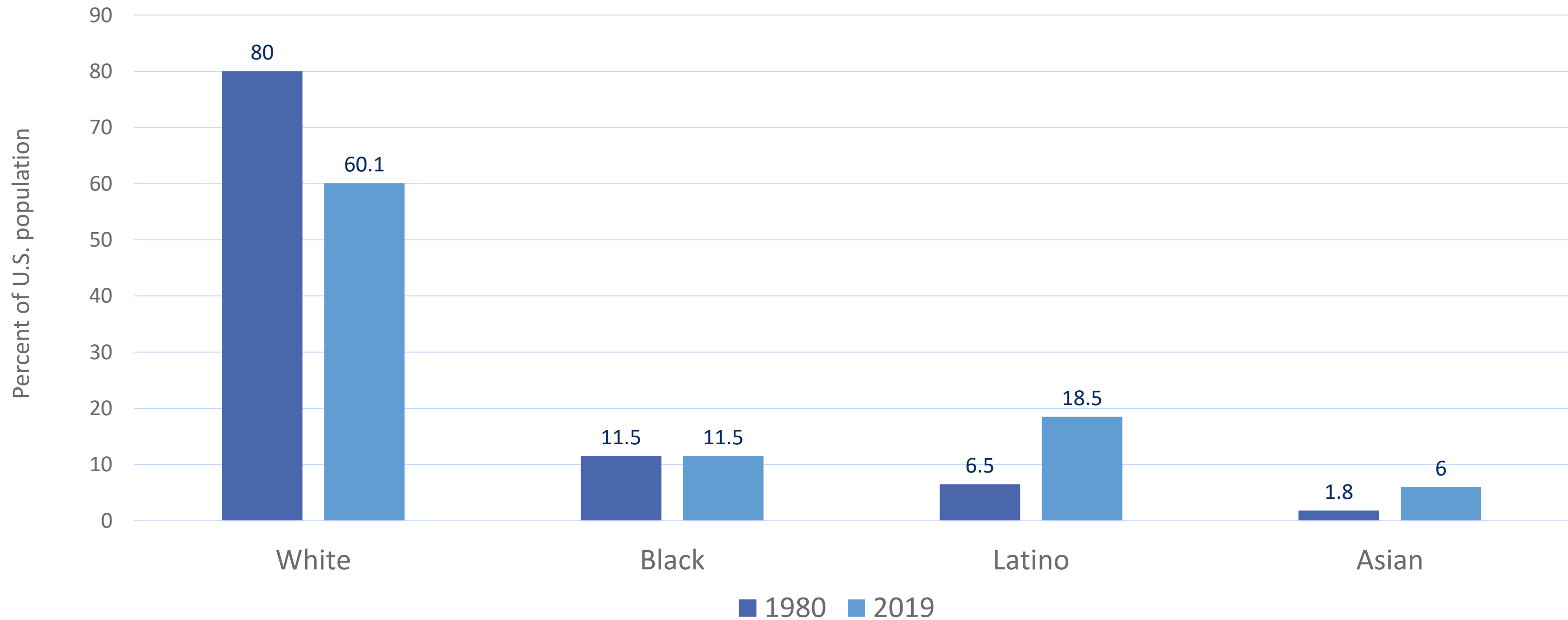


**Why is DEI important?**

# 4 in 10 Americans identify with a race or ethnic group other than white



# As a % of national population, whites shrinking & minorities growing





# Google “fishing” What do you see?



Recreational fishing closed statewide ...  
islandssounder.com



Want to learn to fish? Here are the ...  
twincities.com



techniques for bass fishing in summer ...  
deepersonar.com



How to Choose the Best Fishing Times



Virginia Beach Fishing ...  
visitvirginiabeach.com



Types of Fishing Rods: A Primer for ...  
leisurepro.com



Is fishing exercise ...  
express.co.uk



Key West Fishing Charters  
keywestangling.com



The best underwater fishing camera ...  
digitalcameraworld.com



NATIONAL GO FISHING DAY - June 18, 202...  
nationaltoday.com



outdoors: Hunting, fishing ...  
houstonchronicle.com





# Why companies don't have diversity initiatives



# David Buggs

## Texas Parks & Wildlife Department



### TPWD Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer

Manages the execution of TPWD's diversity and inclusion strategy



### Cultural Compliance & Management

Years of experience in relationship building, leadership development, mentoring, training and executive coaching



