

Marketing, Communications, and Public Relations Plan for the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Division of Information & Education



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**Produced by Responsive Management
and Mile Creek Communications**

2016

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND ON THE PLAN

This plan was produced for the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) by Responsive Management and Mile Creek Communications. The plan describes the strategies and tactics that will be used to fulfill two major goals:

- Goal 1) Raise overall public awareness and support among Maine residents of MDIFW's mission, programs and projects;
- Goal 2) Measurably increase support and participation in activities and programs overseen and/or administered by MDIFW.

The plan further outlines and describes in detail the steps for maintaining a successful communications and outreach effort through long-term commitment, organized and deliberate planning based on current research, and consistent assessment and evaluation. It also addresses two recommendations included in the "Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife 2003/2004 Review," conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Management Assistance Team:

Information & Education Recommendation #5: Develop a Department-wide communications plan using participation from across the agency. The plan would identify the highest priority information, key messages, and delivery strategies. The entire plan must be shared with all agency employees to be most effective.

Information & Education Recommendation #6: Integrate a Department-wide marketing approach.

The overall plan includes communications, marketing, and public relations elements, and was developed based on several components of primary and secondary research conducted with Maine residents and core agency constituent groups, including hunters, anglers, wildlife viewers, trappers, and boaters. The research components are summarized below; note that the full methodology and results for each component are discussed in detail in separate reports.

INITIAL PLANNING MEETING

To initiate the project, Responsive Management Executive Director Mark Damian Duda and Mile Creek Communications President Jodi Valenta traveled to Augusta, Maine, in July 2015 to meet with MDIFW project managers and key personnel. This meeting served as an opportunity for the partners to discuss expectations for the project and MDIFW's agency direction, including its mission statement and goals as an organization; and to begin reviewing pertinent research underpinning the study.

The planning meeting took the form of a daylong workshop, which began with a presentation from Responsive Management and Mile Creek Communications. The rest of the workshop involved focused discussions with MDIFW personnel regarding their ideas for action items to direct the rest of the planning process. These discussions helped establish and clarify key opportunities, objectives, and strategies, including priorities for agency programs. The meeting helped prioritize all planning and research to be undertaken as part of the plan development.

Mile Creek Communications worked with MDIFW to develop and finalize a specific mission, along with goals and objectives aligned to the mission, and to conduct a SWOT analysis to better understand how MDIFW currently interacts and communicates with Maine residents.

A mission statement is a necessary component of a marketing, communications, and public relations plan in order to ensure proper alignment of the goals and objectives. This alignment is necessary to evaluate the plan outcomes and determine if the goals and objectives helped accomplish the project mission. The following mission statement was developed for this project after careful review of the original scope of work for the study:

The mission of the Marketing, Communications, and Public Relations Plan is to enhance the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's communications and relationship with the people of Maine.

Every portion of this plan is tied to accomplishing the overall mission stated above. Each section of the plan includes goals, objectives, and strategies addressing the mission and providing a roadmap for implementation. Though the original scope of work for the plan included the goals stated above, part of the purpose of the planning meeting was to work with MDIFW staff to analyze and adjust the goals as necessary. This process resulted in two additional stated goals for the project:

Goal 3) Identify Maine residents' needs and expectations from MDIFW.

Goal 4) Develop a stronger relationship with Maine residents.

The beginning of each section of the plan specifies the goals addressed in the section. Additionally, each section includes recommendations and strategies to assist MDIFW with implementation of the plan.

RESEARCH REVIEW

The next step in the development of the plan was a thorough research review conducted by Responsive Management. The review, summarized in a report entitled *An Analysis of Public Attitudes Toward and Participation in Programs Managed by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife*, considered data and information from 33 sources in order to understand trends in outdoor activity participation, related expenditures, and public attitudes toward and opinions on wildlife management and associated values. The sources examined in the review included academic publications; survey data collected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Census Bureau, Responsive Management, Southwick Associates, and others; and current and past Maine Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) reports.

SCIENTIFIC SURVEY OF MAINE RESIDENTS AND AGENCY CONSTITUENTS

Responsive Management conducted a scientific survey to obtain current quantitative data regarding Maine residents' and constituents' levels of participation in various activities (including motivations for and barriers to participation), their awareness and knowledge of MDIFW and its activities, their conservation and wildlife values and opinions on important fish and wildlife issues in Maine, and their attitudes toward MDIFW priorities and decision-making.

The survey was used to assess residents' and constituents' participation in various outdoor recreation activities as well as their attitudes toward and opinions on MDIFW's programs. In addition to general population residents, constituents surveyed included hunters, anglers, boaters, and trappers. The survey questionnaire was developed cooperatively by Responsive Management and MDIFW.

To ensure the widest possible coverage of the Maine general population, the overall sample included both telephone and mail components. The resulting sampling design ensured that every Maine resident had an equal chance of being contacted for the survey. Those in the constituent groups were surveyed using MDIFW licensing and registration records; these individuals were contacted by telephone, mail, and email. Note that only after the probability-based random sample was selected from each database were attempts made at contacting those who had been selected.

The overall sample of Maine general population residents was stratified based on three regions (northeast, central, and south), with a predetermined number of surveys completed in each region. Survey administration efforts resulted in a total of 2,118 completed surveys, including 911 interviews with Maine general population residents, 311 interviews with Maine hunters, 237 with Maine anglers, 300 with Maine boaters, and 359 with Maine trappers. The survey was administered from October to November 2015.

The survey results, including extensive crosstabulations among the various respondent groups, are summarized in the report, *Maine Residents' and Outdoor Recreationists' Attitudes Toward Wildlife Management and Participation in Wildlife-Related Recreation*.

EXTENSIVE CROSTABULATIONS OF SURVEY DATA

In addition to the overall survey results, Responsive Management conducted extensive crosstabulations to compare various subgroups within the data. These crosstabulations provided insights into regional differences in attitudes, opinions, and participation rates, as well as comparisons among the various constituent groups. The respondent groups were analyzed and presented separately in the results, as well as by region.

FOCUS GROUPS WITH MAINE RESIDENTS AND AGENCY CONSTITUENTS

To obtain qualitative data complementing and expanding on the survey results, Responsive Management conducted two focus groups with Maine residents and agency constituents in December 2015. Each focus group consisted of a moderated discussion with about twelve individuals. The groups were conducted using a discussion guide developed by Responsive Management in cooperation with MDIFW. Participants were recruited by telephone, mail, and email, and each participant received a monetary incentive for attending.

The first group was conducted in Portland with a sample of Maine general population residents. The second group was conducted in Bangor with a sample of agency constituents including hunters, anglers, wildlife viewers, trappers, and boaters. Both groups used a version of the same discussion guide to allow for consistency in the data collection, although minor changes were made based on specific questions and topics relevant to the two groups.

The purpose of the groups was twofold: to obtain additional qualitative data in connection with the overarching objectives of the study, and to follow up on specific findings from the survey. The focus groups explored participants' awareness and knowledge of MDIFW and its duties, perceptions of agency employees, MDIFW priorities and areas of concern, and interest and current participation in activities managed by MDIFW (hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, and wildlife viewing).

The groups also collected key information on potential messaging themes, the importance of various topics in agency outreach and communications, opinions on potential agency spokespersons, and delivery methods for information and outreach from MDIFW.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE RESEARCH

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) is a highly regarded state fish and wildlife agency. Both the Maine general public and core agency constituent groups (e.g., hunters, anglers, boaters, and trappers) have fairly high levels of awareness of and satisfaction with the agency. The agency also holds high levels of credibility among the general population and its constituent groups. Trend comparisons with a comparable survey conducted in 2003 show that awareness and satisfaction ratings for the agency have both increased substantially, indicating that MDIFW is headed in the right direction. There is also strong satisfaction with outdoor recreation opportunities among recreationists in Maine.

In short, the survey results confirm that the majority of Maine residents are satisfied with MDIFW and the work that it is doing. The results are particularly important insofar as they help put into perspective any complaints or negative feedback MDIFW receives from constituents regarding agency management decisions. While there is always room for improvement and it is always important for MDIFW to be open to public feedback, it is essential that MDIFW recognize that vocal criticisms directed at the agency are likely coming from a very small minority of the public and various constituent groups. In fact, the overarching conclusion of this study is that MDIFW is functioning and providing services at a very high level. The agency is on the correct trajectory, and any criticism MDIFW receives must be understood as relative to the wider satisfied general population and core recreationist constituency throughout Maine.

Controversy related to the Maine Question 1 referendum in 2014 must also be viewed in light of the findings above. It must be acknowledged that there is generally less support for the hunting of bear than for certain other species (e.g., deer); it is also true that trapping, hounding, and baiting are hunting methods of which a large percentage of the population disapproves. The MDIFW must recognize, however, that it was the hunting of bear and the specific methods of take that were being challenged during the election period, and not the MDIFW itself. In fact, there is much evidence to suggest that it was the high level of credibility MDIFW holds in the eyes of the public that ultimately helped to defeat Question 1.

Both the outcome of Question 1 and the quantitative and qualitative results from this study suggest that there may be no better time than now for MDIFW to capitalize on its trustworthiness by enacting ecological, biological, environmental, and recreational projects that are widely supported by Maine residents. The high credibility ratings and overall support for MDIFW as determined through this study amount to a mandate of sorts for the agency.

The overriding obligation for MDIFW is one of communications. While there would appear to be little opposition to MDIFW itself or to the services it provides, the study results indicate that Maine residents would like to know and hear more regarding the specifics of what the agency is doing.

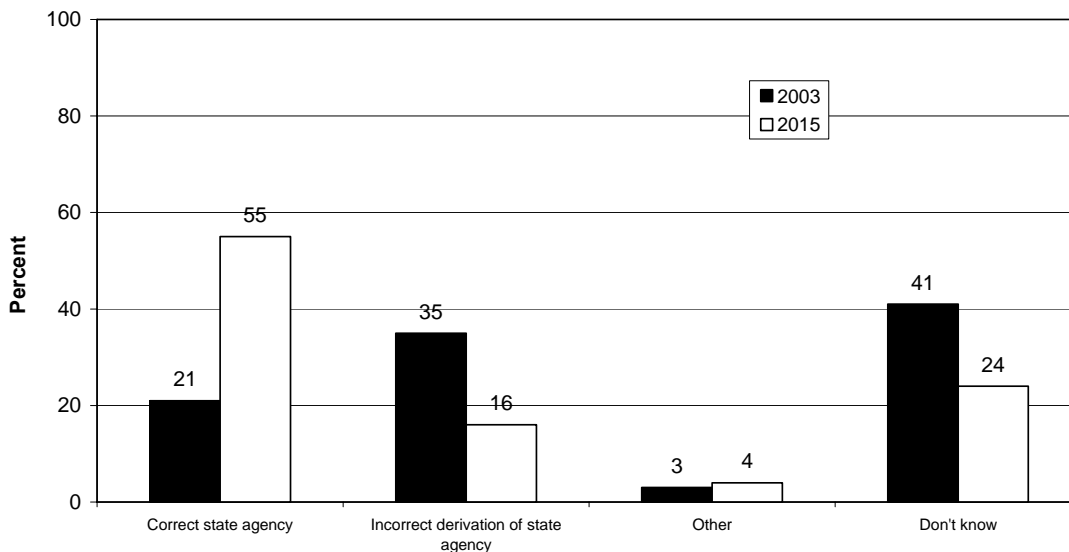
Awareness of MDIFW and Support For Agency Programs

The study results suggest two major delineations of market segments for raising awareness of the agency and its programs. The first delineation is based on geography, specifically the southern region of Maine versus the rest of the state (essentially a split between urban and rural markets).

The second delineation concerns constituent type, specifically traditional consumptive agency constituents (hunters, anglers, and trappers) versus non-consumptive outdoor recreationist groups (wildlife viewers, hikers, canoeists and kayakers, etc.). This latter division is partly cultural in nature, particularly insofar as many members of the former constituency tend to be older and more likely to live in rural areas compared to members of the latter constituency. In developing communications efforts moving forward, the agency should be aware of these market segments and their attendant needs and interests.

Another finding from the research mentioned earlier bears repeating here: awareness of the agency has increased remarkably since 2003 (see the trend graph below). While the exact reason for this increase cannot be determined quantitatively, two relatively high-profile ways the agency may have connected with residents in recent years include MDIFW's public statements on Question 1 in 2014 and the *North Woods Law* Maine game warden reality program on Animal Planet, which began airing in 2012.

Q196. Which government agency would you say is most responsible for managing and protecting freshwater fish and wildlife in Maine?



Following are some of the major ways suggested by the research for MDIFW to continue to increase awareness of the agency and its programs.

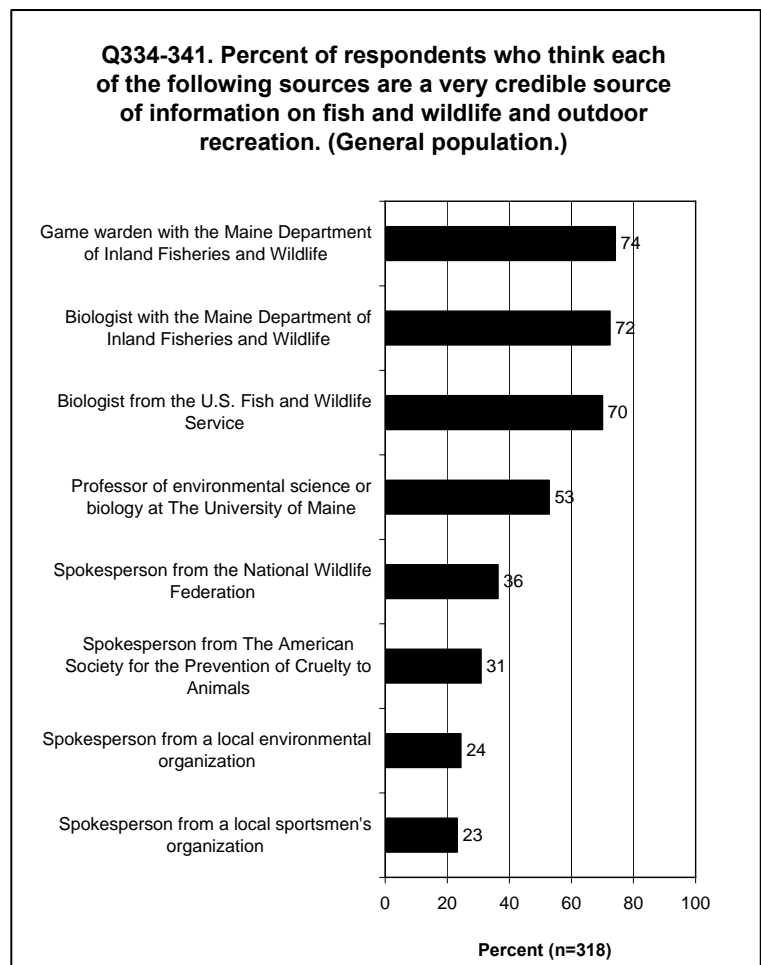
Create a unified look for MDIFW. It is first and foremost recommended that all MDIFW efforts be unified under a single, consistent look. MDIFW should strive to create a visual image for the agency that is widespread and unmistakable, so that any public projects or actions undertaken by MDIFW include the image and be recognized as the work of the agency. (Note that in the focus groups, about half of the general population residents said that they recognized MDIFW's current logo; in the constituent group, virtually all participants recognized it.)

Recognize that all MDIFW staff are potential agency spokespersons. Perceptions of MDIFW can be highly influenced by interactions with agency staff, from biologists and support staff to game wardens and information and education specialists. All MDIFW staff have an obligation to further the good reputation of MDIFW by representing the agency well during public interactions. Therefore, each agency employee should consider him- or herself a potentially important communicator on behalf of MDIFW. MDIFW should further consider training all staff in communications and in the specific recommendations of this study.

