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A 20-year Plan for Hunter/Angler Recruitment, Development and Retention in Nebraska

Mark Pinkerton

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Ron Stave

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Mick Jensen

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

James Ziebarth

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Jerrold Burke

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

Mark Pinkerton, Ron Stave, Mick Jensen, James Ziebarth, Jerrod Burke, Lynn Berggren, George Hall, and Kent Forney

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PREPARED FOR:

Rex Amack
Director



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Dr. Mark Pinkerton

DISTRICT V
Jerrold Burke

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Ron Stave

DISTRICT VI
Lynn Berggren

DISTRICT III
Mick Jensen

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"Conserving an Outdoor Heritage"



Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

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Tony Korth – Aquarium Director, Fisheries

Rich Walters – Biologist, Wildlife

Keith Koupal – Biologist, Fisheries

Wes Sheets – Retired Assistant Director,
NASP Coordinator

Action Plan Team Leaders

Goal 1: Recruitment of Youth Hunters – Objective 1

Kit Hams and Rich Walters

Goal 1: Recruitment of Youth Anglers – Objective 2

Andrea Cade

Goal 2: Recruitment of New Adult Hunters – Objective 1

Clayton Stalling and Laurel Badura

Goal 2: Recruitment of New Adult Anglers – Objective 2

Larry Pape

Goal 3: Recruitment of Lapsed Hunters – Objective 1

Chad Taylor and Tom Welstead

Goal 3: Recruitment of Lapsed Anglers – Objective 2

Rick Eades

Goal 4: Development and Retention of Existing
Hunters – Objective 1

Bob Meduna and Dustin Darveau

Goal 4: Development and Retention of Existing
Anglers – Objective 2

Daryl Bauer

Goal 5: Maintain Support of Hunting/Fishing by All
Citizenry of Nebraska – Objective 1

Jeanine Lackey and Emily Munter

Goal 5: Maintain Support of Hunting/Fishing by All
Citizenry of Nebraska – Objective 2

Don Gabelhouse

Parks Planning Team

Jim Swenson, Jeff Fields and Neal Bedlan

Tier I Rating Team

Jeff Rawlinson – Assistant Division Administrator,
Information and Education

Rick Eades – Fisheries Specialist, Fisheries

Alicia Hardin – Assistant Division Administrator, Wildlife

Andrea Cade – Outdoor Education Specialist, Fisheries

Jeanine Lackey – Outdoor Education Specialist,
Wildlife

Aaron Hershberger – Outdoor Education Specialist,
Information and Education

Jeff Fields – Ponca State Park Superintendent

Jim Swenson – Regional Manager, Parks

Tier II Rating Team

Kirk Nelson – Assistant Director

Sam Sidner – Assistant Director

Roger Kuhn – Assistant Director

Jim Douglas – Division Administrator, Wildlife

Don Gabelhouse – Division Administrator, Fisheries

Ted Blume – Division Administrator, Law Enforcement

Patrick Cole – Division Administrator, Budget and Fiscal

Doug Bauch – Division Administrator,
Information and Education

External Committee

Peter Berthelsen – Pheasants Forever
Dennis Conger – National Wild Turkey Federation
Brandon Houck – National Wild Turkey Federation
Ray and Betty Clayton – Nebraska Walleye Association
Pat Hudak – Cabela's
Ev Tarrell – Cabela's
Rick Brandt – Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Julie Bomgartner – Big Mac Fly Fishers
Bob Barker – UNL Cooperative Extension
Steve Westphal – Nebraska Chapter, Trout Unlimited

Lee Koch – Cornhusker Fly Fishers
Paul Floersch – Ducks Unlimited
Pat Baughman – Ducks Unlimited (Western Regional Director)
Steve Wilson – Ducks Unlimited (Eastern Regional Director)
Brad Mellema – Audobon's Rowe Sanctuary
Alan Kuzma – Whitetails Unlimited
Anne James – Nebraska Alliance for Conservation and Environmental Education, Wildcat Hills Nature Center

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, hunting and fishing are important components of Nebraska's rich outdoor heritage, and

WHEREAS, hunting and fishing promote strong family values and contribute to the state's economic prosperity, and

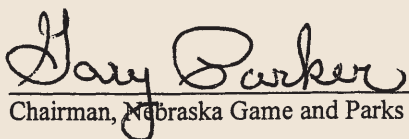
WHEREAS, hunters and anglers support and provide the primary source of funding for fish and wildlife conservation in Nebraska, and

WHEREAS, recruitment, development, and retention of educated, safe, and ethical hunters and anglers is crucial to the mission of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and

WHEREAS, hunter and angler numbers have declined in Nebraska over the last 20 years;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission directs agency staff to take an active role in hunter and angler recruitment, development, and retention efforts;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, the Board of Commissioners of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, at their January 25, 2007 meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska directs agency staff to develop a 20-year plan for hunter and angler recruitment, development, and retention that includes new and/or enhanced efforts to reverse current declining trends in hunter and angler participation and supports staff efforts to accomplish this task.



Chairman, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission



Director, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Introduction

Hunting and fishing are important parts of Nebraska's rich heritage. These time-honored outdoor pursuits are important to overall lifestyle, well-being and natural resources of the citizens of Nebraska. The North American Model for Conservation was based primarily on the activism from our nation's hunters and anglers. Their role helped develop and instill the seven basic premises of the model: Wildlife is to be held in public trust, there should be an elimination of market hunting, wildlife should be allocated by law, there should be hunting/angling opportunities for all citizens, wildlife should only be killed for legitimate reasons, wildlife should be considered an international resource, and science should be the basis for wildlife policy. This model of conservation has been holding strong for over 150 years in this country, and although other groups have taken an active interest in conservation, it has primarily been our hunters and anglers that have taken the greatest activist and financial role in continuance of this conservation effort (RMEF 2006). In 1937, the Pittman-Robertson Act and in 1950 the Dingell-Johnson Act established a secure and highly supportive source of funding for fish and wildlife management, greatly enhancing the North American Conservation Model's ability to sustain nationwide conservation efforts.

Along with hunters and anglers paying for conservation via permits and excise taxes, they contributed \$75 billion to the economy nationwide in 2006 (USFWS 2007). In Nebraska, Fishing and Hunting impacted the economy with nearly \$376 million in 2006 (USFWS 2007). Unfortunately, this tidal wave of funding and economic impact will not continue unless we maintain one of our most important stakeholders, our hunters and anglers.

Total numbers of hunters and anglers per state have been recorded by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for many years, in part, to help in the distribution of federal excise taxes between states. These numbers have fluctuated throughout the years, with record highs in the 1960s, and lows in the mid 1980s. In the past ten years (1997-2007) there has been a loss of 18,579 hunters and 36,272 anglers (USFWS Online Federal License Certification). Although the west-north central region has not seen as great a decline in hunters as other regions, it is still alarming the rate at which our hunters and anglers are leaving the sport.