### Conservation, Fish & Wildlife Board Member

Currently the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Diversity and Inclusion Committee Co-chair



# Thank You



Stephanie Vatalaro  
SVP, Marketing & Communications  
svatalaro@rbff.org



LinkedIn:  
Recreational Boating  
& Fishing Foundation



Twitter: @RecBoatFish



#RBFFWorkshop



RECREATIONAL  
BOATING & FISHING  
FOUNDATION

## **Diversity and Inclusion:**

Why it's important to state Conservation  
Agencies and where to start

RBFF State Marketing Workshop

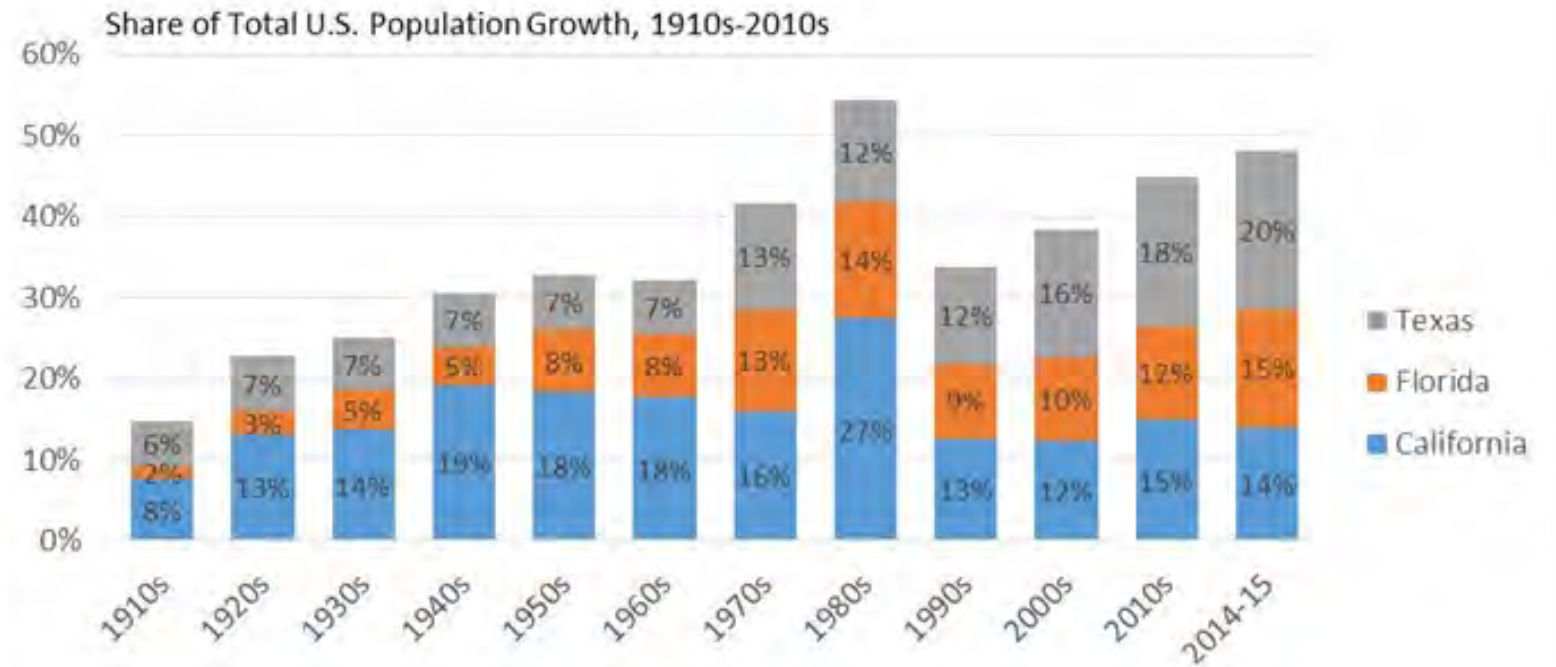