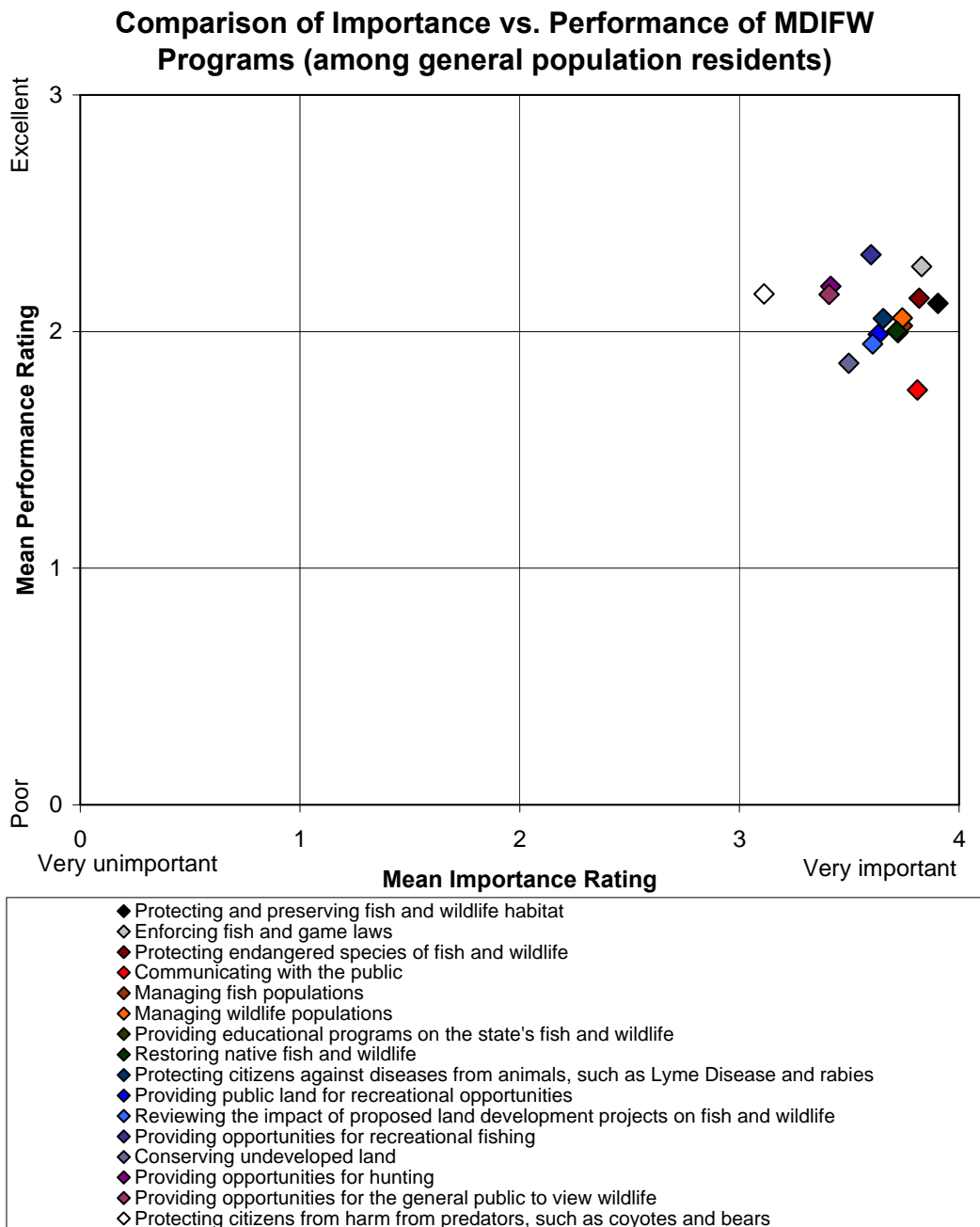
Promote the concept of “a healthy Maine.” MDIFW should adopt a messaging theme that ties together all of the various programs, initiatives, and work in which the agency is engaged. It is recommended that this theme focus on the key word *healthy*, a term with relevance to a number of different areas. Findings from the research reinforce the idea that this term effectively brings together all of the benefits of the work in which MDIFW is engaged, including healthy habitats, healthy wildlife, healthy Maine residents (thanks to their active engagement in various outdoor recreational activities), and a healthy economy.

Distribute messages using MDIFW credibility. As shown in the graph at right, MDIFW enjoys very strong credibility ratings among Maine general population residents. The fact that two MDIFW entities sit at the top of the ranking of *very credible* sources reinforces the need for MDIFW to handle its own communications with the public, rather than relying on outside entities.

Enlist two different MDIFW spokesperson figures. The quantitative and qualitative data suggest that a MDIFW spokesperson team consisting of a male game warden and a female biologist may be particularly effective. This combination would personify two important sides of the agency: the accessible and approachable side of the biologist as well as the necessary enforcement component embodied by the game warden. (Note that one of the game warden cast members of *North Woods Law* may be particularly suited to the latter role, given the individual’s expected comfort in front of a camera.)



Maintain continuous communication with the public. While the survey found generally high ratings for each of the various MDIFW programs and efforts, one major takeaway from the data is the discrepancy between the *importance* of communicating with the public and the agency's current *performance* in this area. This finding is illustrated in the scatterplot below, which compares the importance of various agency programs to MDIFW's current performance in the same programs. In general, the graph suggests that the public both views MDIFW's various programs as important and thinks that the agency is doing a good job in most of the areas. A key exception, however, is the red diamond representing communication with the public, which has a notably higher importance rating compared to its rating for the agency's current performance.

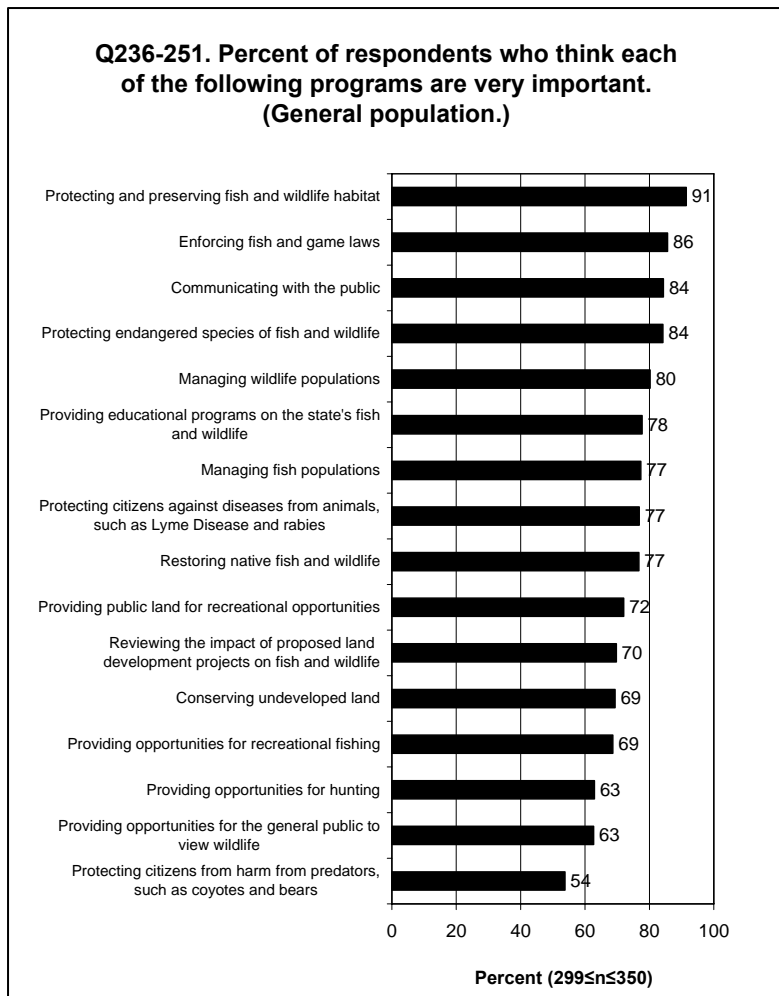


Recognize the importance of water quality issues. While no single issue dominated the open-ended question regarding the most important fish and wildlife issue facing Maine today, polluted water and water quality topped the list. (Note that this finding is consistent with results from other studies regarding residents' views on important environmental or conservation issues as measured through open-ended questions.) The implications of this finding are twofold: first, MDIFW should attempt to connect more general conservation and fish and wildlife issues to the public's high concern over water resources; second, the relative lack of any dominant top-of-mind issues means that MDIFW may effectively shape public perceptions based on the agency's own determination of priority issues (in other words, MDIFW may fill the vacuum of concern by introducing and explaining specific issues to the public as necessary).

Emphasize MDIFW's biological/ecological programs. The data suggest that MDIFW's biological and ecological programs are generally viewed as more important than the agency's outdoor recreational efforts. Communications efforts that emphasize the agency's work in these areas may be the most important. Additionally, the focus groups suggest that residents in the southern part of the state may have less awareness of MDIFW's efforts in these areas, even though these residents view biological and ecological programs as highly important. Therefore, MDIFW may wish to specifically target the southern part of the state with information about these types of initiatives.

Use familiarity with the Maine Loon License Plate and the Maine Wildlife Park as gateways to more detailed information about MDIFW. The data suggest reasonably high percentages of residents are aware of the Maine Loon License Plate and the Maine Wildlife Park, with at least

some people connecting these with MDIFW. In fact, these may be among the most visible signs of MDIFW's presence around the state, at least for some residents. Therefore, the Loon License Plate and the Maine Wildlife Park should be thought of as gateways to additional, more detailed information about the agency, whether through accompanying literature, commercials (using MDIFW spokespersons to connect the items to wider projects and initiatives of the agency), information disseminated at Departments of Motor Vehicles and the park itself, and other avenues directly associated with these two things.



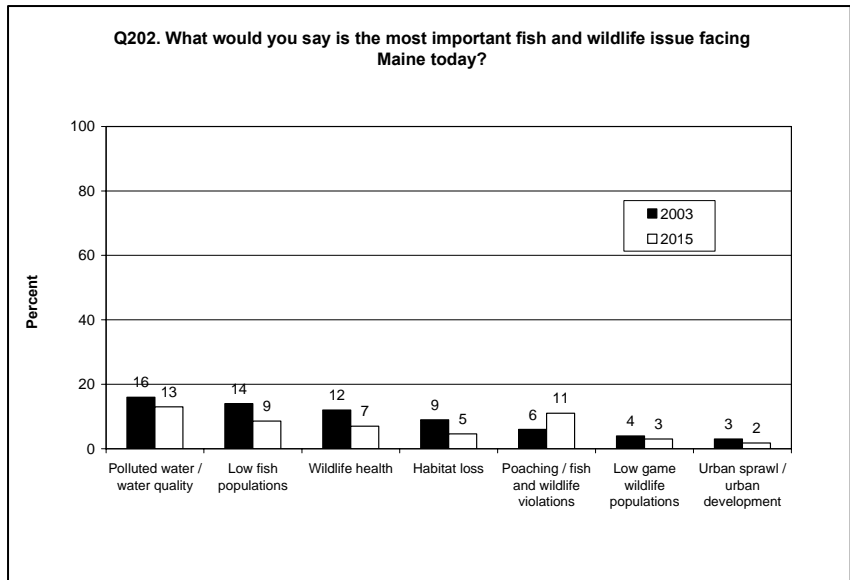
Educate the public on agency funding mechanisms through wider messages. Given relatively low awareness of the funding mechanisms for MDIFW, the agency should strive to build into all messages and communications key information on these revenue sources, specifically how hunting and fishing licenses are used to support the agency and basic facts about the Pittman-Robertson Act. However, the data suggest that awareness of agency funding mechanisms is most likely to improve if the topic is presented within the wider context of messages on conservation issues, habitat improvement, recreational opportunities, and other relevant subjects; it is recommended that MDIFW avoid crafting messages devoted *solely* to agency funding. This recommendation recalls the earlier note regarding the importance of broadly increasing communication with the public about biological, environmental, and ecological projects—messages should communicate the importance of these projects along with the fact that they are only possible through dedicated agency funding.

Develop communications specific to key constituent groups. The survey results underscore a number of important attitudinal and participatory differences between hunters, anglers, trappers, and other core agency constituent groups. The survey showed that trappers, for example, often greatly differ from the other groups, such as having higher levels of avidity in activities even beyond trapping; the qualitative data also suggests that these individuals may often be more likely to offer feedback regarding agency decision-making—in short, Maine trappers would appear to be a particularly engaged constituent group. On the other hand, the survey results suggest that many anglers may be more loosely affiliated with fishing and to the work of MDIFW in general. For example, a certain segment of Maine anglers may purchase a license solely to fish for a few days on a family trip, or because they intend to accompany someone else fishing. Whatever the reason, this cohort within the Maine fishing population represents a constituency with comparatively looser ties to the agency. (As another example, Maine birdwatchers are notably more likely to be female, educated, and to reside in an urban area—this is yet another specific constituent group with a unique set of needs and interests.)

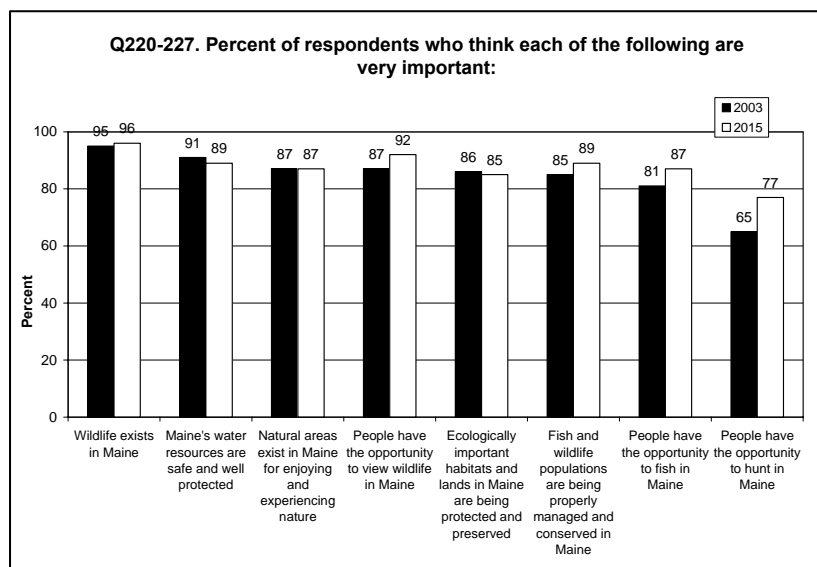
At any rate, the differences between the various core consumptive constituent groups imply that communications directed at them must be customized to each group; rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, materials and messages must be attuned to each group's characteristics. To this end, the attached pages provide summaries of relevant demographic and attitudinal data for some of MDIFW's major constituent groups. These summaries help establish some of the key differences between the groups and suggest how marketing to the various groups should differ.

Ensure that core constituent groups are aware of the agency programs relevant to them. The survey found some notable deficits in hunters' and anglers' awareness of initiatives that directly concern them. For example, just 61% of anglers had heard a great deal or a moderate amount about MDIFW's fish stocking program, while only 48% of hunters were likewise familiar with the agency's management plans for big game wildlife. These findings suggest the need for more consistent and/or detailed messaging to target hunters and anglers about programs relevant to them. Doing so will help reinforce a stronger relationship between MDIFW and these groups, thereby encouraging consistent participation and support for agency programs.

Use *North Woods Law* and its Twitter followers to engage the public about relevant MDIFW topics. A few items from the data suggest the potential influence of *North Woods Law*: in a question concerning the most important fish and wildlife issue facing Maine today, every issue with the exception of “poaching / fish and wildlife violations” decreased in importance since the 2003 survey (the latter topic rose by five percentage points).



Given that *North Woods Law* often devotes considerable airtime to these topics, one might logically expect that the show has had some influence on Maine residents’ opinions on the importance of curbing poaching and fish and wildlife violations. It follows that *North Woods Law* may have strong potential as a vehicle for covering topics that align with Maine residents’ opinions on the top priorities of MDIFW. While the show’s content and focus are obviously influenced by certain factors beyond the control of MDIFW (i.e., the creative decisions of Animal Planet and the show’s producers), the program nonetheless represents an important mainstream media opportunity for covering what residents see as the top priorities of the agency (e.g., protecting and preserving habitat, protecting endangered species, and managing wildlife populations). MDIFW should especially capitalize on the show’s thousands of Twitter followers: even if the show ends soon, these individuals should nonetheless be enticed to stay engaged with MDIFW through Twitter updates on topics connected to the show and the agency.



Recognize that ballot items such as 2014’s Question 1 will likely increase focus on the right to hunt. The uptick in the percentage of residents who consider having the opportunity to hunt in Maine as *very important* may be partly interpreted as an affirmation of hunting in reaction to Question 1. Focus group findings also suggest that some hunters and trappers considered MDIFW’s statements in support of hunting during the debate to be important to their own positive views of the agency.

Participation in Outdoor Recreational Activities

Results from the survey regarding Maine residents' current participation in outdoor recreational activities are largely positive: specifically, substantial percentages of Maine residents participate in a variety of outdoor activities in the state; recreationists tend to be largely satisfied with their recreational experiences; and there are generally few unmet needs among Maine's outdoor recreationists regarding their participation in various activities.

A useful comparison of resident participation rates in outdoor activities can be made with the previous Maine SCORP survey. As shown below, select comparisons of similar activities asked about in the two surveys show fairly similar rates of participation, thereby reinforcing the consistency among the two sets of data.

ACTIVITY		PARTICIPATION RATE (percentages)	
SCORP Survey	RM Survey	SCORP Survey	RM Survey
Hunting	Hunting	18.8	19
Freshwater fishing	Freshwater fishing	35.4	36
Motorboating	Motorboating	38	42
Wildlife viewing / photographing	Wildlife viewing / photographing at least one mile from your home	62.1	62
Swimming in lakes, streams, etc.	Swimming in natural waters, such as a lake or river	64.4	68
Rafting, rowing, waterskiing, use personal watercraft [asked as separate activities]	Other water-based activities, such as rafting, tubing, or waterskiing	12.3; 9.8; 7.1; 6.9 Combined total of 36.1	23
Running or jogging; walking for pleasure [asked as separate activities]	Walking or running on trails for fitness	27.7; 87.6	68
Mountain biking	Mountain biking	27.7	12
Horseback riding	Horseback riding	7.0	5
Visit a wilderness or primitive area	Visiting a wilderness or primitive area	47.1	54
Day hiking	Hiking	41.3	62
Developed camping; primitive camping [asked as separate activities]	Camping	34.5; 27.3	46
Drive off-road	ATV or other off-road driving	26.7	29
Gather mushrooms, berries, etc.	Gathering mushrooms, berries, or other wild food	52.7	40
Visit nature centers, zoos, etc.; visit historic sites; visit prehistoric archeological sites [asked as separate activities]	Visiting a state or national park	56.5, 46.8, 18.3	61

The following section offers recommendations related to participation in outdoor recreational activities among Maine residents.

Enlarge, rather than shift, MDIFW management of and focus on outdoor recreation.

Given that many more Maine residents participate in non-consumptive recreational activities than consumptive activities (hunting, fishing, and trapping), MDIFW should strive to communicate more about its work managing areas and facilities related to the top categories of non-consumptive activity participation, including wildlife viewing, swimming in natural waters, walking and running on trails, hiking, canoeing and kayaking, camping, and motorboating. In short, MDIFW should expand its constituency by reminding the public that it does not merely represent and manage the needs of the “hook and bullet” crowd, but is responsible for the management of a wider array of recreational opportunities. MDIFW communications should have the goal of enlarging agency efforts to encompass these areas, as opposed to shifting efforts to them. MDIFW has a healthy and largely satisfied traditional constituent base of license purchasers; the current imperative is to communicate exactly how much the agency accomplishes for other recreationist groups as well.

