

## AREA 2022 Conference – Round Table Discussions (Sept 2022)

### HOW TO REACH INNER CITY COMMUNITIES?

- Community partners
- Social media group posts
- Creating safe spaces
- Taking it to the neighborhood
- Keep up with moving populations
- Better communication
- Pop-up fishing events
- Regular events
- Staff & Volunteer from the community
- Balance but constant
- Churches
- Bridging gap to make experience positive
- Cost, time barriers alienated
- Working with schools
- Trained volunteers in high school clubs
- Being able to communicate/translate
- First Fish Friday with gear and certificate
- Recipes with their caught, cleaned fish
- Boys & Girls clubs
- Field trips with bus funding
- Supplying rec centers
- Showing food aspect/connection
- Don't have to have expensive equipment
- Safety & Comfort!!!
- 4 sections to analyze
- Making them want to....
- Traveling for trophies...
- Better community fisheries management
- Specific questions for specific communities, understanding
- Mentorship programs
- Meet them where they are, don't speak over their heads, speak to their experience not yours

## KAYAK FISHING CLASSES – WHO’S DOING IT AND HOW?

- RI: Kayak fly fishing adult program
- NC: Freshwater – less variables than salt; safety course online before outings
- TX: kids camp outings
- SD: start on campus lake, move to larger lake; sit-in and sit on; small, telescoping rods; fishing class on shore, basic paddles, then go out and fish; challenge people to get really spread out, volunteers needed, tether everything!!; get a wide stable kayak
- DC: need partners to do boat programs (ex- Green Kayaks-you can rent for free if you pick up trash)
- MD: American Canoe Association – should use take a boater safety course
- TX: Kayaks with high seats, rod holders, dry bags, etc.; How to paddle, cast from a kayak, net on a kayak; still water rivers or lakes work best; ACA certification
- SD: Kayak fishing classes in ponds at nature center; pre-register for kayak fishing class – must bait own hook and take fish off hook; bring kayaks and canoes to allow participants use what they are used to using; don’t need a long pole – kiddie poles; where will you put bait, strap your paddle to boat in case you catch a big fish; ACA Instructor – max of 12 participants for one instructor
- NV: 3-4 instructors (2 solid staff with 1-2 floaters); life jackets are mandatory; participants should all be certified and know how to fish if participating in a kayak fishing course; 120 rule – temperature of water and air combined should be over 120 degrees to prevent hypothermia.
- VT: liability issues if VT provides the canoes and teaches how to paddle; participants need to bring their own to allow fishing instruction.
- FL: certified by ACA; offers courses for kayaking but not kayak fishing yet.
- AR: must know kayaking or canoeing in order to participate in kayak fishing courses. Senior level courses.
- Stillwater/ponds for beginners
- Jackson brand kayaks (side racks/catamaran style)

## GETTING FISHING AND AQUATIC EDUCATION INTO CLASSROOMS:

- Louisiana (Alayna McGarry) has curriculum they use and loan equipment (IGFA Kits) to teachers; give trainings with binder of materials for various subjects (age and growth of fishes; PE – fishing, knot-tying, etc.), 4-H (agriculture)
- South Carolina is working on creating curriculum following school standards (Sarah Chabaane)
- USFWS & Smithsonian started doing virtual hikes/experiences
- Pay stipend to teachers to cover field trip expenses and subs
- Work with college to offer course for teachers – provide equipment
- Work with districts to do teacher PD
- Offering continuing education credits or grad school credits
- Weeklong teacher camp to learn DR topics and how to integrate
- Start with PE teachers
- SIC/TIC (Salmon in the Classroom / Trout in the Classroom) – expand from science teachers to Tech/STEM/AP/Career
- In-depth lesson and kits – aquatic epidemiology and squid dissection
- AR: fishing in the Natural State – 4-12<sup>th</sup> grade program – can adapt up or down; Pulled from old HOFNOD Program
- NY: had lesson plans
- AR DOE (Dept of Education) provided feedback
- Include art, language arts, PE for fishing
- SD: must meet standard to justify a field trip
- AR: fines go back to counties for conservation education
- Teachers have been through sooo much
- Get schoolboard support
- Get more people excited about it.
- AR: Give the teachers 6 hrs. of credit
- Catfish dissection gets them excited
- Homeschool association
- NV: Trout in the classroom – about 80 classrooms
- Even if they are not fishing – we get them learning and why clean water is important
- Teachers can apply for assistance – fisheries biologist
- Classroom mgmt. outside – getting teachers comfortable / directed tasks outside.