February 25, 2021



# U.S. population is growing and changing

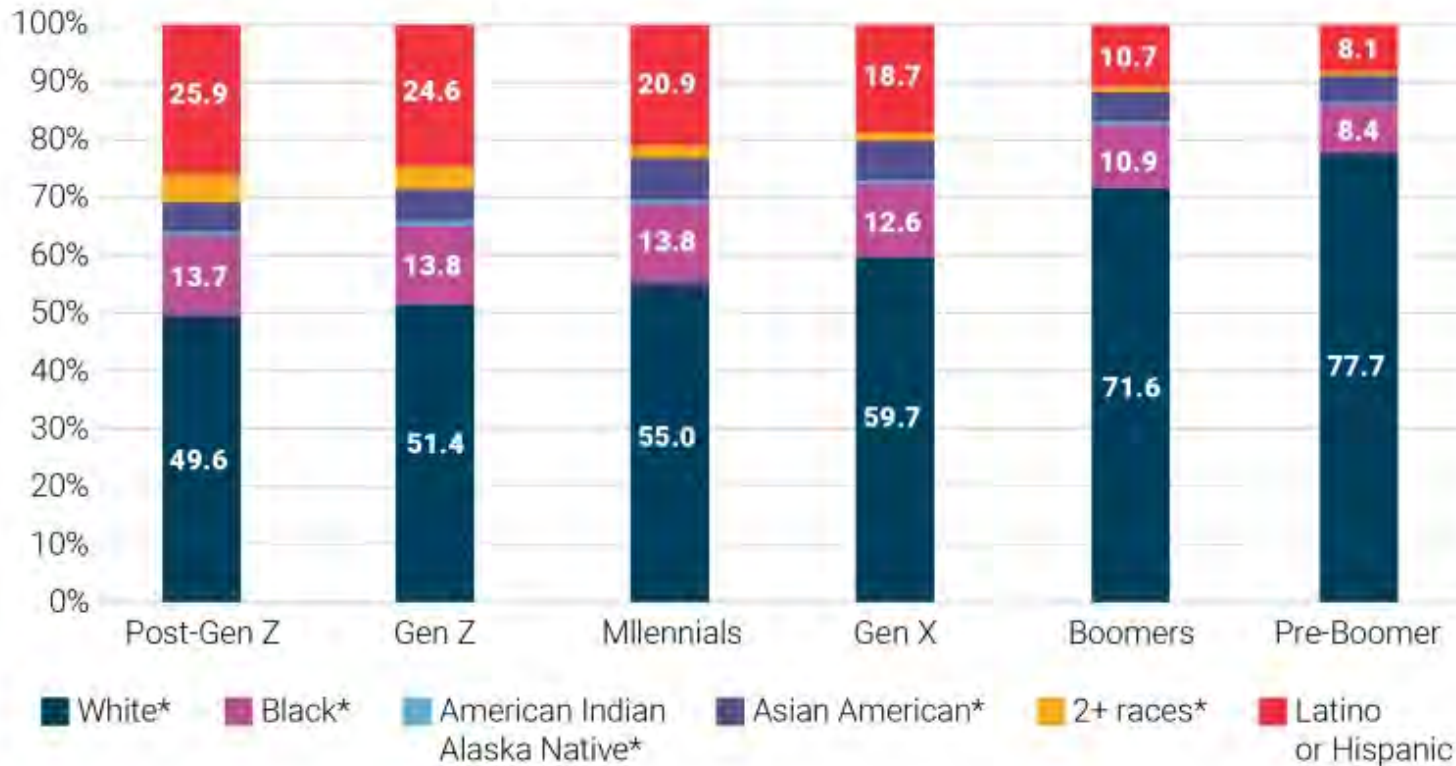
- By 2043, over 50% of the US population will be comprised of minorities.

Three States—California, Florida, and Texas—Account for Nearly Half of U.S. Population Growth



Source: PRB analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

**Figure 6. US racial profiles by generation**



Notes: Numbers pertain to July 1, 2019. Asian American includes Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders  
 \* Non Hispanic members of race