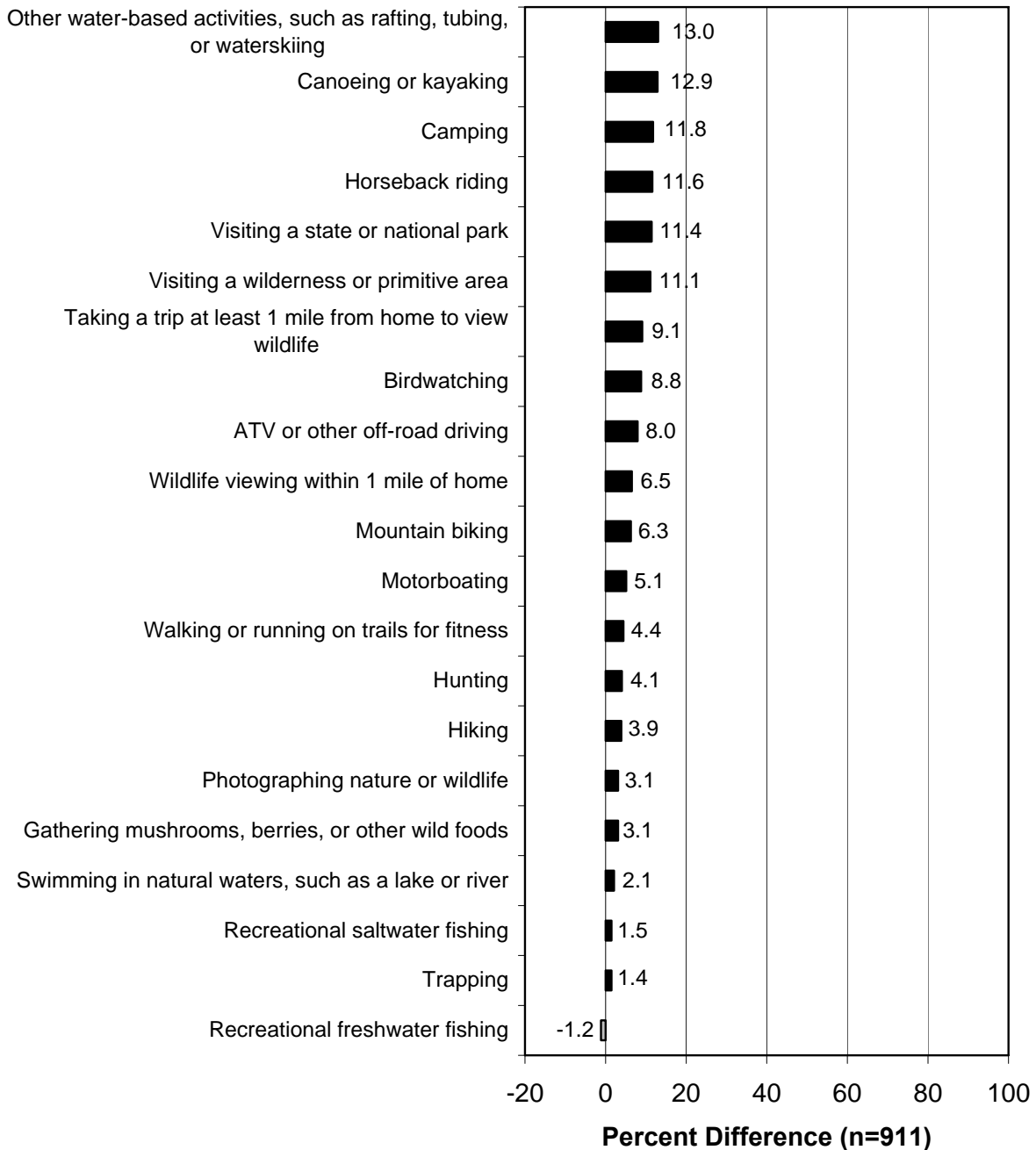
Recognize the importance of game species to wildlife viewing. Contrary to the notion that game species are for hunting and trapping and nongame species are for wildlife viewing, the top ranked species for wildlife viewing are in fact game species (deer, moose, wild turkey, etc.). Given the finding that game species are preferred over nongame species for wildlife viewing, MDIFW game programs should manage for viewing opportunities as well as hunting opportunities.

Use wildlife viewing as an entry point for more detailed communications about agency efforts. The survey found that the top reasons for viewing wildlife were to learn more about nature and wildlife. The implication is that wildlife viewers represent for MDIFW an immediate and receptive audience for additional communications on key agency initiatives and wider topics related to conservation, habitat improvement, and population management. In this sense, MDIFW materials targeting wildlife viewers should initially educate residents about the species they are viewing and then move into conservation issues. This progression is likely to succeed because it begins with what viewers are interested in most before moving into the topics that MDIFW would like for them to know.

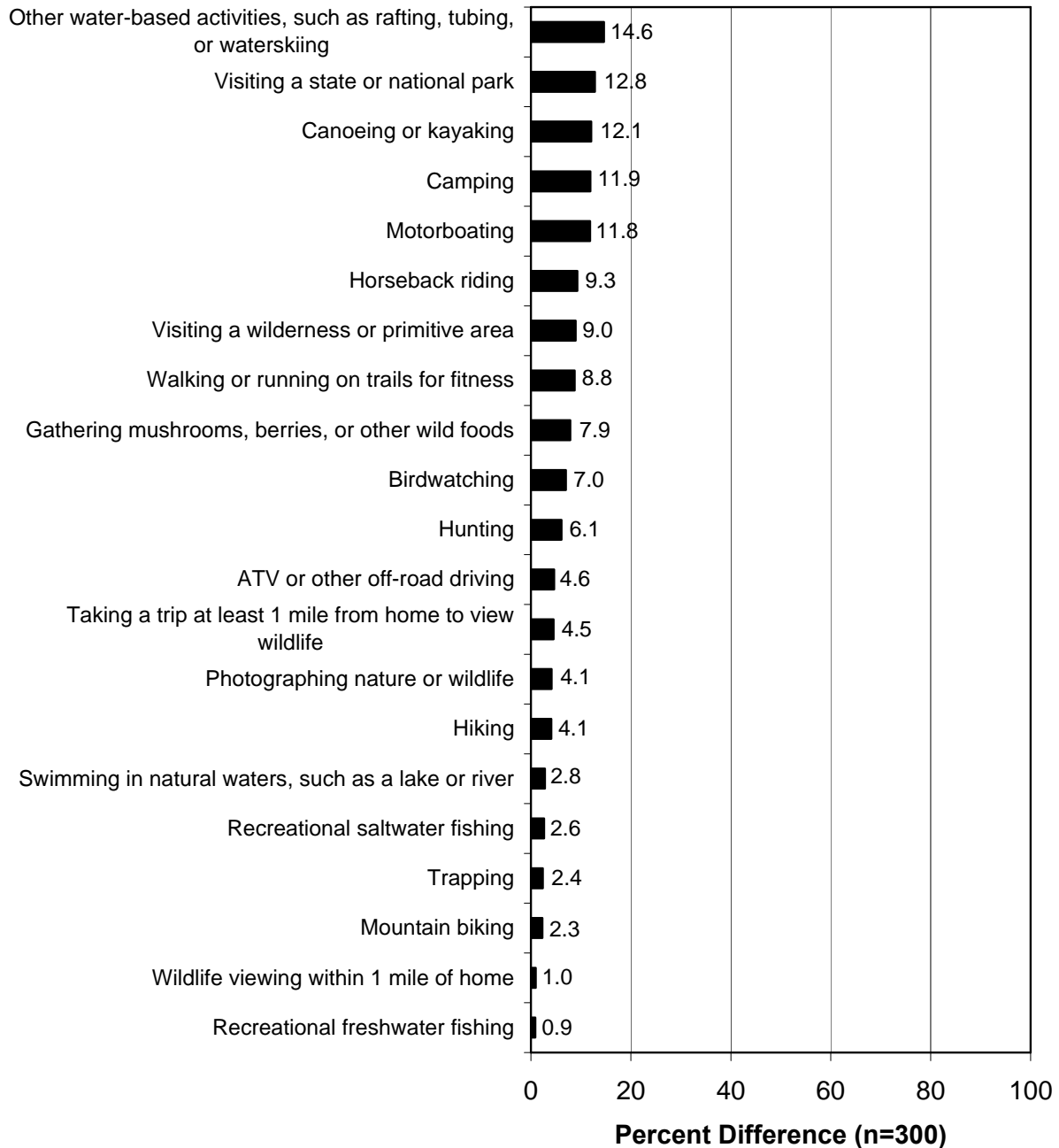
Take an active role in the next Maine SCORP planning process. While MDIFW was unable to participate in the most recent SCORP planning process due to staffing limitations, it is recommended that the agency participate in the next SCORP project; doing so will help MDIFW gain a better understanding of residents’ current needs for outdoor recreation opportunities and facilities around the state, which have direct implications on the work of the agency.

Promote activities according to the survey findings on latent demand. The survey data comparing activities in which residents have participated to activities in which they are very interested in participating provides some clear indications as to the activities with the most potential for growth. The graphs that follow illustrate latent demand for various activities among residents statewide and by region. Statewide, some of the top activities with growth potential include rafting, tubing, and waterskiing; canoeing or kayaking; camping; horseback riding; visiting a state/national park; and visiting a wilderness or primitive area. A further note is that many of these activities have strong potential for crossover marketing. For example, MDIFW may be able to successfully market fishing to canoeing/kayaking participants.

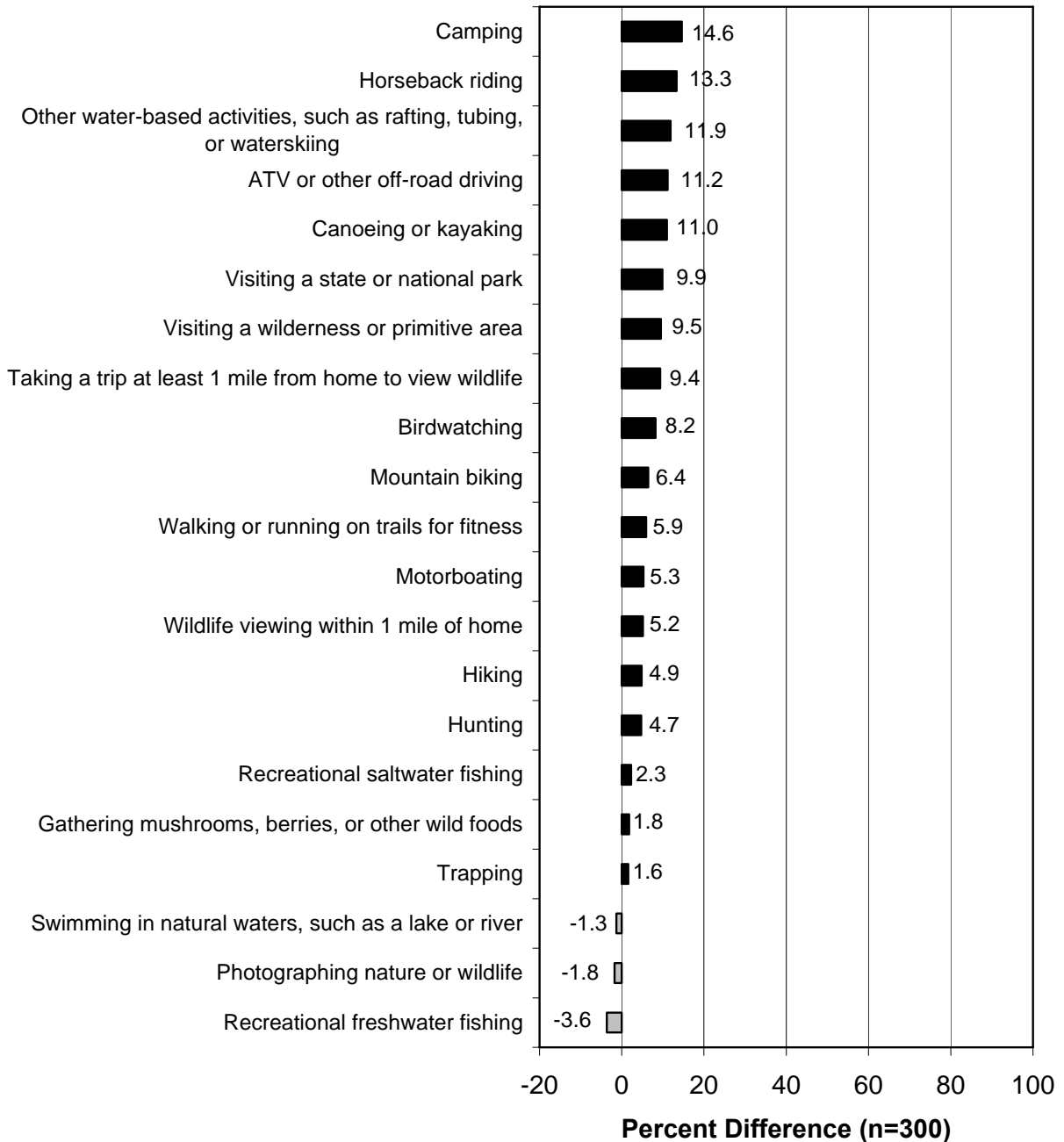
Comparison of participation in the past 12 months against those very interested in participating in the next 12 months (General population statewide):



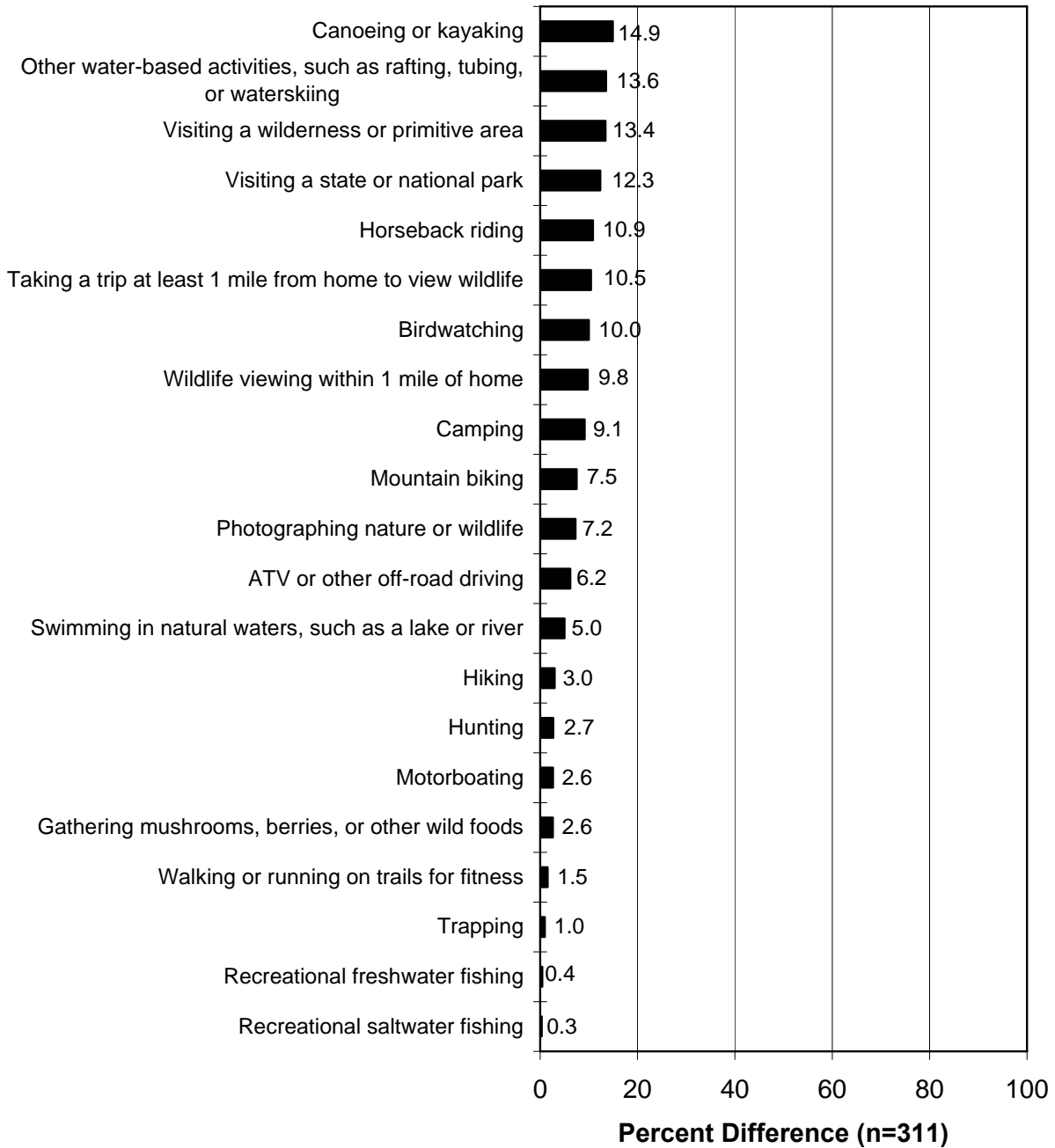
Comparison of participation in the past 12 months against those very interested in participating in the next 12 months (Northeast region only):



Comparison of participation in the past 12 months against those very interested in participating in the next 12 months (Central region only):



Comparison of participation in the past 12 months against those very interested in participating in the next 12 months (South region only):

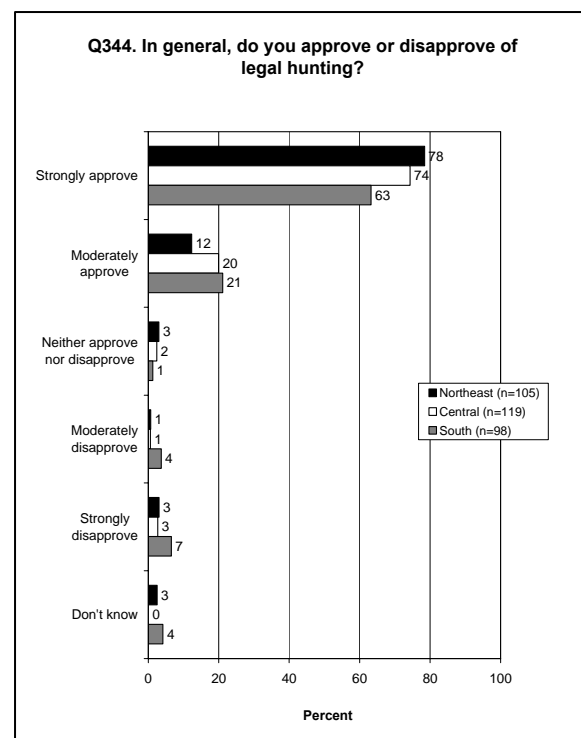


Develop activity-specific wildlife viewing brochures. Along the lines of the recommendation regarding information targeting wildlife viewers, the data suggests notable potential in a series of wildlife viewing brochures specific to various outdoor activities (e.g., *A Boater's Guide to Wildlife Viewing in Maine*; *A Hiker's Guide to Wildlife Viewing in Maine*; etc.). Such publications could include useful information specific to the environment of each activity, but could also offer targeted information on conservation and core MDIFW messages. This follows the logic of the wildlife viewing recommendation, specifically that materials from MDIFW begin with information that is relevant to the audience before moving into information that the agency itself considers a priority.