In an effort to get a better idea of who Nebraska hunters and anglers were, data analysis of four years (2002-2005) of permit information was completed for both hunting and fishing (DJ Case 2007, Southwick 2006). Along with basic demographic information, "Tapestry" software was used to identify the Lifemodes and Segments of our hunters and anglers. Tapestry software uses a combination of geographic information software and Census Bureau Information to find common attributes of neighborhoods. This information can then be used to target certain segments more effectively, whether by a specific media type or having general understanding a neighbor-

hoods socio-demographics. The top lifemode group of Nebraska anglers and hunters was called "Factories and Farms" a group that is described as: "Small towns often in America's breadbasket states, lower income, married, employed in agriculture and manufacturing."

The top segment of Nebraska anglers and hunters is "Prairie Living" described as: "Midwest small farms mostly, average age 40, married, half have kids, typical income, pets, country music, hunts and fishes." The segment with the greatest opportunity to increase hunting and fishing participation is "Prairie Living" (described above), and "Green Acres" described as: "Married with kids, blue collar baby boomers with college education, above average income, suburban fringe, do-it-yourselfers, outdoor types." This information should help our agency to focus on the correct group of people in the most efficient manner.

The many reasons why people do or do not hunt and/or fish are referred to as motivations or constraints. Current literature cites that hunters are motivated to participate in the sport because they enjoyed that type of recreation, like the meat they harvested, enjoyed being in nature, have an investment in the sport, and like being with friends and family (Duda et al. 1995), and further, they are more likely to continue if they gain multiple satisfactions from hunting (Hendee 1974). Constraints to hunting can be seen at the individual and/or macro levels. Macro level constraints include distance from good hunting or fishing locations, public access for the type of hunting or fishing pursued and urbanization. At the individual level, constraints include lack of social support, having time to hunt or fish, poor health, and financial situations (Duda et al. 1995, Enck et al. 2000). More in depth information has been provided within the various goals in the "Issues" section of the plan.

Along with the more traditional reasons to hunt and fish, there is a worldwide movement that emphasizes the mental and physical benefits to being in the outdoors (Louw 2005). There has been a link to stress reduction after being in a natural environment (Wells and Evans 2003). Dr. Paul Quinnett preaches that the act of fishing is something that helps to instill and maintain hope and relieve stress, which leads to a lower incident of suicide by participants (Quinnett 1994). Still other studies promote unstructured "play" in the outdoors for children as a way to battle obesity, Attention Deficit Disorder, and depression (Taylor et al 2001). Studies also show that outdoor "play" adds to cognitive and intellectual abilities (Wells 2000). While outdoor activities such as soccer and golf are positive, activities such as hunting, fishing, and camping, promote stronger relationships to adult environment attitudes (Wells, N.M. and K.S. Lekies, 2006). These studies all point to the greater benefits of hunting and fishing. Although these studies may not directly affect the constraints cited for hunting and fishing, they may be used to educate and encourage participation as the best use of free time and/or time spent as a family.

Funnel Concept



This plan has maintained the continuum concept. In this concept, agency education, marketing and access programs and applicable efforts act as a funnel to take large amounts of citizens and move them toward active participation and support of hunting and fishing following the stages of participation (Decker and Purdy 1986). At the top of the funnel we have “awareness” and “interest” plans, which are large exposure programs such as expos, STEP OUTSIDE events, marketing, and to some extent, Project WILD. Some of these programs focus on exposure of many while programs, such as Project WILD, provide for large-scale introduction of youth to basic fish and wildlife

management concepts. Through the middle of the funnel are plans or programs designed to take beginners to the next level of involvement while creating social support with family, friends and society. These programs secure continuation with or without support. At the constricted end of the funnel are plans or programs designed for advanced education and skill development, where hunters and anglers not only diversify but also begin to give back to the North American Model through their own mentoring and introductory efforts. These programs provide continuation as a hunting/angling proponent.

Approach to Hunter/Angler Recruitment, Development and Retention

The Planning Committee reviewed several hundred pages of research conducted to better understand hunting/fishing participation by adults, youth, women, and minorities, reasons for lapsing, and public opinion on hunting and fishing. In 2006, the Fisheries Division completed a data-mining project that provided important information about anglers, license buyers, etc. In 2007, the Wildlife Division completed a similar project, gaining valuable information on hunters in Nebraska. Both data sets were used in developing the goals and objectives of this plan.

This plan lends emphasis to those actions that will or can impact a broad range of outdoor enthusiasts and is designed to develop new users as well as maintain existing. This plan also suggests actions that allow for added value impacts of using agency venues, personnel and resources where appropriate.

The plan represents a base of 38 ideas, displayed as action plans, that will be further developed with partners and appropriate personnel as they are integrated into the operational portion of the Plan. Developed as a fluid document, the Planning Team expects many action plans to change as they are further developed, more input is received and evaluations completed.

In developing this plan, five main goals stood out as the overriding categories that best reflect the recruitment, development and retention direction of this agency:

GOAL I. Recruitment of Youth Hunters/Anglers

Youth remain a constant focus amongst state fish and wildlife agencies for good reason. Most long-term participants began hunting and fishing before the age of 20 (Responsive Management, 2003). The key to active participation in and commitment to hunting and fishing by future generations is fostering participation among today's youth (Responsive Management, 2003).

GOAL II. Recruitment of New Adult Hunters/Anglers

Possible adult participants represent an important market for hunting and fishing. Nearly half of all active hunters are 35 – 55 years of age (Families Afield, 2006). This represents a stage in life where leisure time is tight but income is relatively high. Another reason this group is important is because they likely have youth that may also benefit from their parental involvement in hunting and fishing. Adults, ages 18 – 55, represent a group that is highly capable of participating in hunting and fishing activities.

GOAL III. Recruitment of Lapsed Anglers/Hunters

Lapsed participants are those who have purchased licenses or permits in the past but no longer are participating. A major reason for desertion by hunters/anglers is the breakdown in the social support. As hunters lose hunting buddies, they themselves are less likely to continue (Responsive Management, 2003). This also ranks as one of the top five reasons anglers become disinterested in fishing. Because these groups have already made a commitment at some point in life to participate, they are the most likely group to participate in the future.

GOAL IV. Development and Retention of Existing Hunters/Anglers

Existing hunter and anglers represent an important market. They are already interested in some aspect of the sport and are likely to continue. Research has suggested that those hunters and anglers that have diversified their pursuits and find multiple enjoyments from their activities are the most likely to continue. Helping participants diversify their pursuits also benefits the Commission from multiple permit sales, longer participation rates and their ability to bring other participants on board.

GOAL V. Maintain Support of Hunting and Fishing by All Citizenry in Nebraska

Most Americans support legal hunting and fishing. While over 75 percent of adults approve of hunting and 95 percent approve of fishing, only 58 percent of youth approve of hunting and 85 percent approve of fishing. It also is interesting that 42 percent of youth whose parents will not let them hunt said it was because hunting was not safe. If hunting and fishing are to increase in popularity, public support is critical. Education and marketing programs that portray the hunter and angler as the law abiding citizens they are have not been effective. One study by Responsive Management in 2003 suggested the majority of our public still feels that most hunters knowingly violate hunting laws and over one third of Americans feel that "a lot" of anglers consciously violate fishing laws. Further efforts are needed to not only make the public understand hunting and fishing but to represent the hunter and angler as positive influences on the environment.

