

Project Abstract Summary

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Funding Opportunity Number

WSFR2023017781

CFDA(s)

15.628

Applicant Name

WILdlife Management Institute

Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project

2024 MSCGP - R3 Advertising Efficacy

Project Abstract

Research released in early 2023 (Chase & Dunfee, 2023) unequivocally showed that state fish and wildlife agencies (SFWAs) will endure further declines in hunting and angling populations in the coming decade. Thus, now more than ever, SFWAs must accelerate the optimization of their R3 efforts to maintain, diversify, and ultimately increase their customer base before the most avid hunters and anglers age out in the early 2030's.

Future success in this optimization will largely depend on how reliably SFWAs can correlate their R3 efforts to participant behavior objectives (i.e., going hunting, fishing, or target shooting as a result of the R3 effort) using reliable indicators like license or privilege purchases. Unfortunately, this outcome-focused approach remains uncommon in R3 effort design and delivery, and SFWAs need to integrate more rigorous methods of evaluation than current research has thus far provided them.

Fortunately, in R3 marketing, SFWAs have adopted more sophisticated tools and techniques which opens the door for a more rigorous approach to R3 effort efficacy to be developed and implemented. That said, most agencies still depend on recent R3 marketing research to guide the design and delivery of their campaigns and advertising. Though broadly insightful and even innovative, a significant limitation of this research is that it primarily utilizes conjoint analyses of self-reported preferences for success outcomes, not actual behavioral indicators. Without ties to participant behavior, it will be extremely difficult for agencies to optimize the specific content, format, delivery, and frequency of their marketing efforts that resonate with the audiences a specific agency would most like to reach.

This project will solve this problem by comparing the license purchasing behavior (i.e., behavioral indicator) of lapsed hunters or anglers who receive a marketing effort (treatment) to a similar group who receive no such marketing effort (control). This rigorous social science approach of match-pairing dramatically increases the ability to draw statistical conclusions and definitively determine which elements of a marketing effort were impactful to participant behavior and how much of that behavior may be attributed to the marketing effort and not other, external variables. The results of this study will provide rigorous, statistical information that can optimize the evaluation techniques for all SFWA marketing principles and R3 marketing efforts.