## **WORKING WITH INDUSTRY IN YOUR STATE:**

- SC: Partner with a Payer – invite orgs paying excise tax to see how the \$\$ is being spent; builds relationships and shows mutual benefit.
- Natural partners want to see \$ in their community.
- AR: Community derby with orgs that have a vested interest in R3; state makes connection and provides education opportunity.
- Communication is KEY – Show benefits, make personal connections
- Don't say you "endorse" any organization, or they endorse you – say "Strategic partner" it's all about wording
- Start small, invite them to your events and activities

## **TIPS FOR NEW AE COORDINATORS / WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW THAT I DON'T KNOW?**

- Create a volunteer network
- Train your volunteers
- Have fun
- Appreciate and incentivize them with support AND mentorship
- Develop a contact list for support resources
- Develop a curriculum framework
- Ask and listen to your volunteers
- Create a volunteer identity with a patch, shirt, hat, etc.
- Think outside the box
- Be flexible, learn to assess, adapt, and change regularly!
- Work to determine what your audience is when teaching
- Understand the different fishing groups/audiences, etc.
- Know you're not going to know everything about fishing and be ok with that
- Partner with someone inside or outside your state to gain experience, ideas, program ideas, etc.

## HOW TO DO MORE WITH LESS STAFF?

Shane Wilson – Fishing’s Future:

- Volunteer ran, you can’t mandate what volunteers do
- Fishing’s Future works with state organizations on angler education, certification for volunteers
- “Friends Groups” for organization – can help leverage or more money; more volunteers
- Online certifications when less staff is available
- Most of the people who retain volunteers is because of responsiveness
- If you have volunteers working for you, you have to work for the volunteer

South Carolina has a train-the-trainer program, so does Oregon, full day training to teach fishing classes. Volunteers must teach 2 classes to stay “certified”

TPWD’s Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center (TFFC) has 22 staff along (Tom Lang):

- 20 local volunteers
- Partners are key, such as Fishing’s Future to cut through politics
- Families fishing is another partner
- Working on creating classes for Volunteers of all subjects

Adam Comer (TPWD) hosts mentored fishing programs that occur every year, act as “reunions” for volunteers

Find / create job opportunities in career development opportunities (building resumes, etc.)

Nebraska Game and Parks works with college fishing clubs

Kansas gives vests to volunteers

Pilot project – bass fishing team teaching college students

Cross-trained staff

Partner orgs/clubs – pull volunteers from them

Bribe volunteers

Working with multiple depts in your organization – ex: enviro police for hunters edu

Working with fishing guides – referrals for discount

Targeting different groups – bass fishing vs red fishing video training options

## **SOURCES FOR BULK FISHING GEAR & EQUIPMENT:**

- AREA table at iCast? - make a dating app for anglers
- Simmons – Angler Education/Zebco Rods – has everything – will cater to you
- Pittman Creek (KY) – all tackle
- Eagle Claw – house products
- Future Fisherman Foundation kits (Oklahoma)
- Pure Fishing – difficult to work with but they're working on it (allegedly)
- Temple For Outfitters – fly fishing stuff, good pricing
- EZ On Bobbers – catering to Aquatic Ed
- Orvis – flies
- Tailwaters – flies, works with NGSs more than states
- Use bulk materials, teach fly tying, use those Umpqua>>CO based flies, experiencing backorders
- Teach kids fly tying?
- Buy from school districts?
- Camoi Bobbers