This Plan is designed for the sole purpose of implementing strategies that ultimately will help the Commission reach the above goals. Each strategy has from one to many action plans that can be implemented (Figure 1). As the Planning Committee has spent many hours developing and refining the goals and objectives, it became clear that redundancy of action items was necessary to these objectives. These include:

RESEARCH — MOTIVATION/CONSTRAINTS

For each objective, because we are actually trying to change or impact human behavior, it is important to understand the motivations behind such behavior. For some of these questions, the answers can be found in national research, if we make the assumption that motivations do not significantly vary from state to state. Why do hunters/anglers quit their sport? What makes some people a multiple permit buyer and others go through life only enjoying one facet of the sport? Market research is an important first strategy in reaching every goal.

BARRIERS

Each objective is stifled by its own inherent barriers that inhibit change in human behavior. The Commission easily can address some of these barriers, such as age restrictions. Barriers such as the lack of time and social support or work and family obligations, etc., will require a more creative approach and some may be impossible to adequately address. The focus here is to develop unique

and realistic strategies to address barriers where possible, removing obvious roadblocks to participation.

ACCESS/OPPORTUNITIES

Critical to many components of this plan is the ability of hunters and anglers to conveniently obtain access to quality hunting and fishing locations. Having sufficient opportunities also can create a more diverse and loyal hunter/angler. This can include permit plans, fees, land, waters, adequate game numbers, etc., but greater opportunities can result in multiple permit sales and more convenient involvement by all. You cannot sell what you do not have and increasing hunter/angler numbers without addressing access opportunities and resource availability likely could compound other problems.

EDUCATION

The ability of education to help change human behavior is well documented. Each objective has an education strategy but with a different action plan component. How we reach adults, youth, females, lapsed hunters, etc., can vary greatly and our actions need to reflect that. Education programs can be used to create a more loyal hunter/angler, by instilling knowledge on opportunities, skills, biology, ethics, and much more. Education also can be used as a basic recruitment tool as is currently being done. It is important to note that research suggests education must be followed by methods to increase social support for new participants to have maximum efficacy.

MARKETING

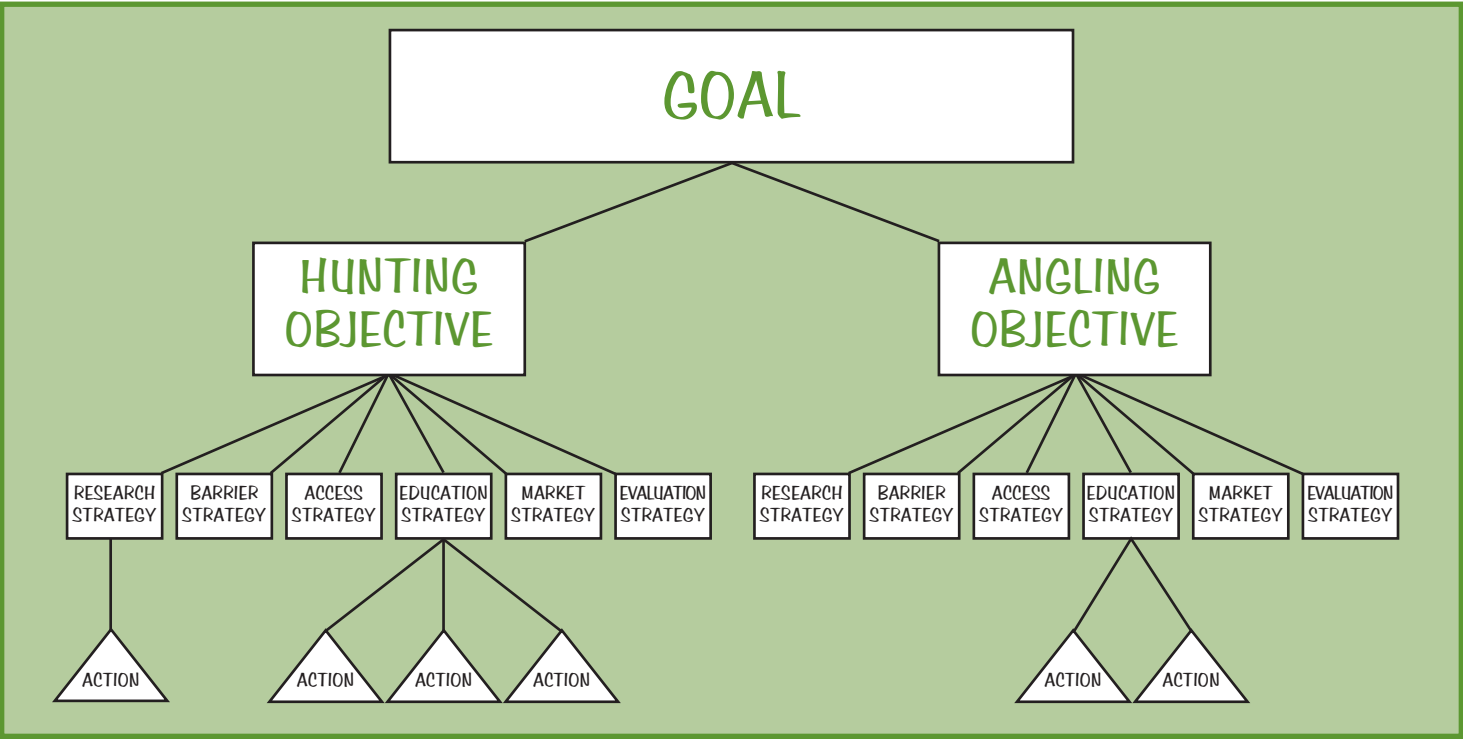
Perhaps no other strategy allows us to reach the masses like a coordinated and proven marketing plan. Such is being developed within the agency and should address the goals and objectives of this plan. The marketing plan and RDR Plan should work together where they share common goals. As with education, marketing is a powerful tool that can be used to change human behavior. Because of this, marketing is addressed under each objective.

EVALUATION

Every action derived from this plan should be evaluated on a timely basis. We simply must derive the greatest return possible on our efforts and effective evaluation efforts will help determine the success of each action plan over a specific period of time.



FIGURE 1. Example of Plan Hierarchy.