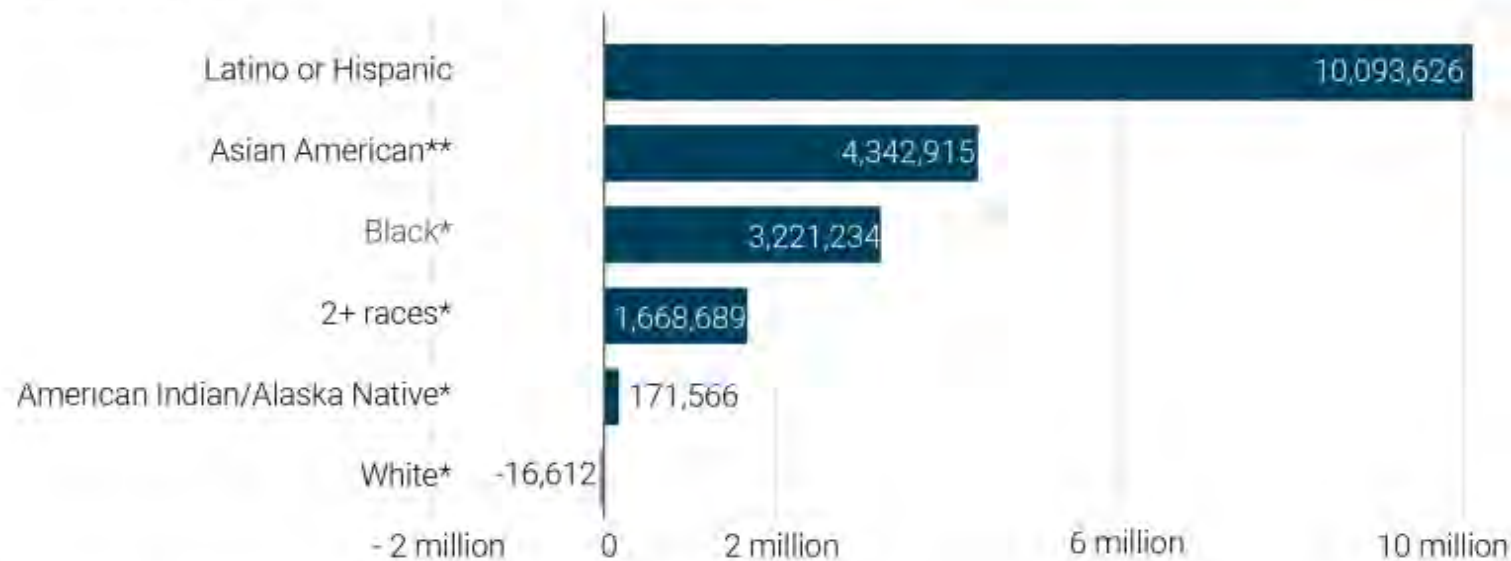
Source: William H. Frey analysis of Census Bureau

**D** Metropolitan Policy Program

**GREATER  
 RACIAL  
 DIVERSITY  
 AMONG  
 MILLENNIALS  
 AND GEN Z**

# DECLINE IN THE NATION'S WHITE POPULATION

**Figure 4. Race-ethnic contributions to change in US population**  
2010 to 2019



\* Members of race group who do not identify as Latino or Hispanic

\* Non-Latino or Hispanic Asians, Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders

Source: William H Frey analysis of Census population estimates released June 25, 2020

**B** Metropolitan Policy Program  
at BROOKINGS



# Why Should We Care?

- **Urbanization of America**
- **Availability of Natural Resource majors**
- **Added value of diverse perspectives in scientific discovery**
- **Overall health benefits and cost reduction for all citizens**
- **Expanding conservation challenge (not just a white guy's issue)**
- **Relevance/Value of fish and wildlife agencies to the changing demographic (Legislative)**





What else is  
at stake?