Emphasize the locavore appeal of hunting and fishing. The survey found that hunters' top reason for hunting was the meat (this is consistent with national trends), and there was also notable discussion in the constituent focus group about marketing hunting and fishing to newcomers as a way for them to obtain inexpensive, organic, chemical-free venison and other meat. MDIFW hunting and fishing recruitment efforts targeting certain segments of newcomers (particularly in the more urban southern part of the state) may find value in emphasizing "non-traditional" motivations for engaging in these activities, such as sustainable eating, humanely or ethically harvested food, interest in healthy foods or new types of foods, self-sufficiency, and the development of personal connections to food, land, and nature itself.

Recognize the difference in attitudes toward hunting in the southern and northern parts of Maine. Along the lines of the above recommendation, it is recommended that MDIFW develop messages about the importance of hunting specifically targeting residents in southern Maine. The regional crosstabulation for the survey question regarding approval of hunting suggests that pockets of disapproval in the southern part of the state persist. This region of the state is a prime area in which to communicate those benefits of hunting that are most likely to be widely supported by the public (i.e., for the meat, for population control, and for wildlife management).

Strive to improve access for various outdoor recreation activities through programs, and continuously communicate such improvements. The top response to the question in the survey concerning the most important issues affecting outdoor recreation in Maine was access for activities in general. As the majority of land in Maine is private, any enhancements to MDIFW's existing recreational access programs (e.g., the Outdoor Partners Landowner Relations Program) should be well publicized to constituents. The key recommendation here is communicating to residents that MDIFW is actively working to improve access, in part by enhancing current access programs.



Recognize that social constraints are bigger obstacles to outdoor recreation participation than resource or structural constraints.

In the survey, the top reason preventing residents from participating in recreational activities as much as they would like is a lack of time. Knowing this, it seems that a messaging campaign from MDIFW that explicitly mentions “time” could help to address the psychological component of a perceived lack of time for outdoor activities (“take back time,” “spend time outdoors,” “devote time to nature,” etc.). While it is certainly true that many would-be recreationists have obligations preventing them from engaging in outdoor activities as much as they would like, there likely exists a further segment of the population for whom the *perception* of a lack of time is the greater hurdle to their participation. Therefore, it may be effective to explicitly mention “time” and to further connect the term to the concept of “health” and/or “a healthy Maine.”

Addressing the importance of social constraints over resource constraints in urging Americans to take part in outdoor activities, Aldo Leopold once wrote, “Recreational development is a job not of building roads into lovely country, but of building receptivity into the still unlovely human mind.” (See Chapter 19, “Conservation Esthetic,” in *A Sand County Almanac*.)

Cross-market outdoor recreational activities to the relevant groups. A key marketing strategy for increasing participation in outdoor recreation is to cross-market activities to relevant groups. Many of the crosstabulated results from the survey reinforce the importance of marketing outdoor recreation activities to other categories of outdoor recreationists; rather than strictly demographic groups, the crosstabulations point to other recreationist groups whose members do not participate in certain activities but who express interest in doing so. While there are some fairly obvious examples of this within the consumptive category alone (i.e., marketing hunting to anglers and fishing to hunters), there are also examples that span consumptive and non-consumptive categories alike. For example, some of the top groups interested in freshwater fishing include horseback riders, birdwatchers, and nature photographers.

The table below provides some key examples of cross-marketing target audiences from these analyses; the complete findings are included in the survey report. Note that the marketing summaries attached to this list of recommendations also reiterate some of the top groups with potential for cross-over marketing (note that these rankings include both recreationist and general demographic categories).

Activity	Top Recreationist Groups Interested in Participating
Freshwater fishing	Horseback riders Birdwatchers Nature photographers
Saltwater fishing	Horseback riders Freshwater anglers Mountain bikers
Hunting	Mountain bikers Saltwater anglers ATV / off-rovers
Trapping	Hunters Saltwater anglers Horseback riders

MAINE GENERAL POPULATION RESIDENTS: DEMOGRAPHICS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Gender	
Male	48%
Female	52%

Age	
Mean	48.9 years
Median	50 years

Education Level	
Professional or doctorate degree	4%
Master's degree	12%
Bachelor's degree	24%
Associate's or trade school degree	11%
Some college or trade school	17%
High school graduate	25%
Not a high school graduate	3%

County of Residence	
Androscoggin	6.9%
Aroostook	5.8%
Cumberland	18.6%
Franklin	1.8%
Hancock	4.3%
Kennebec	12.0%
Knox	2.9%
Lincoln	2.3%
Oxford	3.4%
Penobscot	11.4%
Piscataquis	1.6%
Sagadahoc	3.5%
Somerset	2.9%
Waldo	3.0%
Washington	2.4%
York	16.2%

Income	
\$120,000 or more	10%
\$100,000 - \$119,999	5%
\$80,000 - \$99,999	8%
\$60,000 - \$79,999	12%
\$40,000 - \$59,999	12%
\$20,000 - \$39,999	15%
Under \$20,000	8%

Race/Ethnic Background	
White / Caucasian	92%
Native American / Alaskan native	2%
Black / African-American	0%
Hispanic / Latino	0%
South Asian	0%
East Asian	0%
Middle Eastern	0%

Residence Type	
Large city or urban area	8%
Suburban area	10%
Small city or town	43%
Rural area on a farm or ranch	6%
Rural area NOT on a farm or ranch	30%

Note: "Other/don't know/unsure/none of the above" removed; results may not sum to 100%.

MAINE GENERAL POPULATION RESIDENTS: KEY MARKETING INFORMATION

Percent of Maine residents who correctly named the MDIFW as the agency most responsible for managing and protecting freshwater fish and wildlife in Maine:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 55%
Percent of Maine residents who knew a great deal about the MDIFW prior to the survey:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 20%
Percent of Maine residents who are very satisfied with the MDIFW as an agency:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 40%
Top 5 programs/projects of the MDIFW about which Maine residents have heard a great deal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Loon Plate (38%) ○ The Marine Sportsman Plate (22%) ○ Maine Wildlife Park (22%) ○ Fish stocking (19%) ○ Wildlife Management Areas (14%)
Top 5 MDIFW programs considered to be very important by Maine residents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protecting fish/wildlife habitat (91%) ○ Enforcing fish and game laws (86%) ○ Communicating with the public (84%) ○ Protecting endangered species (84%) ○ Managing wildlife populations (80%)
Top 5 sources of information on fish, wildlife, hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, or other forms of outdoor recreation among Maine residents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internet (56%) ○ MDIFW website (15%) ○ Newspapers (13%) ○ TV (13%) ○ Magazines (6%)
Top 5 sources of information on fish and wildlife viewed as very credible by Maine residents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Game warden with the MDIFW (74%) ○ Biologist with the MDIFW (72%) ○ Biologist with the USFWS (70%) ○ Professor of environmental science or biology at University of Maine (53%) ○ Spokesperson from the NWF (36%)
Percent of Maine residents who strongly agree that the MDIFW provides enough information/communication to meet the public's needs on fish/wildlife, hunting/fishing, wildlife watching, and other outdoor recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 22%
Top 5 activities in which Maine residents participate:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wildlife viewing <1 mile from home (70%) ○ Swimming in natural waters (68%) ○ Walking/running on trails (68%) ○ Hiking (62%) ○ Wildlife viewing >1 mile from home (62%)
Top 5 other activities in which Maine residents are very interested in participating but did not participate in the past 12 months:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visiting a state or national park (16%) ○ Visiting a wilderness area (16%) ○ Rafting, tubing, waterskiing (15%) ○ Viewing wildlife >1 mile from home (15%) ○ Camping (14%)

MAINE LICENSED HUNTERS: DEMOGRAPHICS AND CHARACTERISTICS

19% of Maine residents participated in hunting in the past 12 months.

Gender	
Male	88%
Female	12%

Age	
Mean	52.5 years
Median	53 years

Education Level	
Professional or doctorate degree	3%
Master's degree	6%
Bachelor's degree	21%
Associate's or trade school degree	14%
Some college or trade school	23%
High school graduate	29%
Not a high school graduate	4%

County of Residence	
Androscoggin	6.1%
Aroostook	11.3%
Cumberland	17.7%
Franklin	3.2%
Hancock	4.8%
Kennebec	8.7%
Knox	2.3%
Lincoln	2.6%
Oxford	3.5%
Penobscot	8.0%
Piscataquis	2.3%
Sagadahoc	2.9%
Somerset	5.5%
Waldo	2.9%
Washington	4.2%
York	14.1%

Income	
\$120,000 or more	15%
\$100,000 - \$119,999	7%
\$80,000 - \$99,999	12%
\$60,000 - \$79,999	14%
\$40,000 - \$59,999	19%
\$20,000 - \$39,999	13%
Under \$20,000	5%

Race/Ethnic Background	
White / Caucasian	89%
Native American / Alaskan native	2%
Black / African-American	0%
Hispanic / Latino	0%
South Asian	0%
East Asian	0%
Middle Eastern	0%

Residence Type	
Large city or urban area	6%
Suburban area	6%
Small city or town	37%
Rural area on a farm or ranch	11%
Rural area NOT on a farm or ranch	38%

Note: "Other/don't know/unsure/none of the above" removed; results may not sum to 100%.

MAINE LICENSED HUNTERS: KEY MARKETING INFORMATION

Percent of Maine hunters who correctly named the MDIFW as the agency most responsible for managing and protecting freshwater fish and wildlife in Maine:	○ 50%
Percent of Maine hunters who knew a great deal about the MDIFW prior to the survey:	○ 27%
Percent of Maine hunters who are very satisfied with the MDIFW as an agency:	○ 34%
Top 5 programs/projects of the MDIFW about which Maine hunters have heard a great deal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maine Wildlife Park (27%) ○ The Loon Plate (24%) ○ Fish stocking (21%) ○ Wildlife Management Areas (16%) ○ The Maine Sportsman Plate (15%)
Top 5 MDIFW programs considered to be very important by Maine hunters:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protecting fish/wildlife habitat (91%) ○ Enforcing fish and game laws (90%) ○ Managing wildlife populations (87%) ○ Providing hunting opportunities (84%) ○ Providing public land for recreation (82%)
Top 5 sources of information on fish, wildlife, hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, or other forms of outdoor recreation among Maine hunters:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internet (52%) ○ MDIFW website (21%) ○ Magazines (16%) ○ Fishing/hunting regulations digest (14%) ○ Newspapers (11%)
Top 5 sources of information on fish and wildlife viewed as very credible by Maine hunters:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Game warden with the MDIFW (75%) ○ Biologist with the MDIFW (70%) ○ Biologist with the USFWS (57%) ○ Professor of environmental science or biology at University of Maine (40%) ○ Local sportsmen's organization (29%)
Percent of Maine hunters who strongly agree that the MDIFW provides enough information/communication to meet the public's needs on fish/wildlife, hunting/fishing, wildlife watching, and other outdoor recreation	○ 24%
Top 5 other activities in which Maine hunters participate:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Freshwater fishing (79%) ○ Wildlife viewing < 1 mile from home (71%) ○ Swimming in natural waters (68%) ○ Wildlife viewing > 1 mile from home (68%) ○ Visiting a wilderness area (61%)
Top 5 other activities in which Maine hunters are very interested in participating but did not participate in the past 12 months:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wildlife viewing > 1 mile from home (12%) ○ Rafting, tubing, waterskiing (11%) ○ Visiting a state or national park (11%) ○ Canoeing or kayaking (11%) ○ Camping (11%)
Top 5 groups who are very interested in hunting in Maine but did not participate in the past 12 months (from general population survey):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Went trapping (16%) ○ Went ATVing or off-roading (12%) ○ Went horseback riding (12%) ○ Went saltwater fishing (10%) ○ Gathered mushrooms, berries, or other wild foods (9%)

MAINE LICENSED ANGLERS: DEMOGRAPHICS AND CHARACTERISTICS

41% of Maine residents participated in fishing in the past 12 months.

Gender	
Male	76%
Female	23%

Age	
Mean	48.3 years
Median	50 years

Education Level	
Professional or doctorate degree	4%
Master's degree	11%
Bachelor's degree	28%
Associate's or trade school degree	16%
Some college or trade school	19%
High school graduate	20%
Not a high school graduate	2%

County of Residence	
Androscoggin	4.2%
Aroostook	6.8%
Cumberland	16.9%
Franklin	2.5%
Hancock	5.9%
Kennebec	13.5%
Knox	5.1%
Lincoln	2.1%
Oxford	3.8%
Penobscot	7.6%
Piscataquis	1.3%
Sagadahoc	3.4%
Somerset	4.2%
Waldo	4.6%
Washington	2.1%
York	15.2%

Income	
\$120,000 or more	14%
\$100,000 - \$119,999	9%
\$80,000 - \$99,999	14%
\$60,000 - \$79,999	15%
\$40,000 - \$59,999	18%
\$20,000 - \$39,999	12%
Under \$20,000	4%

Race/Ethnic Background	
White / Caucasian	91%
Native American / Alaskan native	3%
Black / African-American	0%
Hispanic / Latino	0%
South Asian	0%
East Asian	0%
Middle Eastern	0%

Residence Type	
Large city or urban area	4%
Suburban area	10%
Small city or town	42%
Rural area on a farm or ranch	7%
Rural area NOT on a farm or ranch	35%

Note: "Other/don't know/unsure/none of the above" removed; results may not sum to 100%.

MAINE LICENSED ANGLERS: KEY MARKETING INFORMATION

Percent of Maine anglers who correctly named the MDIFW as the agency most responsible for managing and protecting freshwater fish and wildlife in Maine:	○ 48%
Percent of Maine anglers who knew a great deal about the MDIFW prior to the survey:	○ 32%
Percent of Maine anglers who are very satisfied with the MDIFW as an agency:	○ 49%
Top 5 programs/projects of the MDIFW about which Maine anglers have heard a great deal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fish stocking (29%) ○ The Loon Plate (25%) ○ The Maine Sportsman Plate (18%) ○ Maine Wildlife Park (15%) ○ Wildlife Management Areas (14%)
Top 5 MDIFW programs considered to be very important by Maine anglers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protecting fish/wildlife habitat (92%) ○ Managing wildlife populations (91%) ○ Protecting endangered species (90%) ○ Restoring native fish and wildlife (88%) ○ Enforcing fish and game laws (84%)
Top 5 sources of information on fish, wildlife, hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, or other forms of outdoor recreation among Maine anglers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internet (67%) ○ MDIFW website (15%) ○ Magazines (13%) ○ Newspapers (11%) ○ Fishing/hunting regulations digest (10%)
Top 5 sources of information on fish and wildlife viewed as very credible by Maine anglers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Game warden with the MDIFW (83%) ○ Biologist with the MDIFW (73%) ○ Biologist with the USFWS (59%) ○ Professor of environmental science or biology at University of Maine (48%) ○ Spokesperson from the NWF (33%)
Percent of Maine anglers who strongly agree that the MDIFW provides enough information/communication to meet the public's needs on fish/wildlife, hunting/fishing, wildlife watching, and other outdoor recreation:	○ 15%
Top 5 other activities in which Maine anglers participate:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wildlife viewing < 1 mile from home (76%) ○ Swimming in natural waters (74%) ○ Wildlife viewing > 1 mile from home (69%) ○ Hiking (68%) ○ Canoeing or kayaking (67%)
Top 5 other activities in which Maine anglers are very interested in participating but did not participate in the past 12 months:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visiting a state or national park (15%) ○ Camping (14%) ○ Visiting a wilderness area (13%) ○ Birdwatching (12%) ○ Rafting, tubing, waterskiing (11%)
Top 5 groups who are very interested in freshwater fishing in Maine but did not participate in the past 12 months (from general population survey):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Went horseback riding (18%) ○ Photographed nature or wildlife (10%) ○ Went birdwatching (10%) ○ Younger than the median age (50) (10%) ○ Visited a wilderness area (10%)
Top 5 groups who are very interested in saltwater fishing in Maine but did not participate in the past 12 months (from general population survey):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Went motorboating (9%) ○ Annual income under \$60,000 (8%) ○ Lives in the Northeast region (8%) ○ Visited a wilderness area (8%) ○ Went ATVing or off-roading (8%)

MAINE REGISTERED BOATERS: DEMOGRAPHICS AND CHARACTERISTICS

42% of Maine residents participated in motorboating in the past 12 months.