Year 1: Recruitment, Development, Retention Plan — Years 1-5 Schedule

PLAN #	TITLE/DESCRIPTION	RDR \$	MARKETING \$	ACCESS \$	GRANTS*
Year 1	July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009				
1	Develop Statewide Family Hunting/Fishing Camps (Development of Program with Staff and Partners)				
2	Group/Personal Development Through Fishing (Development of Program with Staff and Partners)				
3	Outdoor U Educ/Parks Diploma (Development of Program with Staff and Partners)				
5	After School Program (Development of Program with Staff and Partners)				
6	Angler Development and Retention (Development of Program with Staff and Partners)				
7	Open Fields and Public Angling Access (Pass Legislation, Work with USDA on Agreement)				
8	Youth Motivation Survey (Develop Survey with Partners)				
9	Marketing Campaign (Direct Marketing to Lapsed Hunters/Anglers)		\$25,000	\$25,000	\$85,000**
10	NGPC Employees (Develop Program)				
12	STEP OUTSIDE (Develop Messages and Nebraska Experience Promotion)		\$10,000		
		\$0	\$35,000		\$85,000

* “?” indicate potential grant opportunities.

** \$60,000 Hunting Heritage Partnership Grant pending approval (as of Feb. 29, 2008)



Year 2: Recruitment, Development, Retention Plan — Years 1-5 Schedule

PLAN #	TITLE/DESCRIPTION	RDR \$	MARKETING \$	ACCESS \$	GRANTS*
Year 2	July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010				
1	Develop Statewide Family Hunting/Fishing Camps (Hold 1-2 Pilot Camps)	\$60,000			?
2	Group/Personal Development Through Fishing (Marketing and Development of Fishing Clubs)	\$10,000	\$25,000		
3	Outdoor U Educ/Parks Diploma (Hold 1-2 Sessions/Develop Incentives/ Web Access)	\$30,000			?
4	Urban Fisheries Program (Add 50 Kits)	\$15,000			
5	After School Program (Sponsor 1-2 Pilot Schools)	\$35,000			?
6	Angler Development and Retention (Production of Materials)	\$23,000			
7	Open Fields and Public Angling Access (Sign Up Acres)			\$500,000	\$500,000
8	Purchasing Rate Survey	\$20,000			
9	Marketing Campaign (More Direct Marketing to Lapsed Hunters/Anglers)		\$25,000		
10	NGPC Employees (Encourage Hunting/Fishing Within NGPC)	\$2,000			
11	Statewide Education Staff (One New FTE)	\$55,000			
12	STEP OUTSIDE (Continue National Campaign In Nebraska)		\$50,000		
		\$250,000	\$100,000	\$500,000	\$500,000

* “?” indicate potential grant opportunities.



Year 3: Recruitment, Development, Retention Plan — Years 1-5 Schedule

PLAN #	TITLE/DESCRIPTION	RDR \$	MARKETING \$	ACCESS \$	GRANTS*
Year 3	July 1, 2010-June 30, 2011				
1	Develop Statewide Family Hunting/Fishing Camps (Add New Camps)	\$37,000			
2	Group/Personal Development Through Fishing (More Marketing and Development of Fishing Clubs)	\$10,000	\$25,000		
3	Outdoor U Educ/Parks Diploma (Continue Adding Outdoor U Programs)	\$28,000			
4	Urban Fisheries Program (Add 50 Kits)	\$15,000			
5	After School Program (Sponsor 1-2 Pilot Schools)	\$28,000			
6	Angler Development and Retention (Production of Materials)	\$25,000			
7	Open Fields and Public Angling Access (Sign Up Acres)			\$500,000	\$500,000
8	Purchasing Rate Survey	\$20,000			
9	Marketing Campaign (More Direct Marketing to Lapsed Hunters/Anglers)		\$25,000		?
10	NGPC Employees (Encourage Hunting/Fishing Within NGPC)	\$2,000			
11	Statewide Education Staff (Continue FTE From Year 2)	\$55,000			
12	STEP OUTSIDE (Continue National Campaign In Nebraska)		\$50,000		
13	Track Youth Hunt Participation (Use NASIS)	\$2,000			
14	Youth and Adult Web Ed (Develop Website)	\$30,000			?
		\$252,000	\$100,000	\$500,000	\$500,000

* "?" indicate potential grant opportunities.



Years 4-5: Recruitment, Development, Retention Plan — Years 1-5 Schedule

PLAN #	TITLE/DESCRIPTION	RDR \$	MARKETING \$	ACCESS \$	GRANTS*
Year 3	July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012				
1	Statewide Family Hunting/Fishing Camps (Add 1 New Camp Per Year)	\$55,000			
2	Group/Personal Development Through Fishing (Marketing and More Fishing Clubs)	\$15,000	\$25,000		
3	Outdoor U Educ/Parks Diploma (Continue Adding Outdoor U Programs)	\$30,000			
4	Urban Fisheries Program (Add 75 Kits Per Year)	\$20,000			
5	After School Program (Add 1 New School Per Year)	\$40,000			
6	Angler Development and Retention (Continue Program)	\$25,000			
7	Open Fields and Public Angling Access (Continue to Sign Up Acres)			\$500,000	\$500,000
8	Marketing Campaign (Continue Direct Marketing)		\$25,000		?
9	Statewide Education Staff (Continue FTE From Years 2 and 3)	\$55,000			
10	NGPC Employees (Encourage Hunting/Fishing Within NGPC)	\$2,000			
12	STEP OUTSIDE (Continue National Campaign In Nebraska)		\$50,000		
13	Track Youth Hunt Participation (Use NASIS)	\$2,000			
14	Youth and Adult Web Ed (Develop Website)	\$10,000			
		\$254,000	\$100,000	\$500,000	\$500,000

* “?” indicate potential grant opportunities.

Years 4-5 Alternatives: Recruitment, Development, Retention Plan — Years 1-5 Schedule

PLAN #	TITLE/DESCRIPTION	RDR \$	MARKETING \$	ACCESS \$	GRANTS*
Years 4-5	Alternatives				
15	Volunteer Youth Fishing Instructor Recruitment and Retention (Train the Trainers)	\$2,000			
16	NGPC Outreach Program (Newsletter and Bring Back TV Show)	\$100,000			
17	Women/Youth Program (Expand BOW)	\$50,000			?
18	Skills Camps (Train Partners to Hold More Camps)	\$40,000			
19	Conservation Partners (Work with Partners on More Mentored Hunts)	\$50,000			
20	Adult Beginner Fishing Seminars	\$60,000			
21	Beginning Angler Incentive Program	\$50,000			

* “?” indicate potential grant opportunities.

A 20-year Plan for Hunter/Angler Recruitment, Development and Retention in Nebraska

PROBLEM

Since 1997, declining participation rates for hunters and anglers threaten what were once family traditions, and jeopardize the future of fish and wildlife conservation by reducing social, political, biological and financial support.

MISSION

Create stakeholders that:

- Understand and actively participate in stewardship and support of natural resources;
- Understand, accept and/or lawfully participate in hunting and/or fishing; and
- Understand the need for and actively support funding for fish and wildlife conservation —

By removing barriers to participation, ensuring abundant resources, and reaching citizens through marketing and education.