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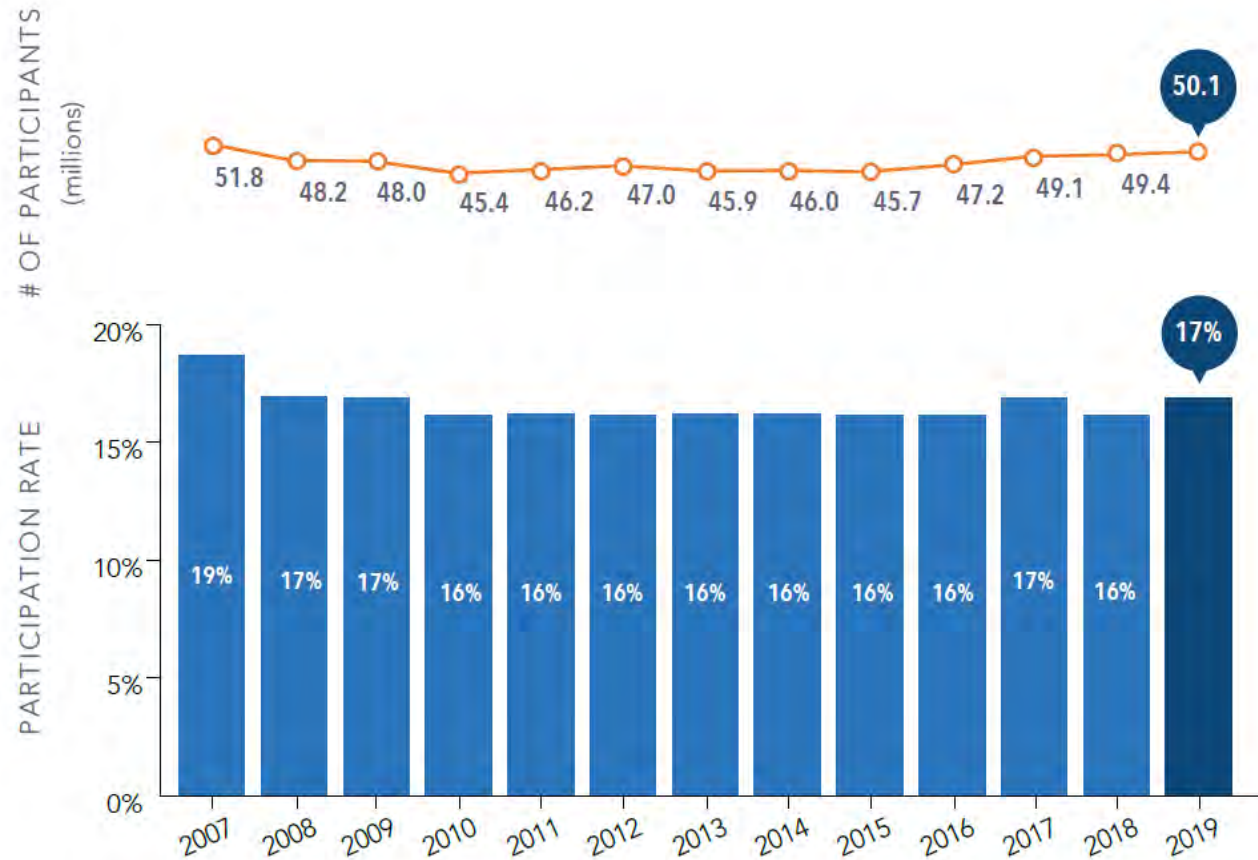


# Fish and Wildlife Conservation



- Fueled by participant dollars (\$76 billion).
- Sportfish Restoration, Wildlife Restoration, Federal Duck Stamps, state licenses and fees uphold the industry.
- “Typical” customer base declining for decades (1970 - 40 million hunters; today - 12.6 million).
- Fishing participation stagnant for decades.