Gender	
Male	87%
Female	12%

Age	
Mean	56.1 years
Median	58 years

Education Level	
Professional or doctorate degree	5%
Master's degree	12%
Bachelor's degree	32%
Associate's or trade school degree	14%
Some college or trade school	21%
High school graduate	15%
Not a high school graduate	1%

County of Residence	
Androscoggin	6.3%
Aroostook	9.3%
Cumberland	22.7%
Franklin	1.7%
Hancock	6.7%
Kennebec	8.0%
Knox	3.0%
Lincoln	2.3%
Oxford	3.7%
Penobscot	8.3%
Piscataquis	2.7%
Sagadahoc	2.7%
Somerset	2.7%
Waldo	1.7%
Washington	3.3%
York	15.0%

Income	
\$120,000 or more	22%
\$100,000 - \$119,999	10%
\$80,000 - \$99,999	11%
\$60,000 - \$79,999	10%
\$40,000 - \$59,999	15%
\$20,000 - \$39,999	7%
Under \$20,000	5%

Race/Ethnic Background	
White / Caucasian	88%
Native American / Alaskan native	3%
Black / African-American	0%
Hispanic / Latino	1%
South Asian	0%
East Asian	0%
Middle Eastern	0%

Residence Type	
Large city or urban area	4%
Suburban area	8%
Small city or town	38%
Rural area on a farm or ranch	8%
Rural area NOT on a farm or ranch	41%

Note: "Other/don't know/unsure/none of the above" removed; results may not sum to 100%.

MAINE REGISTERED BOATERS: KEY MARKETING INFORMATION

Percent of Maine boaters who correctly named the MDIFW as the agency most responsible for managing and protecting freshwater fish and wildlife in Maine:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 52%
Percent of Maine boaters who knew a great deal about the MDIFW prior to the survey:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 24%
Percent of Maine boaters who are very satisfied with the MDIFW as an agency:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 30%
Top 5 programs/projects of the MDIFW about which Maine boaters have heard a great deal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Loon Plate (26%) ○ Fish stocking (22%) ○ The Maine Sportsman Plate (18%) ○ Wildlife Management Areas (18%) ○ Maine Wildlife Park (17%)
Top 5 MDIFW programs considered to be very important by Maine boaters:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protecting fish/wildlife habitat (89%) ○ Enforcing fish and game laws (85%) ○ Managing fish populations (81%) ○ Providing public land for recreation (81%) ○ Protecting endangered species (81%)
Top 5 sources of information on fish, wildlife, hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, or other forms of outdoor recreation among Maine boaters:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internet (56%) ○ Newspapers (15%) ○ Fishing/hunting regulations digest (13%) ○ MDIFW website (12%) ○ TV (10%)
Top 5 sources of information on fish and wildlife viewed as very credible by Maine boaters:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Game warden with the MDIFW (66%) ○ Biologist with the MDIFW (66%) ○ Biologist with the USFWS (56%) ○ Professor of environmental science or biology at University of Maine (46%) ○ Spokesperson from the NWF (25%)
Percent of Maine boaters who strongly agree that the MDIFW provides enough information/communication to meet the public's needs on fish/wildlife, hunting/fishing, wildlife watching, and other outdoor recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 12%
Top 5 other activities in which Maine boaters participate:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Freshwater fishing (75%) ○ Swimming in natural waters (74%) ○ Wildlife viewing < 1 mile from home (66%) ○ Wildlife viewing > 1 mile from home (59%) ○ Hunting (53%)
Top 5 other activities in which Maine boaters are very interested in participating but did not participate in the past 12 months:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visiting a state or national park (15%) ○ Wildlife viewing > 1 mile from home (10%) ○ Camping (10%) ○ Rafting, tubing, waterskiing (9%) ○ Hiking (9%)
Top 5 groups who are very interested in motorboating in Maine but did not participate in the past 12 months (from general population survey):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lives in the Northeast region (17%) ○ Participated in rafting, tubing, waterskiing (16%) ○ Annual income under \$60,000 (13%) ○ Younger than the median age (50) (13%) ○ Went camping (13%)
Top 5 groups who are very interested in canoeing or kayaking in Maine but did not participate in the past 12 months (from general population survey):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Went trapping (16%) ○ Female (16%) ○ Younger than the median age (50) (15%) ○ Lives in the South region (15%) ○ Viewed wildlife < 1 mile from home (15%)

MAINE LICENSED TRAPPERS: DEMOGRAPHICS AND CHARACTERISTICS

2% of Maine residents participated in trapping in the past 12 months.

Gender	
Male	92%
Female	7%

Age	
Mean	52.3 years
Median	53 years

Education Level	
Professional or doctorate degree	2%
Master's degree	7%
Bachelor's degree	20%
Associate's or trade school degree	19%
Some college or trade school	23%
High school graduate	25%
Not a high school graduate	2%

County of Residence	
Androscoggin	5.8%
Aroostook	11.1%
Cumberland	7.2%
Franklin	4.5%
Hancock	5.0%
Kennebec	9.5%
Knox	1.4%
Lincoln	1.9%
Oxford	5.6%
Penobscot	14.5%
Piscataquis	5.6%
Sagadahoc	3.6%
Somerset	6.1%
Waldo	3.9%
Washington	7.5%
York	6.4%

Income	
\$120,000 or more	11%
\$100,000 - \$119,999	8%
\$80,000 - \$99,999	13%
\$60,000 - \$79,999	16%
\$40,000 - \$59,999	21%
\$20,000 - \$39,999	17%
Under \$20,000	6%

Race/Ethnic Background	
White / Caucasian	88%
Native American / Alaskan native	2%
Black / African-American	0%
Hispanic / Latino	0%
South Asian	0%
East Asian	0%
Middle Eastern	0%

Residence Type	
Large city or urban area	2%
Suburban area	5%
Small city or town	30%
Rural area on a farm or ranch	15%
Rural area NOT on a farm or ranch	46%

Note: "Other/don't know/unsure/none of the above" removed; results may not sum to 100%.

MAINE LICENSED TRAPPERS: KEY MARKETING INFORMATION

Percent of Maine trappers who correctly named the MDIFW as the agency most responsible for managing and protecting freshwater fish and wildlife in Maine:	○ 68%
Percent of Maine trappers who knew a great deal about the MDIFW prior to the survey:	○ 42%
Percent of Maine trappers who are very satisfied with the MDIFW as an agency:	○ 23%
Top 5 programs/projects of the MDIFW about which Maine trappers have heard a great deal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fish stocking (43%) ○ Maine Wildlife Park (24%) ○ The Loon Plate (22%) ○ The Maine Sportsman Plate (19%) ○ Wildlife Management Areas (19%)
Top 5 MDIFW programs considered to be very important by Maine trappers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protecting fish/wildlife habitat (93%) ○ Managing wildlife populations (88%) ○ Providing hunting opportunities (87%) ○ Enforcing fish and game laws (84%) ○ Managing fish populations (83%)
Top 5 sources of information on fish, wildlife, hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, or other forms of outdoor recreation among Maine trappers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internet (53%) ○ MDIFW website (29%) ○ Fishing/hunting regulations digest (25%) ○ Magazines (15%) ○ TV (13%)
Top 5 sources of information on fish and wildlife viewed as very credible by Maine trappers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Biologist with the MDIFW (66%) ○ Game warden with the MDIFW (63%) ○ Local sportsmen's organization (35%) ○ Biologist with the USFWS (32%) ○ Professor of environmental science or biology at University of Maine (17%)
Percent of Maine trappers who strongly agree that the MDIFW provides enough information/communication to meet the public's needs on fish/wildlife, hunting/fishing, wildlife watching, and other outdoor recreation	○ 20%
Top 5 other activities in which Maine trappers participate:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hunting (93%) ○ Freshwater fishing (87%) ○ Wildlife viewing < 1 mile from home (70%) ○ Wildlife viewing > 1 mile from home (69%) ○ Canoeing or kayaking (64%)
Top 5 other activities in which Maine trappers are very interested in participating but did not participate in the past 12 months:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Camping (12%) ○ Visiting a wilderness area (8%) ○ Saltwater fishing (8%) ○ Hiking (7%) ○ Visiting a state or national park (7%)
Top 5 groups who are very interested in trapping in Maine but did not participate in the past 12 months (from general population survey):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Went ATVing or off-roading (4%) ○ Went horseback riding (4%) ○ Went hunting (3%) ○ Annual income under \$60,000 (3%) ○ Lives in the Northeast region (3%)

MAINE WILDLIFE VIEWERS: DEMOGRAPHICS AND CHARACTERISTICS

85% of Maine residents participated in some type of wildlife viewing in the past 12 months.

Gender	
Male	45.7%
Female	54.2%

Age	
Mean	49.0 years
Median	50 years

Education Level	
Professional or doctorate degree	4.1%
Master's degree	12.3%
Bachelor's degree	25.8%
Associate's or trade school degree	9.7%
Some college or trade school	18.3%
High school graduate	24.0%
Not a high school graduate	3.0%

County of Residence	
Androscoggin	6.5%
Aroostook	6.2%
Cumberland	17.7%
Franklin	1.7%
Hancock	4.4%
Kennebec	11.8%
Knox	3.1%
Lincoln	2.3%
Oxford	3.6%
Penobscot	11.9%
Piscataquis	1.6%
Sagadahoc	3.9%
Somerset	3.2%
Waldo	3.5%
Washington	2.6%
York	15.3%

Income	
\$120,000 or more	10.6%
\$100,000 - \$119,999	4.9%
\$80,000 - \$99,999	8.7%
\$60,000 - \$79,999	12.0%
\$40,000 - \$59,999	11.9%
\$20,000 - \$39,999	16.0%
Under \$20,000	8.5%

Race/Ethnic Background	
White / Caucasian	93.2%
Native American / Alaskan native	1.9%
Black / African-American	0.4%
Hispanic / Latino	0.4%
South Asian	0.3%
East Asian	0.1%
Middle Eastern	0.1%

Residence Type	
Large city or urban area	6.9%
Suburban area	9.8%
Small city or town	43.5%
Rural area on a farm or ranch	6.4%
Rural area NOT on a farm or ranch	31.3%

Note: "Other/don't know/unsure/none of the above" removed; results may not sum to 100%.

MAINE WILDLIFE VIEWERS: KEY MARKETING INFORMATION

Percent of Maine wildlife viewers who correctly named the MDIFW as the agency most responsible for managing and protecting freshwater fish and wildlife in Maine:	○ 58%
Percent of Maine wildlife viewers who knew a great deal about the MDIFW prior to the survey:	○ 19%
Percent of Maine wildlife viewers who are very satisfied with the MDIFW as an agency:	○ 41%
Top 5 programs/projects of the MDIFW of which Maine wildlife viewers are aware:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Loon Plate (39%) ○ Maine Wildlife Park (24%) ○ Maine Sportsman Plate (23%) ○ Fish stocking (20%) ○ Wildlife Management Areas (16%)
Top 5 MDIFW programs considered to be very important by Maine wildlife viewers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protecting fish/wildlife habitat (93%) ○ Enforcing fish and game laws (86%) ○ Communicating with the public (85%) ○ Protecting endangered species (84%) ○ Managing wildlife populations (81%)
Top 5 sources of information on fish, wildlife, hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, or other forms of outdoor recreation among Maine wildlife viewers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internet (57%) ○ MDIFW website (17%) ○ Newspapers (13%) ○ TV (12%) ○ Magazines (6%)
Top 5 sources of information on fish and wildlife viewed as very credible by Maine wildlife viewers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Game warden with the MDIFW (76%) ○ Biologist with the MDIFW (75%) ○ Biologist with the USFWS (72%) ○ Professor of environmental science or biology at University of Maine (54.0%) ○ Spokesperson from NWF (38%)
Percent of Maine wildlife viewers who agree that the MDIFW provides enough information/communication to meet the public's needs on fish/wildlife, hunting/fishing, wildlife watching, and other outdoor recreation	○ 21%
Top 5 other activities in which Maine wildlife viewers participate:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wildlife viewing < 1 mile of home (82%) ○ Wildlife viewing > 1 mile from home (73%) ○ Swimming in natural waters (72%) ○ Walking or running on trails (71%) ○ Hiking (67%)
Top 5 other activities in which Maine wildlife viewers are very interested in participating but did not participate in the past 12 months:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visiting a wilderness area (17%) ○ Visiting a state or national park (17%) ○ Rafting, tubing, waterskiing (15%) ○ Camping (15%) ○ Wildlife viewing > 1 mile from home (14%)
Top 5 groups who are very interested in at least one form of wildlife viewing in Maine but did not participate in any wildlife viewing activity in the past 12 months:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Male (5%) ○ Education less than bachelor's degree (5%) ○ Lives in the South region (4%) ○ Median age (50) or older (4%) ○ Went motorboating (4%)

MAINE CANOEISTS/KAYAKERS: DEMOGRAPHICS AND CHARACTERISTICS

48% of Maine residents participated in canoeing or kayaking in the past 12 months.

Gender	
Male	52%
Female	48%

Age	
Mean	45.2 years
Median	45 years

Education Level	
Professional or doctorate degree	6%
Master's degree	17%
Bachelor's degree	27%
Associate's or trade school degree	8%
Some college or trade school	16%
High school graduate	22%
Not a high school graduate	2%

County of Residence	
Androscoggin	6.3%
Aroostook	4.9%
Cumberland	21.3%
Franklin	1.7%
Hancock	4.2%
Kennebec	12.0%
Knox	2.9%
Lincoln	2.3%
Oxford	3.4%
Penobscot	10.6%
Piscataquis	1.8%
Sagadahoc	3.4%
Somerset	3.8%
Waldo	3.0%
Washington	2.1%
York	14.0%

Income	
\$120,000 or more	13%
\$100,000 - \$119,999	7%
\$80,000 - \$99,999	11%
\$60,000 - \$79,999	14%
\$40,000 - \$59,999	11%
\$20,000 - \$39,999	16%
Under \$20,000	6%

Race/Ethnic Background	
White / Caucasian	94%
Native American / Alaskan native	1%
Black / African-American	1%
Hispanic / Latino	1%
South Asian	1%
East Asian	0%
Middle Eastern	0%

Residence Type	
Large city or urban area	6%
Suburban area	11%
Small city or town	41%
Rural area on a farm or ranch	6%
Rural area NOT on a farm or ranch	33%

Note: "Other/don't know/unsure/none of the above" removed; results may not sum to 100%.

MAINE CANOEISTS / KAYAKERS: KEY MARKETING INFORMATION

Percent of Maine canoeists and kayakers who correctly named the MDIFW as the agency most responsible for managing and protecting freshwater fish and wildlife in Maine:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 60%
Percent of Maine canoeists and kayakers who knew a great deal about the MDIFW prior to the survey:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 24%
Percent of Maine canoeists and kayakers who are very satisfied with the MDIFW as an agency:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 46%
Top 5 programs/projects of the MDIFW about which Maine canoeists and kayakers have heard a great deal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Loon Plate (46%) ○ The Maine Sportsman Plate (31%) ○ Maine Wildlife Park (24%) ○ Fish stocking (20%) ○ Wildlife Management Areas (17%)
Top 5 MDIFW programs considered to be very important by Maine canoeists and kayakers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protecting fish/wildlife habitat (94%) ○ Enforcing fish and game laws (87%) ○ Communicating with the public (86%) ○ Protecting endangered species (83%) ○ Providing educational programs on the state's fish and wildlife (81.2%)
Top 5 sources of information on fish, wildlife, hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, or other forms of outdoor recreation among Maine canoeists and kayakers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internet (67%) ○ MDIFW website (20%) ○ TV (9%) ○ Newspapers (9%) ○ Fishing/hunting regulations digest (8%)
Top 5 sources of information on fish and wildlife viewed as very credible by Maine canoeists and kayakers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Biologist with the MDIFW (83%) ○ Biologist with the USFWS (78%) ○ Game warden with the MDIFW (76%) ○ Professor of environmental science or biology at University of Maine (56%) ○ Spokesperson from the NWF (41%)
Percent of Maine canoeists and kayakers who strongly agree that the MDIFW provides enough information/communication to meet the public's needs on fish/wildlife, hunting/fishing, wildlife watching, and other outdoor recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 20%
Top 5 other activities in which Maine canoeists and kayakers participate:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Swimming in natural waters (91%) ○ Hiking (87%) ○ Walking or running on trails (81%) ○ Wildlife viewing > 1 mile from home (79%) ○ Wildlife viewing < 1 mile from home (78%)
Top 5 other activities in which Maine canoeists and kayakers are very interested in participating but did not participate in the past 12 months:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rafting, tubing, waterskiing (19%) ○ Birdwatching (16%) ○ Horseback riding (15%) ○ Visiting a state or national park (14%) ○ Camping (13%)
Top 5 groups who are very interested in canoeing or kayaking in Maine but did not participate in the past 12 months:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Went trapping (16%) ○ Female (16%) ○ Younger than the median age (50) (15%) ○ Lives in the South region (15%) ○ Viewed wildlife < 1 mile from home (15%)

PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Mile Creek Communications relied heavily on the survey and focus group results to develop and write the plan. Additionally, the following documents were extensively reviewed:

- *Analysis of Public Attitudes Toward and Participation in Programs Managed by the MDIFW;*
- *Maine Residents' and Outdoor Recreationists' Attitudes toward Wildlife Management and Participation in Wildlife-Related Recreation;*
- *Management Assistance Team Review of the MDIFW;*
- *Recreational Hunter and Angler Market Report;*
- *Hunting in Maine 2013: A Statewide and Regional Analysis of Participation and Hunting Contributions;*
- *Fishing in Maine 2013: A Statewide and Regional Analysis of Participation and Hunting Contributions;*
- Several research documents produced by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF), including *Evaluation Results 2015—Boat Registration Marketing Program;* *RBFF State Renewals Final Report;* *RBFF 2015—Fishing License Marketing Program: State Results Summary;* and the *2015 Take Me Fishing Campaign Evaluation.*

Mile Creek Communications then reviewed and analyzed the MDIFW website, all of MDIFW's social media outlets, its organizational chart, the State of Maine Social Media policy, the agency's opt-in GovDelivery email database, the Maine Online Sportsman Electronic System (MOSES), legislation on issues and topics germane to the plan, and brochures about the Maine Wildlife Park and Swan Island, as well as other properties managed by MDIFW. Mile Creek Communications also interviewed MDIFW Information and Education staff regarding technological and online capabilities of the agency; key questions included the following:

- Do all MDIFW staff have internet access?
- Do all staff have access to an internal server allowing for cross-communication among departments?
- Do all staff have access to agency social media (YouTube, etc.)? What percentage of staff know how to utilize these media?
- Which staff have permission to manage agency email lists and post to agency social media accounts?
- Which position(s) within MDIFW currently manage and coordinate marketing, communications, and public relations?
- What are the agency's current data-mining capabilities?
- Is MOSES still in use, and when was the last time it was upgraded?
- What other lists does MDIFW currently own, and how does the agency utilize them? What percentage of the lists include email addresses?
- Who is responsible for pulling data for lists to create MDIFW communications?
- What is the approval process for sending communications to the list (for example, is there a long approval process for sending out reminders to buy a hunting license, or can this be done fairly expeditiously?)