GOAL I. Recruitment of Youth Hunters/Anglers

ISSUE: Youth motivations for hunting and fishing are well documented. Efforts to develop youth participation in hunting and fishing are very important because 67 percent of all first-time hunters and 80 percent of all first-time anglers are 20 or younger with the remaining 33 percent of first time hunters that are over the age of 20 more concentrated in urban areas and the earlier a person starts hunting the less likely they are to drop out at a later date (USFWS, 2007) (Responsive Management, 2003). One national study suggested that 85 percent of youth hunt to have fun and 44 percent hunt for conservation purposes (Responsive Management, 2003). This is important when reviewing regulations that may be perceived as barriers to youth. Youth hunting/fishing programs should focus less on management's traditional ideals and more on the aspect of having success, fun and social interaction. Perhaps the most important factor in gaining and sustaining new youth hunter/angler participants is developing a framework of social support for their initial and continued participation (Wentz and Seng, 2000). Because studies suggest that only 30-40 percent of teenagers interested in hunting actually are

trying it, successful RDR strategies must focus on providing more opportunities for youth to enjoy hunting and fishing while creating greater social support for their continued involvement (Wentz and Seng, 2000).

Objective I. Increase hunter replacement ratio from .60 to 1.0 (based on data from National Surveys of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation)

ACTION PLANS:

1, 3, 5, 7-8, 11-14, 16-18, 20, 24, 27-32, 36, 38

Objective II. Increase youth angler participation rates from 19 percent to 50 percent (based on data from 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation)

ACTION PLANS:

2, 4, 6-7, 15, 19, 21, 23, 25, 33





GOAL II. Recruitment of New Adult Hunters/Anglers

ISSUE: The number of new adult hunters and anglers continues to decline as the average age for both continues to increase. Adult women are one of the fastest growing segments of the hunting and fishing sports and are demanding more opportunities each year. When females participate, children also are more likely to be involved (2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation). Unfortunately, women also represent a less avid hunter/angler (Duda, 2001). It is also interesting to note that the majority of women surveyed hunt for meat (47 percent) yet the No. 1 reason for dissatisfaction is “having no one to go with,” suggesting that social support is very important for females (Duda, 2001). Because nearly 33 percent of all new hunters and 20 percent of all new anglers are over the age of 20, efforts should focus on further recruiting and developing new adults to these activities, especially those with families (Responsive Management, 2003). Participants that start as adults are less dedicated to the sport compared to participants that start at younger ages (USFWS, 2007). Plans must focus on working with current as well as new institutional partnerships such as churches, clubs, etc. to involve adults and families in these activities. Because decline in adult hunting/angling was significantly less for those who have hunting and angling children, it would seem imperative to utilize youth programs as a tool to engage adults as well. This has been proven in other activities such as 4H. This is also consistent with other findings suggesting that hunting and angling is surrounded by the family and that attempts to increase angling participation should focus on the family (Responsive Management, 2005).

Objective I. Increase number of adult hunters from 151,500 to 161,500

ACTION PLANS:

1, 3, 7, 10-12, 14, 16, 20, 22, 24, 26-32, 35-38

Objective II. Increase number of new adult anglers annually from 30,000 to 40,000

ACTION PLANS:

4, 6-7, 15, 19, 21, 23, 25, 33

GOAL III. Recruitment of Lapsed Anglers/Hunters

ISSUE: Hunter/angler retention rates are also dropping nationwide. Retention rate for hunters from 1991 – 2005 dropped from 64 percent to 55 percent amongst those age 20 – 28 and remained steady from age 35 and up (retention rate for younger hunters has declined amongst those age 14 to 20 as well) (USFWS, 2007). Hunter/angler drop out rates are greatest in urban areas. It is interesting to note that between 1996 – 2001, male hunters with hunting children declined by 6 percent and male hunters with nonhunting children declined by 37 percent. Getting kids involved appears to be a key factor in hunter/angler retention rates of adults (USFWS, 2007).

Lapsed hunters/anglers are viewed by permit purchase rate. Those hunters/anglers that purchase a license or permit one to two years out of four are considered low purchasing rate hunters/anglers. Those that purchase a license or permit three or four out of four years are considered high purchasing rate hunters/anglers. Low purchasing rate would equal a less loyal and more apt to lapse hunter/angler vs. a high purchasing rate hunter/angler. According to the latest data mining effort, 30 percent of Nebraska hunters purchase a license three or four years out of four (DJ Case 2007).

Hunters and anglers move through the various stages of participation at different rates. Because they are in a mix of participation stages, they decrease participation for many reasons. Of these, the top seem to be: amount of free time, work and family obligations (not enough time) and a loss of interest, with only 22 percent suggesting access is a key reason (Responsive Management, 1995). These represent very vague reasons and more research is needed to determine the actual reasons hunters and anglers lapse.

Hunter/angler participation as discussed by Wentz and Seng, 2000, focused on each stage and strategies best used to continue participation at that stage. Participants that lapse are generally those that would continue with support or lapse after permanent cessation. For those participants in the “continuation with support” stage, the following agency strategies apply:

- Provide quality opportunities for participation (mentor hunts, etc.)
- Develop advanced, voluntary, species specific hunter education
- Develop opportunities for networking with other hunters/shooters (social support)
- Develop and provide refresher activities prior to seasons to engage last year’s license buyers
- Develop social support structures for hunter education graduates
- Provide hunters/shooters opportunities to be mentors

Angling dissatisfaction issues also center around “not enough time,” yet a key issue also seems to be water quality and competing aquatic recreational uses outside of fishing (Responsive Management, 1995). This same study also notes the highest satisfactions surrounding angling are “relaxation” and “being with family” with “catching fish” ranking lower. Key efforts for angling need to center around the entire family and familial benefits of angling.

Objective I. Increase the high purchasing rate for hunters from 30 percent to 60 percent

ACTION PLANS:

1, 3, 7, 9, 10-12, 14, 16, 20, 22, 24, 26-32, 35-36, 38

Objective II. Reduce percentage of lapsed anglers (those anglers that have ceased to purchase a fishing permit in last four years) from 41 percent to 20 percent

ACTION PLANS:

2, 6-7, 15, 23, 33

GOAL IV. Development and Retention of Existing Hunters/Anglers

ISSUE: Current Tapestry data suggests that 72 percent of resident and 8 percent of nonresident hunters

purchase multiple types of permits (DJ Case 2006). The Hunter/Angler Recruitment and Retention Social Support Model suggests that participants need further development of skills, opportunities, understanding, etc., before they become long-term participants (Decker, D.J. and K.G. Purdy 1986). Many opportunities exist for multiple permit/license sales among current hunters/anglers as their understanding of other hunting/fishing related opportunities increases.

As with angling, hunting continues to be strongly centered around the family but to a lesser extent. As hunters progress to a more veteran stage, they have found multiple satisfactions from the sport, suggesting these satisfactions are key to long term participation (Responsive Management, 1995). This study also suggests that state agencies need to support this desire of multiple satisfactions through enhanced offerings including new seasons that take advantage of various types of equipment use and highlighting the nature, health and the camaraderie aspects of hunting and fishing.