# PARTICIPATION TRENDING

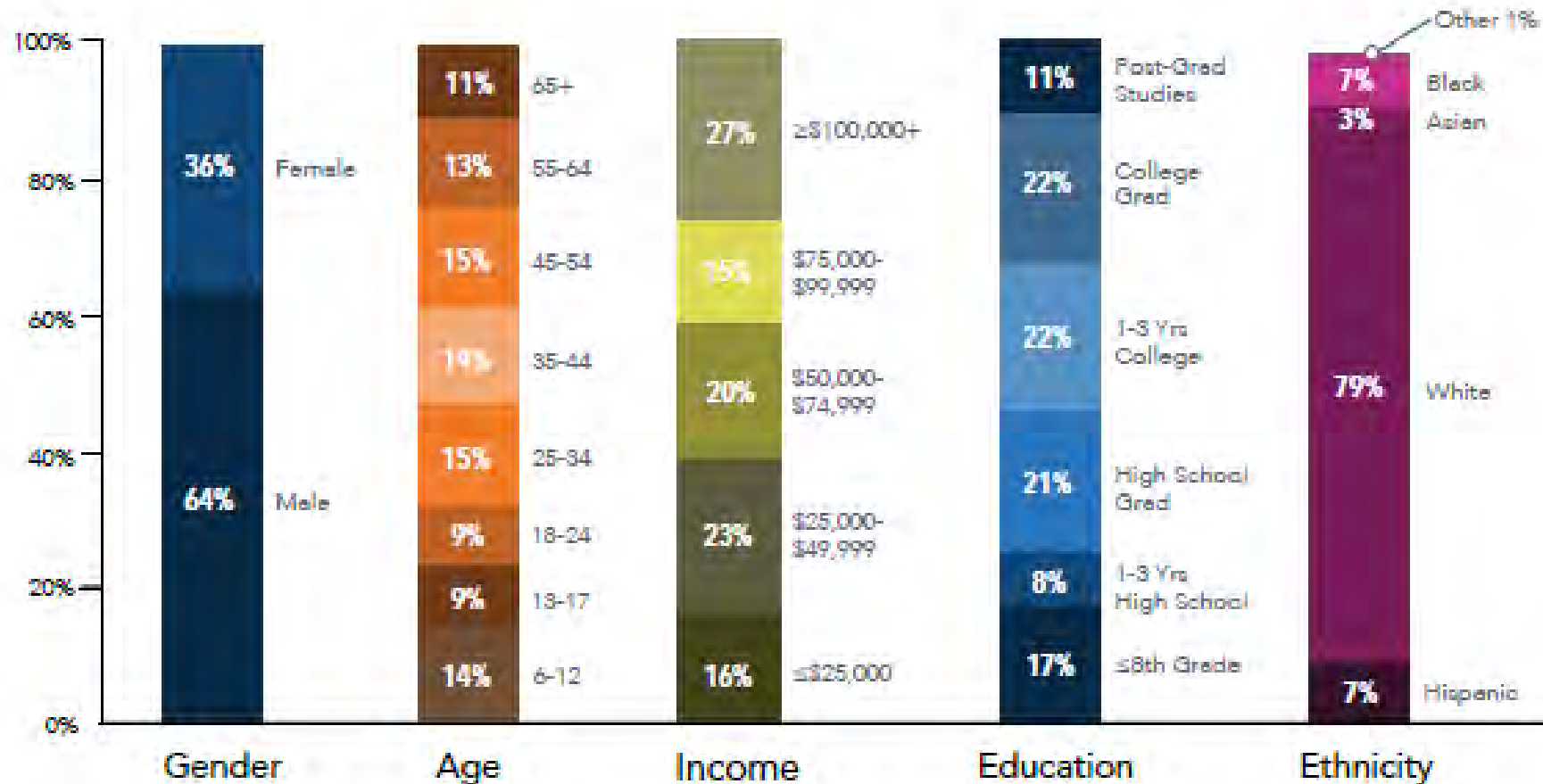


**# OF TOTAL OUTINGS**  
**880M**



**AVERAGE ANNUAL OUTINGS**  
**17.5**

# WHO PARTICIPATED?







How do natural resource agencies who support and are engaged in conservation activities, become relevant to this growing and changing population without losing current participants and supporters?



There is an intrinsic appreciation for nature and the outdoors in all of us.

















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Our country went through huge economic change in the 40's, through the 70's

Most of us who grew up in rural areas, with a focus on natural resource preservation, began to migrate to urban settings.

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For several reasons, such as;

- Shifts in the types of labor
- Lack of access to land
- Restrictions on ownership
- Economic challenges (some self-imposed and some by external forces),
- Personal safety
- media influences

Many ethnically diverse groups have not engaged in what the majority calls conservation.







# Why People Diversity in Conservation?

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# How does Diversity and Inclusion add value to Organizations that support Conservation?

- **Attract and retain new talent.**
- **Effective communication of conservation message.**
- **More innovative approaches to programs, services and research.**
- **Attract new customers: local, regional and international.**
- **Increase value of the organization to its constituents and legislators.**
- **Expands outdoor recreation for youth and adults.**
- **Expands cultural understanding internally and externally.**



# TPWD Engaging Diversity and Inclusion

“Diversity is part and parcel of what makes our mission, our work, and our service so unique and special to our state and to its citizens.”

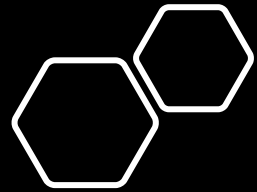
Carter Smith, Executive Director, Texas Parks and Wildlife  
Department