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The importance of following through on the recommendations and strategies developed for the plan cannot be overstated. The results of the research and the plan itself will amount to little if MDIFW does not implement the plan in its entirety. Often the implementation of a marketing or communications plan does not occur in full because the process is viewed by agency staff as being too overwhelming. However, an essential point to remember is that evaluation of outcomes can only occur if the plan has been implemented in full. In other words, MDIFW cannot fully accomplish its mission unless implementation of the plan described here occurs. Fulfillment of goals and objectives cannot be fully determined unless the strategies recommended here are implemented.

It is recommended that MDIFW address the various plan components through prioritization. First, determine what can be accomplished easily and take the necessary steps to implement these tasks. Next, determine priorities that may require a higher level of time, effort, and funding. Accomplishing these, even if it takes a period of a year or more, will help pave the way for lower priority items that depend on the implementation of the higher priority items.

Progress is achieved as each item in the plan is addressed and completed. Initial accomplishments will help build momentum and sustain the desire to advance and improve. Recognition of accomplishments may occur both internally and externally. For example, if MDIFW redesigns its website, it will be important to recognize this step through press releases and social media outlets that reach both agency employees and external constituents.

A Note Regarding MDIFW Personnel

Implementation of this plan will require a considerable amount of staff time beyond the time currently dedicated to daily activities undertaken to achieve the agency's mission. However, it is not recommended that staff from other departments be moved into the Information and Education Division in order to execute the plan. Rather, MDIFW Division of Information and Education leadership should consider hiring new personnel or contractors to direct and manage various aspects of the plan (several recommendations included in the plan discuss this approach). Leadership must also plan for staff or contractors to manage coordinators, planners, specialists, graphic designers, web designers and interns.

It should be noted that a similar recommendation was included in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Management Assistance Team's "Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife 2003/2004 Review," stated as follows:

Information & Education Recommendation # 3: Fill at least three new positions in I&E to meet needs: webmaster/graphic designer, an additional public relations writer/editor, and a public relations specialist dedicated to the Warden Service.

EVALUATION

The key to refining marketing, communications, and public relations strategies is to evaluate efforts by determining their outcomes. This plan provides recommendations for evaluating the success of the various efforts, but evaluation should be considered a general rule for any and all marketing and communications efforts undertaken.

Some agencies fall into the trap of producing *outputs* without having a clear idea of *outcomes*. This may result because a) agencies already think they know what their audiences want, or b) they initiate marketing or communications efforts based on research but then fail to evaluate them. The former is problematic because the agency has no true understanding of what its constituents want or need, so the material or campaign created has no basis in research. Thus, there is no scientific way to evaluate it. The latter is problematic because, though the material or campaign was developed based on data, there was no evaluation done to determine if the approach had an impact.

Without proper evaluation, there is no way to know whether efforts were a success, why they were a success, and the degree to which they were successful. It is much more beneficial to scale back the size of a campaign in order to preserve funds for evaluation than to spend valuable resources on the campaign without accounting for a complete understanding of the outcomes. Small efforts that are evaluated will prove more successful because the results can often be applied to larger efforts. Also, implementation of the plan amounts to a learning process—recognize that each effort will provide insights and answers to questions which can then be applied to subsequent efforts. In this way, MDIFW can hone strategies over time and become increasingly successful in its approach.

Planning for the evaluation of various components must always take into account the individual goals, objectives, and strategies, and how they relate to the overall mission. When evaluating plan components, strive to answer the following questions:

- In a broad sense, did the effort work?
- Did the agency accomplish what it set out to do with the effort?
- Did the agency meet its goal for the effort (for example, increase awareness or participation, or build support for an initiative or program)?
- How many people took the desired action as a result of the effort? How many people actually reacted to the call to action?

A final and crucial evaluation question concerns one of the overarching goals of the entire study:

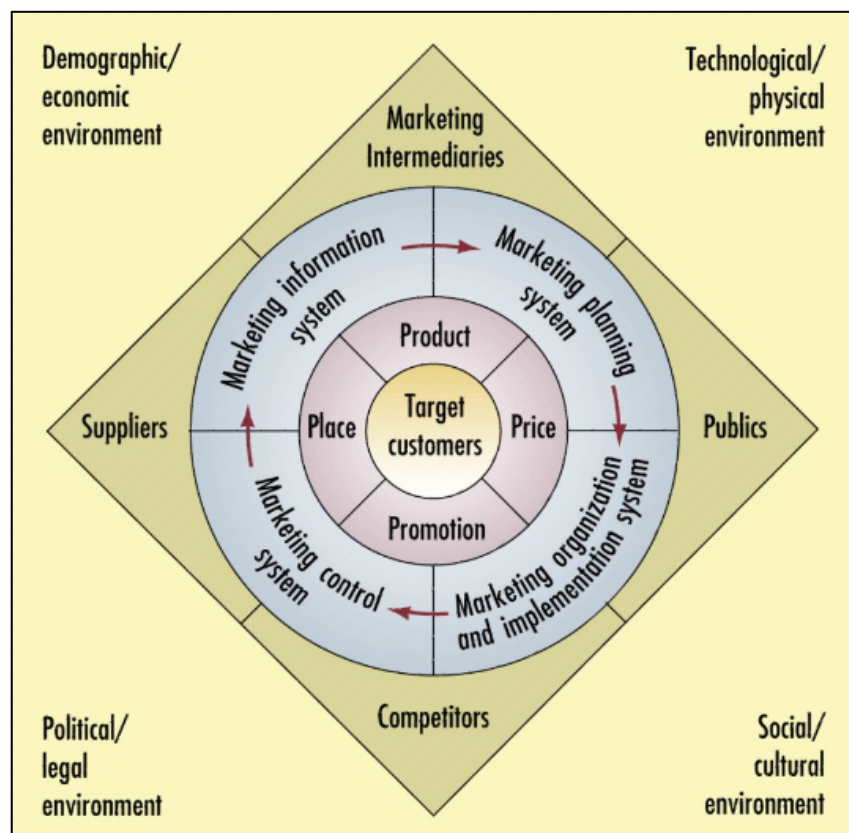
How did the effort or strategy help the Division of Information and Education to enhance MDIFW's communications and relationship with the people of Maine?

MARKETING OVERVIEW AND APPROACH

Marketing is a deliberate and orderly step-by-step process that begins with people (markets) and ends with programs, products, services, and strategies. Note that this is the opposite of how many programs, products, and services are often developed—starting with a program, product, or service, and then looking for constituents and customers to use them—the proverbial “product in search of a market.” The marketing process entails a series of smaller decisions and information gathering processes that assist in reaching larger decisions. By following a marketing approach, the “what to do” part (strategies, programs, products, and services) “falls out” of the process. Solutions do not emerge from thin air; a marketing approach eliminates the need for guesswork.

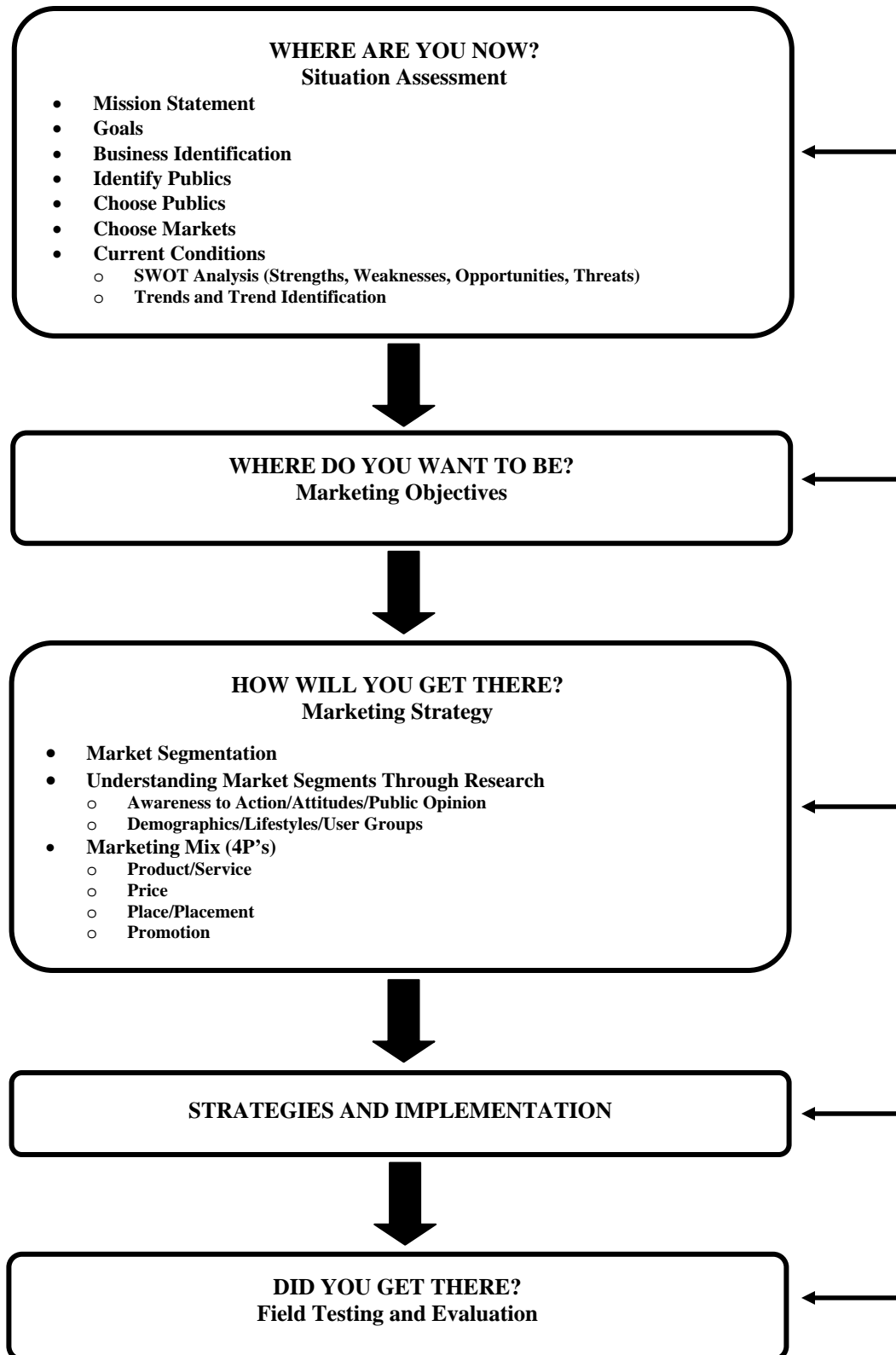
A marketing approach leads to the most effective decisions and the development of the most appropriate programs, products, and services. Within the context of natural resource management, marketing is the deliberate and orderly step-by-step process of first defining what it is exactly that is to be achieved; understanding and defining different groups of constituents (markets) through research; and then tailoring programs, products, and services to meet those needs through the manipulation of the marketing mix—product, price, place, and promotion (Figure 1). The purpose of marketing in a fish and wildlife agency is value-service driven to both better meet the goals of the agency and to better meet the needs of its constituents to provide them with quality programs, products, and services.

Figure 1. Marketing matrix.



Source: Kotler, 2002.

Figure 2. Marketing process model.



MARKETING PROCESS

Successful marketing begins with the development of a quality marketing plan. A marketing plan spells out the goals, strategies, and tactics that will be used in reaching the fish and wildlife agency's objectives. There are four major steps in marketing planning: analyzing opportunities, developing strategies, planning programs, and managing efforts (Kotler, 2002). This marketing process follows the standard format for good planning (see Figure 2 on the previous page).

It asks the following questions:

1. Where are we now? (Situation assessment)
2. Where do we want to be? (Opportunities and objectives)
3. How will we get there? (Strategies and program planning)
4. Did we get there? (Evaluation)

The key to a successful marketing effort will be long-term commitment, organized and deliberate planning based on a solid foundation of human dimensions research to identify measurable goals and objectives and better understand target audiences and messages, and consistent program assessment and evaluation.

SITUATION ASSESSMENT: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

For a situation assessment, the organization takes a careful look at where it is now. The elements of the situation assessment include the following:

Business Identification (source: MDIFW website)

The following background on MDIFW is taken from agency materials and provides a summary of the business identification aspect of the marketing approach:

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife was established in 1880 by the state legislature and made the two Maine Fisheries Commissioners responsible for enforcing the laws that had been enacted to control the taking of important game species. The uncontrolled taking of moose, caribou, and deer during the 1800s had contributed to a serious depletion of big game populations. This early enforcement effort represented the beginning of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. At the time, game wardens were appointed to patrol the State's woods and waters and bring poaching under control. They did not receive a salary, but instead received half the amount of the fines paid by violators they apprehended.

The Department was soon expanded to include the propagation of game fish. Thousands of trout, salmon, and bass were stocked annually across the state to support a rapidly growing tourist industry. Through the early 1900s, many new hunting and fishing laws were enacted to conserve fish and wildlife. Hunting and fishing licenses were established to pay for fish and wildlife conservation programs. Detailed studies of the status and needs of wildlife began in the 1940s to guide the management of these resources. Statewide fisheries management programs were initiated in the 1950s. Today, the Department carries out a wide variety of fish and wildlife conservation programs and remains focused on the protection and enhancement of the state's inland fisheries and wildlife, while at the same time providing for the wise use of these resources. Assuring the conservation and use of these resources is vital to the state's economy.

Mission Statement

A mission statement is a clear, concise statement that communicates the marketing plan's overall purpose, vision, and direction. Every fish and wildlife agency should have not only a mission statement for the agency as a whole, but mission statements for its activities and programs, whether it be a duck population monitoring project or a plan to communicate to Maine anglers information on how to canoe.

An effective mission statement should briefly explain the purpose of the organization, project, program, or campaign, what the organization does or will do, who it serves or who are the target audiences, and the values held by the agency or why the project/program/campaign is important. The mission statement guides organizational decisions and direction and should resonate with internal employees, as well as external constituents. Mission statements let people know why the agency exists or why it is doing what it is doing and what it is to be achieved. Everything that follows in the marketing plan is based directly on the mission statement of the agency.

Goals

Goals are broad and lofty statements about a desired outcome. Goals outline a vision for where an agency wants to be in the future. Based on the S.M.A.R.T business strategy of goal setting, goals should be specific, measurable, realistic, and timely (Doran, 1981). Goals define the management philosophies within which objectives are pursued (Crowe, 1983). For example, the goal of a fish and wildlife agency might be to increase the number of newly recruited anglers statewide. Committing goals to paper becomes more important as one gets further into the marketing plan.

Business Identification

What exactly is one's business? A business should be defined based on a market need and not on a product that serves that need. For example, people choose to listen to music. This desire is a market need. A product, such as an .MP3 file, is the result of how that market need is filled. Previously, record companies that focused solely on how to make a better record were immediately outcompeted by companies that developed CDs and then .MP3's. Today, CDs have mostly been replaced by streaming music, downloaded .MP3 music files, and the market need itself (e.g., the need to listen to music) to want a more convenient and easy way to listen to customizable music playlists. Theodore Levitt (1983) pointed out that market definitions of a business are superior to product definitions of a business. In summary, he stated that products, services, and programs are transient, but basic market needs endure. When thinking strategically, focus on market needs, not on products.

Identifying Publics

There is no such thing as the general public. Research indicates that people's relation to natural resource and outdoor recreation issues is affected by a variety of factors, including age, race, gender, income, level of education, and other variables. A list of one's publics is important in identifying one's place in a particular market.