Tapestry data also suggests it may be easier to develop certain hunters/anglers into multiple permit buyers than others. For example, turkey hunters are more likely to hunt deer than waterfowl hunters. This creates a natural group to focus educational and marketing efforts as Nebraska boasts a high deer hunting population with turkey hunting opportunities at an all time high.

Objective I. Increase multiple permit sales per hunter from 46 percent to 65 percent

ACTION PLANS:

1, 3, 7, 10-12, 14, 16, 20, 22, 24, 26-32, 34-36, 38

Objective II. Increase the percentage of avid (purchased license at least three of last four years) anglers from 18.3 percent to 33.3 percent

ACTION PLANS:

4, 6-7, 15, 19, 21, 23, 25, 33



GOAL V. Maintain Support of Hunting and Fishing by All Citizenry in Nebraska

ISSUE: Public support is important to the future of hunting and fishing in Nebraska. Studies show that the majority strongly supports legal hunting (75 percent) and fishing (95 percent) (Responsive Management, 2003). Public support must remain high for these activities to grow. Unfortunately, this same study also suggests that support for hunting is lowest in our nation's young people. Also concerning is that 62 percent of Americans agree that hunters violate game laws and 40 percent agree that anglers violate game laws. In this study, 89 percent of hunters and 93 percent of non hunters agree that new hunters should be required to take Hunter Education (Responsive Management, 2003), suggesting this program aids public support greatly.

A similar study conducted by Responsive Management in 2002 of Washington hunters found that the majority approve of legal hunting with higher approval rates (92 percent) for meat hunting much lower approval rates (53 percent) for releasing of nonnative species to support hunting. For adults, 63 percent felt that hunting was safe

and 58 percent felt that additional hunter training would improve their opinion. It is concerning that a 2003 National study of youth by Responsive Management suggested that while 58 percent approved of legal hunting, 50 percent disagree that hunting is safe and 42 percent of youth whose parents will not let them hunt said it was because hunting was not safe. More needs to be done to maintain and promote the overall safety record of hunting and to a lesser degree fishing in Nebraska.

Objective I. Maintain public approval of legal hunting of approximately 75 percent or greater (Responsive Management)

ACTION PLANS:

1, 11-12, 14, 20, 28, 32, 36

Objective II. Maintain public approval of legal fishing of 95 percent or greater (based on data provided by Responsive Management)

ACTION PLANS:

15, 25



Action Plan Summary

PLAN #1

Develop and/or Enhance Statewide Family Hunting/Fishing Involvement

By creating and implementing species-specific weekend camps or workshops for families, especially within our state parks, this plan provides hunting and fishing social support within the family. Such efforts can be had with church groups and other nontraditional institutions. These include family skills camps, family outdoor education programs in the state parks and family-oriented hunting/outdoor workshops.

Participation Stage = Participation with Support
Cost = >\$100K FTE = 0 Staff = >12

PLAN #2

Group/Personal Development Through Fishing

This plan advocates fishing as a healthy outdoor activity that benefits individuals and relationships by: Include fishing as a participatory activity for groups using existing park amenities.

Create Noncompetitive Fishing Clubs. Get more casual anglers involved in fishing clubs as a social, rather than competitive, activity – a place to go and socialize, tell stories, make friends, and set up fishing trips. Club members become fishing buddies and share expenses, boats, travel, etc.

Market fishing as a family-oriented activity, suitable for all generations.

Promote fishing in nontraditional outlets.

Participation Stage = Awareness/Interest
Cost = >\$100K FTE = 0 Staff = 1-2

PLAN #3

Outdoor U-Education Series/ Parks Diploma

Develop an education program using workshops, printed materials, and Web programs designed to give adults more education of hunting opportunities, techniques, equipment, “how to”, etc., can be effective

in recruiting and developing new adult hunters. Workshops will be developed for deer, turkey and muzzleloader hunting in Nebraska.

Participation Stage = Participation with Support
Cost = >\$50K - \$100K FTE = 0.75
Staff = >12

PLAN #4

Urban Fishing Program/Mentored Youth Fishing Course

The intent of the course is to restructure the current Urban Fishing Program to be a more intensive course that generates interest and skills to go fishing. Fishing clinics will be six-week events and include a mentor.

Participation Stage = Permanent Participation
Cost = >\$10K - \$25K FTE = 0 Staff = 3-5

PLAN #5

Pilot Conservation After School Program

The After School Conservation Education Program would develop an after school program for youth in various regions using the Junior Achievement Model and partnerships with various nongovernment organizations. The program will provide a curriculum for youth to work on conservation related educational projects for a period of 12 weeks. At the end of the 12 week session, school clubs will compete against other clubs within their district for awards and prizes.

Participation Stage = Participation with Support
Cost = >\$50K - \$100K FTE = 0.5 Staff = 3-5

PLAN #6

Angler Development and Retention

Develop species-specific angling seminars, workshops, Web pages and publications to reach current and lapsed anglers designed to educate

anglers on new skills, opportunities, and techniques to enhance their ability to embrace new activities and their success in doing so.

Participation Stage = Participation with Support
Cost = >\$25K - \$50K FTE = 0 Staff = 6-12

PLAN #7

The Open Fields and Public Angling Access Program

Open Fields is a component in both the Senate and House versions of the 2007 Farm Bill. As written, the language would provide up to \$20 million per year for access to private lands for hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation. For Nebraska, Open Fields would augment the CRP-MAP program and could serve to expand and enhance the program to allow simultaneously for more hunting access and the addition of fishing access and access for wildlife-viewing opportunities.

Participation Stage = Awareness/Interest
Cost = >\$100K FTE = Partners Staff = 3-5

PLAN #8

Determine Motivations of Youth Hunters

An extensive Literature Review has been conducted within the NGPC on the motivations and barriers to young hunters which has shaped many of the RDR Action Plans. Research would be on going and expanded encompassing feedback from participants in youth hunting outreach programs. Feedback would be in the form of surveys conducted every 4-5 years.

Evaluation Component Cost = >\$10K - \$25K
FTE = 0 Staff = 1-2

PLAN #9

Marketing Campaign

A creative marketing campaign directed towards “low-purchasing” hunters that creates a “need” to hunt (e.g. exercise, healthy food, and quality time outdoors). Specific messages will be based on information from the survey on motivations and constraints.

Participation Stage = Awareness/Interest
Cost = >\$50K - \$100K FTE = 0
Staff = 3-5





PLAN #10

Encourage More Hunting/Fishing In Game and Parks Employees

Currently, roughly 44 percent of NGPC employees purchase hunting permits. This makes serving one of our primary constituents difficult through a lack of understanding this important culture, needs, etc. Efforts to increase this number to at least 60 percent over the next five years would prove positive to RDR efforts.

Participation Stage = Permanent Participation
Cost = <\$10K FTE = 0 Staff = 6-12

PLAN #11

Significantly Expand Reach of Education Staff Across Nebraska by Developing and Hiring One New Outdoor Education Specialist in Each District

Many states that have shown great successes in enhancing the number of youth hunters and anglers

maintain a large presence of education staff throughout the state. Having education professionals “on the ground” is a critical step in changing public behavior by coordinating regional educational programs aligned with local schools, church groups, etc., that have real impacts to Nebraska families.