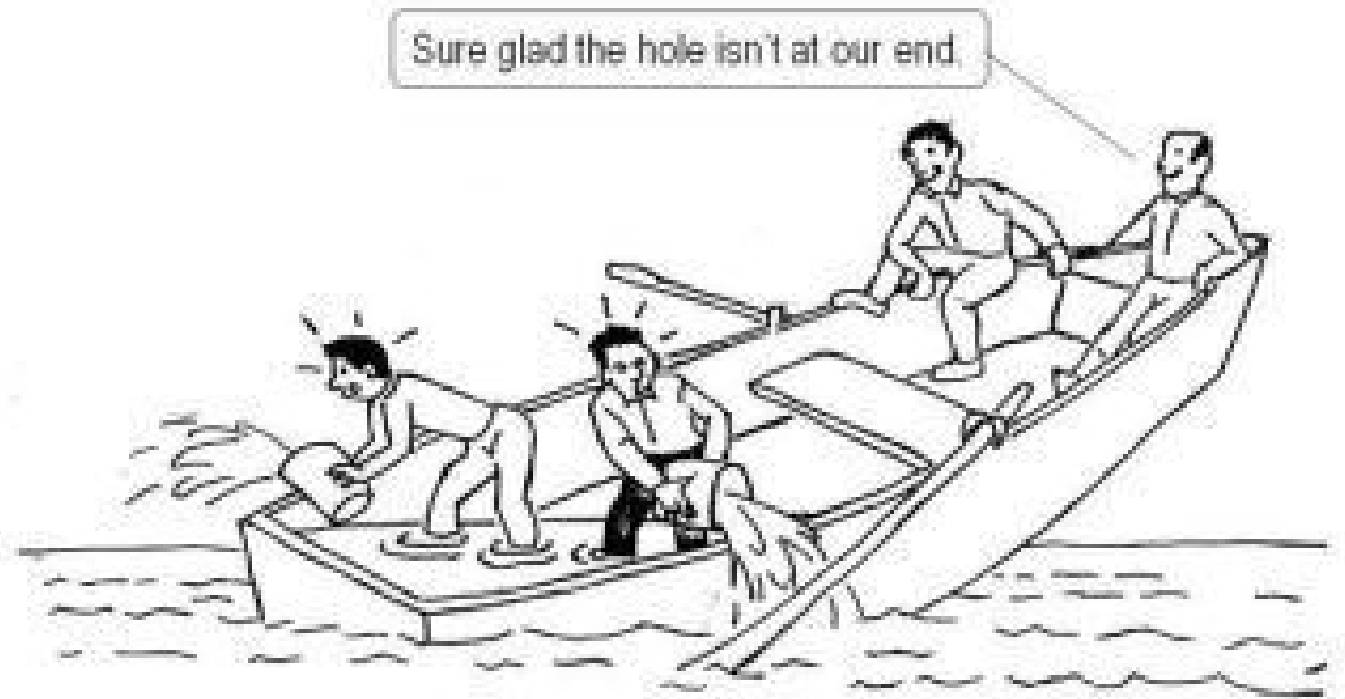


# How We can address the Diversity and Inclusion Challenge in Conservation





# Not a Zero-Sum Game Issue



Its difficult to solve a problem until you acknowledge that you are a part of the problem you are trying to solve!

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Intentional

Accommodate

Listen

Images

Find People  
with their own  
organization

Media

Careers

Programming

Peers

Volunteers

Media

23









# Silver Tsunami

Baby boom Scientists Nearing Retirement







## Inclusion in Careers

- Self-Examination
- Become comfortable being uncomfortable
- Evaluation of requirements (Don't lower, adapt)
- Be intentional
- Mentor/Internships
- Inclusive images





TPWD TEAM MEMBERS

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# Programming

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# Neighborhood Fishing Houston





# Neighborhood Fishing Dallas, Ft. Worth

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# Recruitment of Volunteer Instructors & Partners





# Texas Fishing and Boating Partnerships

- **Port Authority-Port of Houston-Maritime Education Program**
- **San Jacinto College-Maritime Training Program**
- **Texas Southern University-Maritime Logistics Programs**
- **Prairie View University-TPWD Program Events**
- **Houston Pilots Association-Maritime Education Program**
- **Texas Drownproofing Alliance-Drownproofing partner**
- **Safe Kids-Drownproofing Partner**
- **Sea Center of Texas-Tour and Youth Fishing Program**
- **Sea Star Base Galveston-TPWD Boater Education Courses**
- **Coastal Brigade-Youth Camp**
- **Coast Guard Auxiliary-Boat Crew/Instructor**
- **Galveston Bay Foundation-Monitors the Bay**





















## Non-Traditional University Partnership

- Increased Volunteers
- Increased Diversity
- Increased Conservation awareness
- Increase diverse Talent for agency
- Decrease cost of engagement






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Advertising our  
Boater Safety, Aquatic  
Ed. or Angler Ed. to  
maximize inclusion

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- Bi-lingual
- Local Newsletters
- Local businesses
- Hispanic Television
- Radio
- Worship Centers
- Urban Schools
- Boys and Girls Clubs



“If I don’t see me, It  
won’t be me.”











go  **FISHING TIPS FOR BEGINNERS**



**REGS & ETHICS**

Anyone age 17 and up needs a fishing license, unless fishing in a Texas State Park. Purchase online or at an outdoor retailer.