## **VISUAL AIDS RESOURCES FOR BOTH AQUATIC EDU AND ANGLER EDU:**

- Rods and Reels – Tenkara, Backpack, Jiggle Sticks
- Tackle Boxes
- Light up / Magnetic match name of fish
- Knot tester
- Big-Painting of shark signs
- Pet Finder for Shark Species
- Tri-fold – knot tying
- Macro-invertebrate keys
- Fisher Scientific – Macro guides
- Use washing machine pans to sort macros
- Project WET – Drop in the Bucket activity, Marine Debris Sand Tray
- How long things take to decompose
- Nurdles – we eat a credit card’s worth of plastic a month
- Take Me Fishing Trailer – 3-D Fish, Scavenger Hunt with questions and QR Code
- Life Cycle – Salmon Migration
- Goose Chase
- Digital microscope – shows up on phone/tablet
- Clinic kits
- Cabin Critters (stuffed animals)
- Build a Pond (Felt pond to build up a pond with insects, fish, plants, depth changes)
- Otoliths compared with tree cookies
- Infographics
- Water quality indicator display
- Fish prints (Gyotaku)
- Workbook/Activity Guides (Anatomy, Ethical Angler, Knots)
- Design a Lure
- Casting inflatable

## **AREA MEMBER RECRUITMENT / ADAPTING BEST PRACTICES / DEI:**

### **Member Recruitment:**

- Sign on to listserv and engagement
- Welcome package!!! Send after signing up
- Professional Development – like webinars
- Job announcements
- New Membership mentor
- More presence – social media, TikTok, Twitter
- Classes through AREA Professional Development
- Join AREA flyer / cards to pass out at events/conferences
- Recruit more college kids
- Promo Video for what AREA is / AREA mission
- Gather Big Accomplishments from AREA members and make information more readily available online

### **DEI:**

- Ted Talks and webinars
- Partner wit AFWA
- Outdoor Afro
- Hispanic / Latino Outdoors
- PAL Activities
- Kayak Fishing
- HBCU's – Fishing Edu/Training
- Pop up Event Es Mi Parque (It's My Park) Outreach to new communities
- Bi-lingual Rangers
- Resources/webinars online – links to YouTube



## **HOW COVID-19 HAS CHANGED AED OUTREACH (DELIVERY / VIRUTAL TEACHING):**

- Virtual Fishing Clinics: Check out gear before Zoom teaching
- Knot-tying classes and mini-subjects
- Engaging new audiences, senior groups
- New topics: Pond management, beginning bass and trout, panel discussion
- Virtual – more reach
- Virtual – using more online state resources
- Virtual – ½ online and ½ in person
- Making more mini videos
- State agency web pages updated
- Turned more to tech savvy – videos
- Learned to teach a different audience, 10 ft apart

## **VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION / AQUATIC EDU VS ANGLER EDU / SWAG FOR VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTORS:**

- Shirts, patches, “Uniform” to identify, hats, name plates
- Dinner/Appreciation Day
- Say Thank You / Recognize
- Professional Development Sessions
- Presidential Service Awards Collaboration
- “Rewards Program” is time consuming; investment (additional staff)
- Hierarchy system for volunteers = leadership, growth
  - Basic Instructor, Advanced Instructors, “Chiefs” who can stand in for agency staff
  - Workshops / Clinics for volunteers
- Check w/ USFWS (SFR) eligibility for funding instructor activities
- Make them feel important and appreciated
- Newsletters that highlight volunteer achievements
- Birthday cards / Holiday cards
- Incentives or gifts for volunteer hour achievements
- Asking volunteers directly what they would like to get out of volunteering

**ARE YOU RAWA READY? (IMPACTS ON FISHING EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION PRIORITIES):**

RAWA = Recovering America's Wildlife Act. Has passed Federal House of Representatives; Will it pass federal Senate? pass by end of the month

- Provides stable funding to state agencies for increased conservation needs – State Wildlife Action Plan – every 10 years required some states do so more frequently
- A Lot of funding
- Ex: Michigan Fund research for biologist, new staff, partnership organizations
- Rarely sport/game species
- Endangered, threatened species
- Impact important species to state
- Plants and animals
- Reintroduction of species recovery
- Prevent a species from becoming listed
- Recover habitat
- Boots on the ground – positions ready to fill upon approval
- Use of matching funding and grants, 25% match
- BOT – improve habitat by using funds to repair or create access or roads, spillways
- Tribal use if they apply
- Improve relationships with underserved populations
- Educate people to increase falling populations of species