Participation Stage = Awareness/Interest
Cost = >\$100K FTE = 6 Staff = 1-2

PLAN #12

STEP OUTSIDE Marketing Efforts

The simple marketing effort by the National Shooting Sports Foundation’s STEP OUTSIDE Program aims to push hunters and anglers to ask others to give it a try. This simple mentoring activity has proven effective as studies have shown that the majority of people would try hunting, shooting or fishing if asked by someone they know. This plan encourages this concept and provides for incentives to reward mentors.

Participation Stage = Awareness/Interest
Cost = \$25K - \$50K FTE = 0 Staff = 3-5

PLAN #13

Tracking Youth Hunting Participation

In an effort to track the youth hunting (residents under age 16) NGPC will offer a free (downloadable) permit that recognizes them as a hunter or use NASIS surveys if possible to track youth involvement in hunting and fishing.

Evaluation Component **Cost = >\$10K - \$25K**
FTE = 0 **Staff = 1-2**

PLAN #14

Develop a Youth Outdoor Page and Public Hunter Education Page on Our Website, and Educational Programs, Games, Interactive Activities Designed To Teach Skills, Conservation, Etc.

Create a web site exclusively aimed at youth 15 and under. The site would also be a tremendous asset to junior high and elementary educators/teachers desiring more conservation education materials in their classrooms and curriculums. Program will make use of existing resource such as Project WILD and NGPC staff. Site could offer interactive outdoor games, hunting and fishing activities, and outdoor educational offerings for youth and families.

Participation Stage = Awareness/Interest
Cost = \$25K - \$50K **FTE = 0** **Staff = 1-2**

PLAN #15

Volunteer Youth Fishing Instructor Recruitment and Retention

Volunteer Youth Fishing Instructors (YFIs) lead clinics to teach the fishing heritage to young people. The number of clinics reported should be increased as should the number of Youth Fishing Instructors (YFIs) and incentives should be offered to encourage YFIs.

Participation Stage = Permanent Participation
Cost = <\$10K **FTE = 0** **Staff = 1-2**

PLAN #16

Commission Outreach Program (Television, Newsletter, Sports Shows)

Enhance statewide hunter/angler outreach efforts using an agency television program and NGPC Newsletter. The television program (26-week season) would garner public support for the agency and its products to the extent that additional funding for the agency could become a mandate from the citizens of Nebraska.

Participation Stage = Awareness/Interest
Cost = >\$100K **FTE = 0** **Staff = 3-5**

PLAN #17

Develop More Shooting Programs For Women and Youth to Enhance Youth Involvement In Shooting Sports

Women-only weekend retreats; BOW +1 camps that allow each participant to share the experience with a youngster of their choice; and/or full family events/weekends. Each event would feature in-depth instruction on specific shooting disciplines by trained individuals and hands-on shooting activities. Shooting sports programs for families through gun club partners, non traditional institutions such as churches, hunting moms and wives camps.

Participation Stage = Permanent Participation
Cost = >\$50K - \$100K **FTE = 0.5**
Staff = 6-12

PLAN #18

Outdoor Skills Camps Expansion

Expand the offering of Outdoor Skills Camp by forming a training/staff sharing partnership with the University of Nebraska 4-H. Each camp would be one week in length, open to roughly 100 kids and could offer education in rifle, shotgun, muzzleloader, archery, fishing, camping, canoeing, bird watching, hiking, wildlife calling, etc. Youth could choose the workshops they would like to participate in.

Participation Stage = Permanent Participation
Cost = \$25K - \$50K **FTE = Partners**
Staff = 6-12

PLAN #19

Determine Needs of Conservation Partners and Work With Partners to Develop Stronger Volunteer Mentoring Programs, Enhance Educational Programs, and Develop an Internal Structure Within the Partners to Oversee Mentoring Programs

NGPC will gather information on all organized Non-government Organizations (NGO) efforts in the realm of mentored youth hunts. Once completed, the next step involves identifying what as an Agency the NGPC can do to enhance the opportunities for mentored youth hunts conducted by NGO partners.

Participation Stage = Permanent Participation
Cost = >\$50K - \$100K FTE = 0 Staff = 3-5



PLAN #20

Adult Beginner Fishing Seminar

Adult Beginner Fishing Seminars (ABFS) will be held to allow adults (i.e. ages 16 and over) the opportunity to learn the beginning basics of fishing during an approximately 2-3 hour lecture. These would include the distribution of entry-level fishing equipment and instructional materials to Adult Beginning Fishing Seminar participants. NGPC could utilize the participant database to promote fishing, and analyze participation with respect to permit sales and retention of anglers.

Participation Stage = Permanent Participation
Cost = >\$50K - \$100K FTE = 0 Staff = 3-5

PLAN #21

Beginning Angler Incentive Program

The main focus of the program will be to educate new anglers on how and where to fish, and to provide them with the basic necessary equipment needed to start fishing. Incentives for existing anglers to recruit new anglers to purchase fishing licenses will be in the form of a "buddy permit" system.

In addition, the new angler will be given information on how to receive free fishing equipment (see below). To assist beginning anglers with obtaining the basic gear necessary for catching a variety of species in Nebraska, the Fisheries Division's Outdoor Education program will assemble "beginner fishing kits" to be given, free of charge, to new anglers who purchase fishing permits.

Staff from the district fisheries offices will install instructional signage at all the beginner fishing lakes.

Participation Stage = Participation with Support
Cost = >\$25K - \$50K FTE = 0 Staff = 1-2

PLAN #22

Hunting/Angling Education of Future NGPC Agency Professionals

Currently, a concern has been raised over the number of fish and wildlife graduates that have little to no hunting knowledge, experience, etc. Dr. Scott Hygnstrom has desired to build from a NGPC/UNL partnership to develop a college level program for credit to be taken by students that have not hunted before. Dr. Hygnstrom has been through the Max McGraw Conservation Education Training program and would like 4-6 NGPC staff to obtain this certification and training to begin offering



such programs in Nebraska and Kansas in partnership with the Kansas Parks and Wildlife Department. Such requirement would be to host at least one education program annually for future fish and wildlife students so they may at least understand the hunter/angler, our conservation heritage and the reasons why we strongly support such activities.

Participation Stage = Permanent Participation
Cost = <\$10K FTE = 0 Staff = 3-5

PLAN #23 Beginner Fishing Facilities

Secure funding of \$750,000 annually to develop Beginner Fishing Facilities at 3-5 ponds, sandpits, lakes, reservoirs, rivers and streams per year. Identify and develop fishing access points.

Ensure that quality fishing ponds, sandpits, lakes, reservoirs, rivers and streams are being maintained within 50 miles of population areas (2,000 + people). Sample water bodies on a rotational basis, evaluate stocking regimes, densities and conduct creel surveys.

Develop and enforce fishing regulations on Beginner Fishing Ponds, sandpits, lakes, reservoirs, rivers and streams by conservation officer presence.