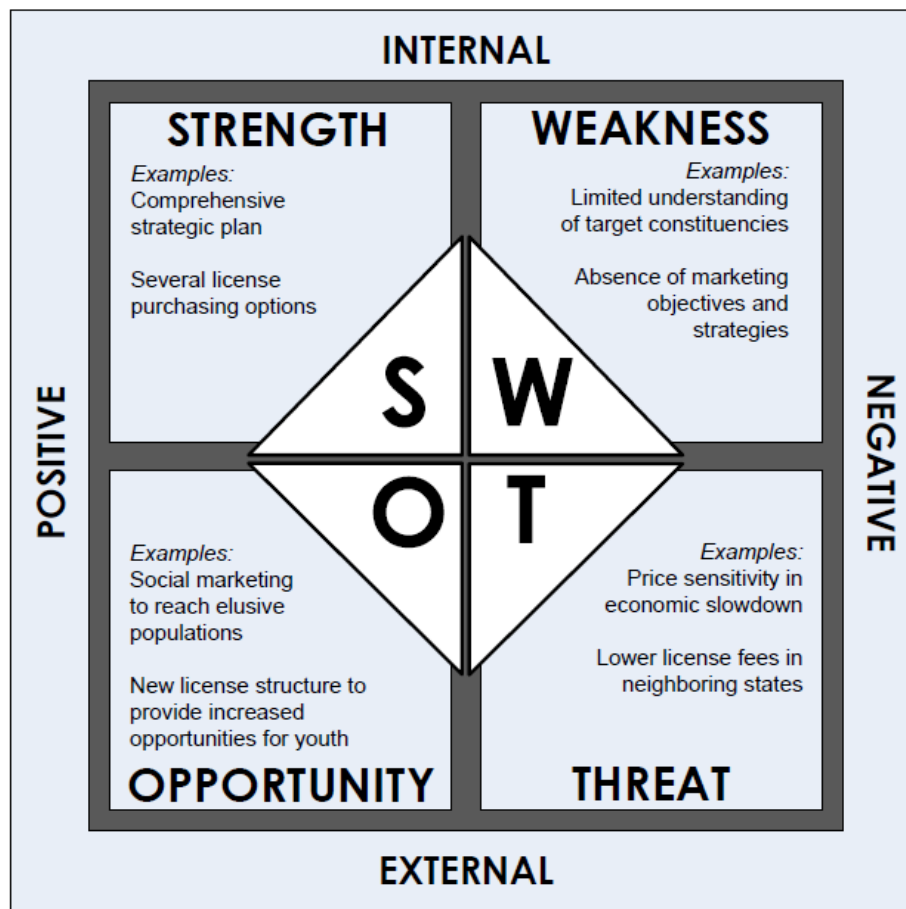
Choosing Publics

A commonly heard phrase in marketing is that “You can’t be all things to all people.” Marketing means making choices, and making choices means deciding specifically which groups will be targeted at any given time, with timing being different for different target markets (audiences). Different markets require different strategies. It is all right to choose more than one market to target, but it is important to keep in mind each group may require different strategies.

Current Conditions

The trend identification portion of the marketing process allows an agency to become proactive rather than reactive. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis is a strategic assessment of an agency’s current conditions, including internal organizational strengths and weaknesses, and external opportunities and threats (see Figure 2 below). The SWOT analysis helps identify conditions that influence the success fulfillment of marketing objectives. The analysis is used to determine marketing strategies by capitalizing on strengths, minimizing weaknesses, utilizing opportunities, and mitigating threats.

Figure 2. SWOT Analysis Model.



Source: Adapted from a model by SmartDraw.com

SWOT Analysis—Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

One of the goals of the July 2015 planning meeting was to conduct a SWOT analysis with agency personnel. The results of the analysis helped the researchers evaluate current internal and external conditions of the MDIFW and beginning developing marketing strategies. The resulting bullet point lists assist planners by shedding light on the “big picture” by compiling extraneous facts into an easily understandable visual model.

Strengths

- There is high credibility among stakeholders
- The state has many high-profile game and non-game species
- MDIFW has passionate, motivated staff with substantial professional experience
- Mainers already take advantage of the outdoors and go outside often
- MDIFW is in charge of a resource that is popular with residents
- The different ecosystems allow for an interesting variety of wildlife species, which is likely appealing and marketable to Maine constituents
- Access to new Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration funding effective January 16, 2016 for hunting and trapping
- There is strong administrative and internal support for implementing a plan that assists MDIFW in accomplishing its mission
- There is a lot of private land available in Maine
- The Maine wilderness is singular and beautiful, and the natural resources of the state as a whole are unique and well worth the price of a license
- MDIFW has the ability to hire subcontractors for implementation of the communications, marketing and public relations

Weaknesses

- It is hard to be current with technology and the latest trends in communications, marketing, and public relations (this is affected by staffing turnover)
- There is a need for MDIFW to track who they are reaching
- There is no Sunday hunting in Maine—this could result in frustration among hunters
- There is a need to improve communications in general at the agency
- Some in-house personnel are not comfortable communicating with constituents
- Some personnel are not well-versed in outreach methods
- Internal communications are compartmentalized—there is no formal chain of communication
- There are few if any overarching agency messages addressing issues/projects/programs
- Many residents may perceive that the agency caters only to consumptive sportsmen
- There is a need to improve the MDIFW website
- There is a need for outdoor news reporters; MDIFW must also improve its relationships with other media
- A dedicated marketing staff is needed
- MDIFW must distinguish the agency from other “official” entities of the state
- The agency has branding issues

- Current research is not being used to guide communications—MDIFW is entrenched in its current way of doing things

Opportunities

- The marketing, communications, and public relations plan will be a roadmap for change and improvements
- MDIFW has the material to create strong public interest stories
- The locavore movement is strong in Maine and can be used to build support for hunting
- MDIFW is involved in key social media including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs, and YouTube
- Current social media presence includes 75,000 followers
- Management and some degree of coordination is already in place
- Getting information from the field is challenging but improving—despite some internal inconsistencies, staff meet regularly
- Delivery.gov includes 175,000 email addresses
- A state wildlife action plan exists and allows MDIFW to work with partners who will distribute information

Threats

- Loss of funding
- Inefficiencies of the state system
- Anti-hunting and anti-trapping sentiment in Maine
- Aging customers not being replaced
- Difficulties in staying relevant; the risk of becoming obsolete
- Personnel afraid to say the wrong thing
- External feedback can unduly affect how MDIFW conducts its business (e.g., public meeting feedback)
- Agency support is variable
- The issue of science versus customer opinions, emotions, and (potential lack of) understanding
- Loss of resources (e.g., potential decline in deer population)
- Bureaus do not adequately communicate with nor understand each other
- Lack of support for internal efforts and activities (per the MAT report)
- Regional staff communicates, but communication varies depending on where, how, etc.
- Lack of effective ways for internal communications other than meetings

MARKETING OBJECTIVES: WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

Once a fish and wildlife agency identifies where it is on a project, the next step is to decide where it wants to be. Objectives are directed toward the accomplishment of goals and are specific and measurable statements of what, when, and how much will be achieved (Crowe, 1983). It is important to note where this objective setting is placed in the marketing process—at the end of the situation assessment. This is because realistic objectives cannot be set until there is a thorough understanding of where the agency is presently.

After completing a comprehensive situation analysis, the agency is now ready to set informed, measurable objectives for evaluative results.

For the marketing plan to be effective, it must both set and serve specific, firm objectives. Key elements to consider in defining marketing objectives include identifying a target audience (public), determining the agency's public image or how the agency wants to be perceived by the public, developing attainable timelines, and estimating the overall return on investment. Marketing objectives are a major touchstone for the overall marketing plan; the marketing plan will be written with clearly defined objectives in mind, and ultimately, marketing efforts will be evaluated against these criteria.

Marketing objectives should be clearly defined and communicated. Many programs and initiatives fail from the start because objectives are not agreed upon and written down by those involved. Perhaps the best example of obtuse objectives occurs when it comes to "informing and educating" a market about fish and wildlife. Informing and educating a target market is a laudable goal but not a feasible objective. In the objective portion of the marketing process, "informing and educating" the public needs to be refined to something more specific, such as increasing factual knowledge, increasing concern, altering opinions, changing attitudes, or altering behavior. Taking the time to complete a situation assessment is extremely valuable. After all, if an agency does not know where it is or where it wants to be, how will it get there?

Prior to the July 2015 planning meeting, MDIFW established two major goals for the project:

- 1) Raise overall public awareness and support among Maine residents of MDIFW's mission, programs and projects;
- 2) Measurably increase support and participation in activities and programs overseen and/or administered by MDIFW.

Attendees of the planning meeting later established two further goals adding detail to the outcomes related to Maine residents:

- 3) Identify Maine residents' needs and expectations from MDIFW.
- 4) Develop a stronger relationship with Maine residents.

Development of these goals ensures that all plan strategies and tactics (including program planning) are aligned with MDIFW's overall mission.

MARKETING STRATEGY: HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

At this point, the marketing plan has identified where the organization is and where it wants to be. The "marketing strategy" section of the marketing plan identifies how it will get there.

Market Segmentation

First, the market should be segmented; this section of the marketing plan identifies the specific market segment(s). Who are they exactly? Recall that there is no such thing as a general public. Additionally, what are the demographics of the market segment? What do they want and what do they need? What are their attitudes and opinions about the product, program, or service? It is

important to understand that marketing is not a “one size fits all” effort. It is clear from the research that agency marketing efforts need to be tailored to provide specific programs, products, and services to specific groups. The messages that resonate with frequent anglers, for example, may not work for other target constituencies, such as lapsed anglers or youth anglers.

By targeting specific groups with specific messages, marketing efforts will become more effective and their outcomes can be more effectively measured. Outcome evaluation and program success can be measured by comparing participation levels, perceptions, and opinions before and after implementation of these efforts. For example, national research shows that one of the most important target markets for increasing fishing participation are other outdoor activity groups, such as hunters, target shooters, boaters, campers, jet skiers, wildlife watchers, campers, hikers, national/state park visitors, water skiers, and mountain bikers (Responsive Management, 1999).

The research conducted for Maine as part of this plan shows similar results; in other words, the best way to increase the number of trappers is to focus recruitment efforts on hunters, just as the best way to increase boating participation may be to target anglers and others already on the water to some degree. Cross-promoting activities across relevant recreationist groups will also be essential to increasing participation. MDIFW staff should focus particular attention on the exploding activities of canoeing and kayaking. As the research showed both substantial current participation and latent demand (i.e., interest in participating) for these activities, key crossover promotional opportunities for these activities should be directed at boaters, anglers, wildlife viewers, campers, and others engaging in activities near or involving the water.

IDENTIFICATION OF TOP PRIORITY PUBLICS

Those Maine residents who participate in outdoor recreation collectively make up a multitude of potential target audiences: these audiences range from wildlife viewers—the activity with the highest rate of participation—to trappers—the activity with one of the lowest rates of participation—and all recreationist groups in between. Though it is possible for MDIFW to communicate with all of these groups, it is not feasible for the agency to do so. Limitations in time, budgets, and staffing require that MDIFW identify the highest priority audiences, especially those with whom the agency already has an established relationship and those especially open to communication from MDIFW (this latter audience will require the least effort to penetrate due to its existing receptivity). The top priority publics include the following:

Traditional Outdoor Recreationists: MDIFW should continue to reach out to target audiences with whom the agency has a relationship, and whose members fund and support agency programs through purchases of licenses, registrations, and certain equipment. MDIFW currently directs the majority of its communications to these audiences. Going forward, it should focus on the detail and consistency of the messages distributed to these groups:

- Hunters
- Anglers
- Boaters
- Trappers

Non-Traditional Outdoor Recreationists: The agency should consider as priority audiences those who have participated in the following activities in the past 12 months:

- Wildlife viewers
- Those who participate in water-based recreational sports
- Those who walk or run on trails for fitness
- Hikers
- State or national park visitors
- Visitors to wildlife areas/nature areas
- Canoeists/kayakers
- Campers

The benefit of communicating with these audiences is that the recommended messages will resonate with them—they are the groups most likely to take action thanks to their current participation in outdoor recreational activities and existing level of engagement with agency issues. Along these lines, similar important audiences include birdwatchers, those who gather mushrooms, berries, or other wild food, and those who participate in winter sports/activities.

Media (Journalists)

Because the media plays an essential role in communicating to the recommended target audiences, MDIFW should focus on cultivating solid and positive relationships with these organizations and individuals. Specifically, MDIFW will need to consider the following media groups when implementing the recommendations in the plan:

- **Outdoor Media:** special organizations like the New England Outdoor Writers Association
- **Traditional Media:** newspapers, magazines, television
- **Online Media:** blogs, newsletters, online editions of newspapers and magazines
- **Special Interest Media:** outdoor recreation and nature-based media

Demographic Locations

Beyond the aforementioned recreationist groups, geography plays an important role in segmenting audiences—regional delineations in Maine have implications on demographics and, consequently, the manner in which MDIFW communicates with the audiences in each area:

- **Residents of Southern Maine:** Residents in this predominantly urban region are notably different than residents residing in the central and northern regions of the state, especially as they appear more likely to hold anthropomorphic attitudes about wildlife.
- **Residents of Central/Northern Maine:** Residents residing in the more rural regions of the state appear more likely to hold utilitarian attitudes about wildlife.

Marketing Mix

Once a market has been identified, a program, product, or service is tailored to the specific market. Marketing mix, commonly referred to as the 4P's of marketing, is the set of controllable variables that are used to tailor the program, product, or service to the target market: product, price, place, and promotion (McCarthy, 1960) (see Figure 3 on the next page).

Figure 3. Marketing mix.

Source: Kotler, 2002.

Product. Product is the most important element in this mix. A product or service is what the agency offers the market. In a fisheries section, this may range from freshwater fishing opportunities to information on stocks, hatcheries or special fishing opportunities like tournaments and derbies. It is important to recognize that an organization has many product lines. It is also important to differentiate between a product's features and a product's benefits. A feature is the makeup of the product or service; a benefit is what the constituent or customer receives. Focus on the benefits of the product, not the features. Identify the most important benefits the product has for the market and communicate those benefits.

A product or service is what MDIFW offers its market. To understand the success of products or services, it is important to focus on their benefits to constituents and customers. MDIFW offers a varied and diverse "product line" of fishing and hunting licenses, including special license options for youth, seniors, military personnel, and the disabled. With so many options, MDIFW provides the benefits of convenience, flexibility, and tailored options that meet the needs of varied constituencies. Other "products" and services include the numerous fishing and hunting opportunities MDIFW provides for residents. Through its website, MDIFW provides a number of other services, including regular updates, catch records, stocking schedules, and regulations.

Products also exist for nature-based users, though they are limited and not always easily found. Also, while MDIFW's website includes a limited number of videos and publications, many of these seem geared to hunters and anglers. It is therefore recommended that MDIFW expand the number of products for residents who do not hunt or fish but who engage in wildlife viewing.

Price. Price is another variable in the marketing mix. Price issues can have profound effects on fish and wildlife agencies. Price can be manipulated in a variety of ways; the most obvious is the actual cost. What does the product cost? Does it cost the same to fish on a lake or stream during the week as on the weekend? What is the difference in cost between a deer license and turkey license? Does the price match the demand? What are the access costs for boaters? Do they align with the activity? All of these questions are important to consider. Price is an excellent way to tailor the overall product to a market to achieve an agency's objective(s). As a side note, the costs of various licenses and registrations are not always readily available on MDIFW's website. Since the only way to pay for a license in Maine is via its website, prices for all licenses should be clearly noted on the license page—MDIFW should not require users to enter into the payment system in order to determine license prices or expect potential purchasers to search regulations books for prices. This is a significant barrier to purchasing a license.

Another point to consider regarding price is that the majority of MDIFW's users do not pay a fee in order to participate in non-consumptive outdoor activities. Therefore, a minority of users in the state is "foot the billing" for the majority. The implementation of a new user-pay user-benefit fee structure or donation requirement applies here and deserves consideration. Determining the pricing or donation amount would require research to help identify the maximum tolerable fee. This is a serious point to consider when establishing prices at various levels.

Place. Place refers to the physical locations where the product or service are offered. In this case, place is not only the MDIFW website where users purchase licenses and look for information, but also access points for fishing, hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, boating, and water-based activities throughout the state. Questions to ask related to "place" include the following: Is the MDIFW website reliable and easy to navigate? Does its current state affect demand and sales? Are fishing, hunting, and other key recreational areas located in areas that are easy to access? A central obligation is to identify where the product is located (or promoted or sold) and determine whether it meets the needs of the target market(s).

MDIFW also maintains many Wildlife Management Areas, along with numerous lakes, rivers, and streams for outdoor recreation activities. The "place," in this case, encompasses a multitude of locations for outdoor recreation. Does MDIFW do a good job promoting all of the areas? Does it make a point of highlighting the fact that the agency oversees the health and continued existence of these areas? Does it promote the fact that these areas are open for Maine residents to appreciate and enjoy? Considering that most available land in Maine is private, does the overall number of areas result in challenges to participation in recreation?

MDIFW addresses some of these issues by providing updated information on its website regarding site closures, re-openings, and other public notices. Because MDIFW generally limits its communications about these places to mostly notices and updates, it is missing an opportunity to introduce non-traditional outdoor recreationists to the wider availability of the Maine outdoors. It could also align itself more closely to traditional users by promoting specific places of interest to them.

Promotion. The promotion mix includes magazines, newspapers, brochures, direct contacts, and television coverage. Promotion options are nearly limitless, and it is vital to keep in mind the target market. At this point in the marketing process, the market (i.e., who they are, what they want, and their opinions, attitudes and values) have been identified. A product, program, or service has been developed and tailored that precisely fits that market's needs. The benefits of the product, program, or service have been identified. Because of this, the media most likely to reach the target market can be selected effectively.

