

Project Abstract Summary

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Funding Opportunity Number

WSFR2023017812

CFDA(s)

15.628

Applicant Name

Wildlife Management Institute

Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project

2024 MSCGP - ACI Increasing Shooting Sports Participation by Introduction and Education through Schools

Project Abstract

Within the last decade, two major initiatives and multiple toolkit packages have delivered strategic frameworks, guidance, and practical training tools on R3 effort evaluation to R3 practitioners. The evaluation theory, tools, and resources developed by these initiatives have been largely accepted by the professional R3 community as the standards by which R3 programs, efforts, and interventions should ideally be measured for their effectiveness and efficiency.

The Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model (ORAM) is a fundamental theoretical framework that facilitates many of these standards of efficiency. The ORAM has succeeded in offsetting a longstanding aversion to evaluation by the R3 community. Though the ORAM has proven useful, few of those who tout its merits fully understand its limitations, poorly validated assertions, or the elements of its logic that need further study before being put into practice; specifically, the ORAM's 'decision to continue' point and its direct association with individual identity formation. Though noted as a critical decision in the original text, few answers are provided to a modern R3 practitioner wondering "what to do next" for participants or what specific aspects of an R3 effort induced the participant to go hunting or fishing. This void in modern R3 evaluation has unintentionally halted many R3 practitioners from identifying how to design efficient pathways for various target demographics. Further, the R3 community remains unaware of how identity formation within a participant can be accelerated to convert them into an avid and independent hunter or angler who can "continue without support".

Fortunately, the process of establishing a self-identity and its role in the "decision to continue" are well known to social science. Decades of Self-Identity Theory research has revealed how the 'decision to continue' is influenced by an individual coming to see what groups they belong to, and how that identity can be accelerated programmatically if understood by practitioners. Regrettably, this research is not yet integrated into R3 evaluation strategies or the decisions R3 professionals make on how to develop effective adoption pathways for various audiences. The purpose of this study is to remedy this hole in the ORAM by partnering with 4-6 state fish and wildlife agencies (SFWAs) who wish to benefit from measuring, and then developing, elements of the self-identity component of the ORAM.

Project leads will collaborate with SFWAs to integrate three principles of self-identity: Aptitude, Behavior and Community (ABCs) into preexisting pre- and post-event surveys. Project leads will then analyze to analyze the change in an attendee's self-identity induced by an R3 effort, the effectiveness of the R3 effort in developing self-identity, which R3 efforts tend to attract different types of self-identifying hunters/anglers, and then chain successive R3 efforts tailored to the specific individual. By applying components of self-identity to R3 audiences, SFWAs can 1) capture higher ROIs on R3 efforts, 2) have more success achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion goals, and 3) attain higher conversion rates as would-be outdoor enthusiasts make the 'decision to continue.'