Determine which, if any, of our efforts contribute to an increase in fishing participation by tracking fishing permit sales.

Market restored lakes and new opportunities to former anglers. New lakes are being built as well – lapsed anglers may not know about these new opportunities.

Participation Stage = Participation with Support
Cost = >\$100K FTE = 0 Staff = 6-12

PLAN #24 Increasing Public Access To Hunting Lands

Approximately 3 percent of Nebraska land is open to public hunting and fishing. Opening more acres to public access would supply much-needed acres to new hunters trying to find a place to hunt without costing them a lease. Focusing a CRP-MAP like program along river drainages to open acres specifically for deer and turkey hunting would also supply much needed big game habitat open for hunting.

Participation Stage = Awareness/Interest
Cost = >\$100K FTE = 0 Staff = 6-12

PLAN #25

Art and Writing Programs

Create an interdisciplinary program that incorporates art and education to raise awareness and funds for fish and aquatic habitat conservation.

Conduct State Fish Art Contest, Duck Stamp Contest, and River of Words.

Create a traveling display of artwork, poetry, and essays by fourth-12th grade students submitted to the state contest.

Participation Stage = Participation with Support
Cost = <\$10K FTE = 0 Staff = 3-5

PLAN #26

Adult Mentoring Program

Develop, with partners, "Adult/Family Mentors" that focus on teaching adults how to hunt. We propose to develop a program connecting hunters with nonhunters for a mentoring experience focusing on hunter ethics, hunting techniques, and game care and cleaning.

Participation Stage = Permanent Participation
Cost = <\$10K FTE = 0 Staff = 3-5

PLAN #27

Removing Regulatory and Statutory Barriers for Hunters to Get Involved In Hunting, Adding Hunting Days and Species as Opportunity Arises

Expand hunting opportunities statewide by reviewing and removing barrier where possible. Simplify hunting regulations by creating universal rules. Explore the purchase of permits with special incentives such as family, couple or combination packages, lower price for youth hunters and establish a lottery system where permit holders are eligible for prizes, by a drawing of their permit numbers.

Participation Stage = Participation with Support
Cost = <\$10K FTE = 0 Staff = 1-2

PLAN #28

Train Agency Personnel to Ensure Staff Have the Skills And Training To Do Effective Educational Programming

Offer educational programming training workshops for resource personnel to help make them feel more comfortable conducting educational programming.

Participation Stage = Permanent Participation
Cost = <\$10K FTE = 0 Staff = 3-5

PLAN #29

Metro Public Shooting Park

In 2006, NGPC began working with the Eastern Nebraska Law Enforcement Consortium; Phase one of their efforts was to locate and develop a 640-acre law enforcement and public shooting park that has been completed. Planning has now begun for another facility that will include a 100- and 200-yard public rifle range, 50-yard public pistol range, trap and sporting clays facility. Such a facility will be open to the public and serve as a primary location for metro Hunter Education programs and over 100,000 public hunters and shooters in the metro area.

Participation Stage = Participation with Support
Cost = >\$100K FTE = Partners Staff = 1-2

PLAN #30

Recruitment, Development and Retention Partnerships

Develop or redevelop interest of communities in hunting and fishing. These entities all have a vested interest in recruiting hunters to their communities. Marketing efforts should be directed towards cooperatively hosting wild game feeds, hunter breakfasts, conservation banquets, trap shoots, and disseminating information. Obvious marketing partners would also include local chapters of various conservation groups.

Participation Stage = Participation with Support
Cost = >\$10K - \$25K FTE = Partners
Staff = 3-5

PLAN #31

Develop One Public Shooting Range For Rifle/Shotgun In Each District By 2010 Using National Rifle Association Standards

A survey of shooting ranges in 2001 showed a lack of public accessible rifle/muzzleloader ranges in Nebraska. One shooting range of small scale developed in each district by 2010 would alleviate many problems associated with this lack of access. Ranges would be developed on lands already owned by NGPC. Users would be required to have a valid hunting license and to register online before using the facilities.

Participation Stage = Participation with Support
Cost = >\$10K - \$25K FTE = 0 Staff = 3-5

PLAN #32

Hunter/Angler Outdoor Media Events (also Goals 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Use large scale media outlets, partners, expos, media days to showcase and introduce the public to hunting and fishing and the positive, healthy outdoor lifestyle they provide.

Participation Stage = Awareness/Interest
Cost = >\$100K FTE = 1 Staff = >12

PLAN #33

Understanding Nebraska's Angler (also Goals 2, 3 and 4)

Use NASIS to determine if there are any Nebraska-specific constraints to fishing, beyond what national literature cites (time, social support, etc.) and develop surveys to understand the multiple species avid anglers and what motivates them to fish for multiple species.

Evaluation Component Cost = <\$10K
FTE = 0 Staff = 1-2



PLAN #34

Survey Multi-Species Hunters and Nonmulti-Species Hunters

A survey sent to hunters who already purchase more than one type of license/permit could be developed to find the motivations behind this type of hunter. Another survey could be developed to find out the constraints to the nonmultiple license/permit purchaser. If we could pinpoint the major motivation/constraints of hunters we might have valuable information to use in creating or tweaking existing programs and or marketing campaigns.

Evaluation Component Cost = >\$10K - \$25K
FTE = 0 Staff = 1-2

PLAN #35

Obligatory Incremental Evaluation Periods (5 Years) (also Goals 2 and 4)

For a long-term plan to be of great benefit, it must be adaptive and contain mechanisms built in for a self-assessment phase. The action plans for all goals should be evaluated for effectiveness and modified as needed on five-year increments.

Evaluation Component Cost = >\$10K - \$25K
FTE = 0 Staff = 1-2



PLAN #36

Referendum In State Statute Supporting Citizens' Right To Hunt

In order to establish the importance of hunting to the citizens, culture, and economy of the State of Nebraska, NGPC should establish relationships with state legislators; utilizing support from NGOs, including the Nebraska Sportsmen's Council, to build support of hunting and its associated activities.

Participation Stage = Awareness/Interest
Cost = <\$10K FTE = 0 Staff = 1-2

PLAN #37

Motivations of Adult Hunters

(also Goal 5)

We know the myriad of reasons behind why many people do not pursue the sport (time, work, social support), but little as to what would entice a person or group of people to start a sport after they are an adult. A survey

sent to hunters over the age of 20 that have not shown up in our hunter database for the last five years might be a way to sample this population of hunters. Valuable information might be gained to use in creating or tweaking existing programs and or marketing campaigns.

Evaluation Component Cost = >\$10K - \$25K
FTE = 0 Staff = 1-2

PLAN #38

Review Previous Evaluations and Research Findings and, If Needed, Re-Evaluate Aspects of Current Nebraska Conservation Education Programs

Review all NGPC existing and new education programs for their impacts on creating public support for hunting/angling.

Evaluation Component Cost = >\$25K - \$50K
FTE = 0 Staff = 3-5

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Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

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