- Observe regulations – download the free Texas Outdoor Annual App for daily bag and fish length limits. [www.OutdoorAnnual.com](http://www.OutdoorAnnual.com)
- Respect other anglers and recreational water users. Keep noise to a minimum so you don't scare the fish away.



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**GEAR**

A closed-face spincast rod and reel with a bobber, lead-free sinker and a circle hook is the easiest for beginners to use.

Match the line and hook size to fish you want to catch. For freshwater, use 6-10 lb. test line; for saltwater, use 10-20 lb. test line.

**Remember to bring:**

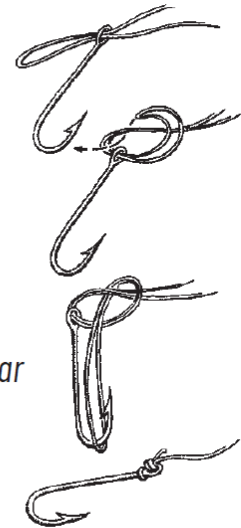
- Nail clipper or line clipper
- Hemostats or needle-nose pliers
- Net to help land your fish
- Measuring tape or fish ruler
- Ice chest to store the keepers
- First-Aid kit

**KNOTS**

Don't lose the big one! Attach hook with a Palomar or Improved Clinch knot.



*Improved Clinch*



*Palomar*



Be prepared to talk about Diversity in Outdoor activity





Engage Diversity  
focused Outdoor  
Organizations.

# Diverse Outdoor Organizations

- IFBBA
- African American Fishing and Hunting Directory
- Ebony Anglers
- Dallas Bass Hookers
- Outdoor Afro
- Latino Outdoors
- Outdoor Asians
- HECHO
- Fishing with Jim Austin Bass Clubs
- African American Hunting Association (AAHA)



outdoor asian



African American Hunting Association



HISPANICS ENJOYING CAMPING,  
HUNTING, AND THE OUTDOORS





CAROLYN FINNEY

# BLACK FACES, WHITE SPACES



Reimagining the  
Relationship of  
African Americans  
to the Great Outdoors

## Carolyn Finney (Black Face White places)

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- Outreach must go two ways. We need to teach others about us and learn about them. There has to be reciprocity for relationships to be sustainable.
- There is no universal story. My experience with nature is different than yours. It should not be assimilation.
- We have to examine our biases about what we do. Examine your risk and willingness to become uncomfortable.
- Do you want to be comfortable or better?

Not everything that is faced  
can be changed,  
but nothing can be changed  
until it is faced.

James Baldwin

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FIN

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# Erica Nelson

## REAL Consulting, Awkward Angler Podcast



### Diversity & Inclusion Consultant

Cofounded REAL (Reconcile, Evolve, Advance, Lead) Consulting based in ancestral Ute Territory, aka Crested Butte, CO



### Awkward Angler Podcast Host

An authentic series talking about fishing, social justice, and storytelling with folks within the outdoor industry



### Self-Taught Fly Angler

Passionate about sharing her learning process and journey



# WELCOMING DIVERSE AUDIENCES TO THE WATER: WHY IT'S IMPORTANT AND WHERE TO START

Erica Nelson (she/her),  
Awkward Angler Podcast Host  
& Diversity and Inclusion  
Consultant and Co-founder of  
REAL Consulting



# **AWKWARD .**

Learning how to [fly] fish isn't easy or accessible for all, and my goal is to increase awareness and education around this.

And it can get awkward...











# BARRIERS



## Adaptive

Require learning to identify the problem(s) and solution(s)

The onus is on all stakeholders to apply the solution(s)



## Technical

Have clear problem definition(s) and solution(s)

The onus is on authority figures and experts to apply the solution(s)

# ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES REQUIRE ADAPTIVE SOLUTIONS

- Adopt a new paradigm of thinking
- Create, maintain and invest in networks of accountability





# WHERE TO START

1. Reconciliation
2. Community Building
3. Advancing and Leading the Industry



# LEAD AUTHENTICALLY



- Leverage social media
  - Avoid performative or bandwagon activism
- Explore POC coalitions
- Focus on relationships and community over profit
- Meet people where they are as opposed to expecting them to come to you
- Embrace cultural differences



# THANK YOU!

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 [@AwkwardAngler](https://www.instagram.com/AwkwardAngler)

[www.consultREAL.org](http://www.consultREAL.org)