When developing promotional materials, agencies should keep in mind the difference between the tools of promotion and the goals of promotion. Just because an agency has developed full-color advertisements, radio ads, or a website does not automatically mean it has increased knowledge levels, changed attitudes, or increased participation. Real success should be measured in quantified attitude changes, total license sales, increased awareness of the agency and what it does, support for its mission, and quantifiable usage of its website for things other than license buying.

In other words, success should be measured in the public's actual engagement with the agency. The objective is not just to develop advertisements or brochures to make the agency think it is promoting its mission and fulfilling its goals and objectives, but to foster awareness, change attitudes, increase factual knowledge of natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities, or, better yet, increase license or user-fee purchases and donations. Again, it is important to separate the means and the ends of programs, products, and services.

MDIFW currently communicates with various media across the state generally on an as-needed basis. MDIFW uses general information and outreach booths, news releases, radio, and television to communicate messages mostly targeted at its traditional users. Because of this somewhat limited approach, the agency generally does not engage the majority of Maine residents and is currently missing an opportunity to communicate with residents who use its products. Such communication, if undertaken consistently, would result in widespread recognition of all of the positive and important things the agency accomplishes on behalf of fish, wildlife and natural resources in Maine and, in turn, residents in general.

Perhaps the most reliable and cost-effective method of promotion is MDIFW's website, which has the potential to provide an abundance of key information about everything the agency accomplishes on behalf of the state. While MDIFW's current website may be impacting certain markets, an updated website with information on a more diverse array of topics may result in increased overall awareness and knowledge of the agency's work and, ultimately, an uptick in license purchases, user fees, and/or donations.

RECOMMENDED OVERALL MARKETING THEME

The researchers recommend the development of an overall campaign theme that focuses on the health of Maine's outdoors, which can be customized based on specific socioeconomic or demographic characteristics of consumer markets. Current and previous research showed that, despite differences in demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, a commonality among essentially all Maine residents is an interest in and concern for the health of fish, wildlife, and natural resources in the state. This finding suggests the potential in a theme linking the health of the outdoors to the health of Maine residents and Maine itself.

This message applies to all of the audiences studied in the research. Both consumptive and non-consumptive users want Maine to remain as it is today, unique in its wilderness and beauty. This uniqueness is directly related to the concept of health in many facets, including the health of resources and wildlife populations, aqua- or agricultural health more generally, personal health of residents (including intellectual and bodily health), economic health of the state, and certain aspects of industrial health (e.g., tourism, manufacturing). In other words, the health of Maine's natural resource system has enormous bearing on the health of Maine itself and its residents, who desire for Maine to "stay Maine." As it currently stands, many residents (perhaps most) are not aware of what MDIFW does to accomplish this. A sure way to reach consumptive and non-consumptive constituents alike is to link the work of MDIFW to the general themes about health.

To this end, the researchers recommend a theme based on the following words: *Healthy, Maine, and Outdoors*. This marketing theme addresses the outdoor experience as a whole and directly links it to the work in which MDIFW is engaged every day.

The following are suggested taglines that must accompany the MDIFW logo:

- *(Assuring) Healthy Outdoors for a Healthy Maine*
- *Assuring the Health of Maine's Outdoors*
- *(Assuring) Healthy Maine Outdoors for a Healthy You*

As noted above, a further theme that emerged from the focus group research is the fact that residents want Maine to "stay Maine" into the future. To that end, while the tagline "Assuring that Maine stays Maine" does not specifically utilize the term "healthy," it does imply it. In general, all of the recommended taglines combine the key words in a positive way, resulting in simple, concise messages—an essential requirement of any strong tagline. These messages should be treated as all-encompassing themes that can be tailored to specific markets.

The marketing theme recommended here has similarities to some of the content used in campaigns to promote fishing in Washington State and Arizona—both of these campaigns generated widespread media coverage and helped spur increases in fishing license sales in part due to consistent messaging and branding. The campaigns in the two states used lighthearted promotional images that depicted fishing as a fun outdoor experience. In the case of Washington State specifically, the initiative helped increase revenue from fishing license sales by \$1.7 million (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2013).

MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES

The following overarching recommendations are applicable regardless of the targeted markets and messages; these recommendations should be considered throughout the marketing planning and implementation process. The recommendations are separated from other strategies listed because the researchers believe they are overarching guidelines that should provide a basis for the approach moving forward. Based on a general idea of costs and outcomes, these recommendations are prioritized to offer the most cost-effective methods for increasing communications and outreach. This portion of the plan addresses goals 2 (measurably increase support and participation in activities and programs overseen/administered by MDIFW) and 3 (identify Maine residents' needs and expectations from MDIFW).

Recommendation 1. Emphasize and promote MDIFW's biological, ecological, and environmental programs. These rank the highest in importance. Outdoor recreation programs are secondary, but still important. According to the research, the majority of Maine residents are concerned about protecting Maine's natural resources. Promoting what MDIFW does to conserve Maine's resources should be the highest priority. Its current programs should be expanded and new programs created. All of MDIFW's conservation programs should be heavily promoted.

Recommendation 2. Develop the recommended theme and tagline and test it in the market. The researchers recommend testing the *Healthy Outdoors for a Healthy Maine* tagline and its variations to determine their validity to the target markets. This will also determine whether the message can be incorporated into the larger concept of MDIFW overseeing and assuring a healthy outdoor. The theme should utilize the same general message for all outdoor recreation markets with a customized tagline for each target audience. For example, "Maine Outdoors: Healthy Waters—Fun for Boaters," or "Maine Outdoors: Healthy Wilderness—Fun for Campers" represent ways of tailoring the theme to boaters and campers. It is essential that the campaign maintain a consistent look and brand, no matter the target audience of the message. The challenge will be to keep the theme similar across all agency communications, its online presence, and among public persona. All branding images and logos should include language or images focused on the target audience.

Recommendation 3. Use core group of avid recreationists to increase participation in various activities. Recruitment and retention research from the past 20 years indicates that the most effective way to increase participation in activities is to encourage current participants to invite people to join them. MDIFW offers many programs for newcomers, but national studies show that newcomers need an initial invitation from someone they know in order to try a new activity, particularly hunting or fishing. The research conducted for this project suggests that this principle will hold true for both traditional consumptive activities (e.g., hunting and fishing) and non-consumptive outdoor recreation (canoeing, kayaking, wildlife viewing, hiking, etc.). The key to bringing newcomers into the fold will be to encourage current participants to invite others to join them when they head outdoors. MDIFW should customize this message to its numerous target audiences—the most effective way to accomplish this will be to include the concept under the umbrella theme of the *Healthy Outdoors for a Healthy Maine* effort as recommended above.

Recommendation 4. Designate a marketing manager/director for a consistent and balanced effort. It is important that MDIFW consider hiring a marketing manager/director to manage all promotional and campaign efforts. This will result in consistent messaging and ensure cohesiveness throughout the effort.

Recommendation 5. Centralize all marketing and communications across MDIFW so that anything produced has a consistent look, brand, and message. This applies to all press releases, signage, print material, websites, social media, licenses, publications, videos, etc. Everything should be approved by the Division of Information and Education (I&E), as this division is the owner and manager of this plan. All online media should be approved by the MDIFW “social media officer” and the I&E Director.

Recommendation 6. Take advantage of unique opportunities offered to Maine residents. The MDIFW offers numerous outstanding opportunities to participate in the outdoors. To maximize participation, the MDIFW should promote events/opportunities via all available media outlets utilizing consistent branding. Key events and opportunities include:

For everyone:

- National Get Outdoors Day
- National Public Lands Day
- National Rivers Month
- Father’s Day, Mother’s Day
- Great Outdoors Month
- May Day
- First days of Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter

For traditional users:

- Opening days of the various hunting and fishing seasons
- National Boating and Fishing Week
- National Hunting and Fishing Day
- Opening days of ice fishing season, deer season, etc.
- Family fishing days
- Season openers at key locations (consider featuring a new locale each week)
- Derbies and tournaments
- Special seminars
- Lottery announcements
- Exceptionally good years/seasons for bass, trout, walleye, etc.
- Availability of apprentice licenses
- Fish stocking days

Consider these notable examples: The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission highlights several events at once on the landing page of its website, with appealing photos and logos promoting each event. Similarly, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game tailors its marketing messages and themes for specific programs, events, and/or holiday dates. For example, the agency tailored its messaging around Father’s Day to promote opportunities for fathers to take their children fishing.

As another example, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game offers educational events to introduce children to fishing using five trailers around the state that move to different ponds to educate children on how to fish. To promote these events in local areas, bookmarks are provided to schools near these educational clinics during the times these clinics are offered, and community calendars are used to promote upcoming events.

Recommendation 7. Develop a high-quality mail, email, and telephone database of all target audiences for future marketing efforts. The key to reaching the target audience is to have updated, accurate contact information. For this reason, it is imperative that MDIFW develop and maintain a high-quality mail, email, and telephone database of all target audiences for future marketing efforts. The MDIFW already has two invaluable electronic tracking mechanisms at hand that should be used to better market the agency’s “product line.” In addition to simply providing a database for future contact with target markets, this information could be used to track sales at specific locations and determine which marketing approaches and promotional outreach efforts might be more effective. These capabilities are also invaluable for evaluating the outcomes of marketing efforts.

Recommendation 8. Take advantage of peak sales dates. Effort should be made to ensure that direct mail and email drop dates coincide with the previous peak sales dates of specific licenses. Specifically, marketing materials should be distributed so that they reach the target audience approximately one to two weeks leading into the average peak sales dates for previous seasons. This ensures that specific individuals will receive marketing messages when they are most likely to be deciding to participate. Finally, the sales dates examined should be reflective of the specific target audience and not of the entire angling database as a whole.

Recommendation 9. Utilize the resources provided by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) on the TakeMeFishing.org website and the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) website at NSSF.org. Due to budget and staffing limitations, it may not be possible for MDIFW to develop its own resources (e.g., online mapping). Though it is best to offer resources customized to a particular target audience, an excellent alternative to doing this is to use resources that have already been developed for the state agencies by the RBFF and NSSF. Specifically, both offer information on where to fish and hunt, general information about fishing and hunting, safety information, how to participate with family, and many other links and resources. These links can be utilized in an a la carte fashion to fill in areas lacking this information on MDIFW’s own website; they may also be later replaced with pages that are more appropriate for MDIFW’s target audiences. Using what is already available without “reinventing the wheel” provides a cost-effective approach to reaching a broader audience.

Recommendation 10. Cross-promote opportunities to enjoy the outdoors provided by MDIFW. According to the research, there is ample opportunity for cross-promotion among the various activity groups. This marketing plan recommends a balanced approach to cross-promotion, such as by marketing opportunities to fish to hunters, opportunities to canoe to boaters, hiking to wildlife viewers, and hunting to trappers.

Recommendation 11. Develop an online mapping application. Develop an online mapping application that provides information on access site and that can also be used as a smart phone app. This will provide instant access to site-specific information that will continually engage outdoor recreationists by providing convenient and accurate information regarding where to recreate.

Recommendation 12. Every strategy should be supported by a public relations effort that will generate earned media. A public relations campaign will increase awareness of MDIFW strategies and assist in accomplishing objectives without putting a strain on the budget. For example, the launch of a marketing effort to encourage intermittent anglers to purchase a license to fish prior to the opening day of the season should be heavily promoted to various media outlets. In this case, MDIFW could target members of the Outdoors Writers of America Association and the New England Outdoor Writers Association. Each strategy would require a different mix of media to target. This approach is integrated into RBFF's own campaigns and those it does in partnership with the state. In other words, marketing and public relations should always go hand-in-hand in all of MDIFW's efforts.

Recommendation 13. Develop a list of well-known Maine personalities who represent traditional and non-traditional users, and who represent MDIFW but *not* other entities. One of the detailed recommendations below is to appoint two MDIFW spokespersons. Because they cannot be all things to all people all the time, creating an assembly of people MDIFW can rely on to represent the target audience in various promotions would be an invaluable resource. These people can later be utilized as spokespersons or models for various strategies and can assist in garnering earned media for public relations efforts. As an example, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources partnered with its governor to promote fishing for its MinnAqua program efforts.

Recommendation 14. Take timing into consideration. Take into account the amount of legwork and time it takes to produce items recommended for these strategies. For example, preparing the layout, graphic design, printing, programming, and editing for an email or mailing requires a significant amount of lead time, particularly if it must be approved through several management steps. Additionally, associated public relations and advertising efforts often require a lead time of two to six months. Recognize that coordinating and completing necessary steps prior to actual implementation often takes three to six months or more.

RECOMMENDED MARKETING STRATEGIES

Strategy 1: Take advantage of high credibility ratings by assuring residents that MDIFW takes care of Maine's natural resources. Survey results show that the Maine public thinks MDIFW makes good decisions without its input. The key is to maintain that credibility by promoting exactly what the Department does. MDIFW should use all of its media outlets to promote what it does for the residents of Maine. A key here may be to utilize agency spokespersons to highlight the importance of MDIFW, and what would potentially happen if the agency stopped managing the state's natural resources.

Program Planning: Determine who could fill the role as agency spokespersons. As suggested in the research, choose both a biologist and a game warden who are comfortable being recorded and dealing with the public and media. Provide the necessary training to help them learn skills for being filmed for events and media communications. Plan in advance topics for six months worth of videos that will be used to reach priority target audiences. Plan to have the spokespersons present at special events throughout the year to announce initiatives for conservation priorities—note that these do not have to be brand new initiatives, but can be work that is done on a normal basis (recall that many Maine residents have fairly low awareness of what MDIFW does, so any number of topics may constitute new information for these audiences).

Strategy 2: Recognize the importance of water resources to Maine residents. Research results showed that water resources are a top-of-mind conservation issue of importance. Any fish and wildlife issue MDIFW faces should be connected to the public's high concern over water resources. Because there are no dominant top-of-mind issues when it comes to priority issues, MDIFW can influence public priorities based on its own determination of top issues.

Program Planning: Outreach to the agency email lists is essential. Promoting the fact that MDIFW oversees Maine's water resources and that they are healthy and usable for recreation should form the basis of a significant outreach effort, especially to those who utilize the resources and are priority target audiences. This can be done using the agency's email list of boating registrants and angler licensees. While other water recreationists may be more elusive and difficult to reach without specific lists, a public relations effort driving these audiences to the website and capturing email addresses through an opt-in effort would be effective here.

Strategy 3: Streamline the current MDIFW logo in order to reflect all of the activities of the agency and the messaging that most resonates with the Maine residents. Results from the constituent focus group showed that the current logo is closely associated with law enforcement activities, and that other activities of MDIFW may be secondary (some constituents described the shape of the logo as "badge-like"). While law enforcement plays an important role in the overall mission of the agency, it is only a fraction of everything the agency does. MDIFW does not want its activities misinterpreted or too narrowly considered simply because of the style of its logo. The logo should avoid the attributes of a law enforcement badge by removing the three upper points, thereby giving the logo a more rounded border. With that slight change, it will still retain its "official" characteristic by reflecting a government seal. Additionally, it is recommended that water remain a prominent part of the logo, as water resource issues rank high in importance among Maine residents.

Program Planning: Streamline the current MDIFW logo to have a more circular appearance. Work with in-house design staff to tweak the logo and develop complementary fonts for the messaging, while replacing the old logo on all agency material and owned media. Plan a special event to launch the new logo. The best timing is at the start of the major outdoor season, preferably March 2017. Plan outreach to the media to raise awareness of the adjusted logo.

Strategy 4: Focus on promotion, and not just education. Use the Maine Wildlife Park, Swan Island, and popular Wildlife Management Areas to showcase the success stories of how MDIFW helps keep Maine’s natural resources healthy. These properties are the most heavily used and have a high potential for communicating MDIFW’s message. Rather than just imparting facts and figures on the signage in these areas, MDIFW should use these resources as a way to “toot its own horn.” The abundance of wildlife and variety of natural places that can be viewed at these venues amount to visible and obvious examples of the work MDIFW accomplishes statewide. In other words, the examples at these places help to reinforce a *Healthy Outdoors for a Healthy Maine* and that *Maine Stays Maine*.

Program Planning: Tie educational information in with key promotional messages. Consistently use the MDIFW logo and branding to educate residents about what the agency does for Maine’s natural resources. Promote conservation success by targeting campaigns to specific interest groups. Messages should include specific information that educates audiences about the health of the resources they use for recreation—this can be done by including key messages on signage at venues and in literature. For example, on the Maine Wildlife Park event brochure below (Figure 5), key promotional space is used to explain that MDIFW is not part of the Maine State Park system, but there is no explanation of what MDIFW is or what it does.

Figure 5. Maine Wildlife Park Brochure

2015 MAINE WILDLIFE PARK Summer Wildlife Days
Sponsored by the Friends of the Maine Wildlife Park
All programs will run from 11am - 2pm unless otherwise noted.
www.mainewildlifepark.com

MAY

Saturday May 2 WILD CATS OF MAINE The park's new Canada lynx exhibit is beautiful! Come to the park to learn about, view and photograph the yearling lynx and cougar, and our long time resident bobcats. Special feeding times will be posted so the public may see how and what these exciting carnivores are fed. Other big cat activities will go on periodically too! **NEW!**

Saturday May 9 BUILD A BIRDHOUSE Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day with Covese Conservation, a locally owned company that builds a bird house for every species of cavity nesting bird in North America from Maine white pine. Join them to build your own bird house! Knowledgeable staff & volunteers will be on hand to take you through the building process and advise you where to hang it to benefit your local cavity nesters. There will also be samples of many other bird houses you might consider putting up on your lands. www.covese.com **NEW!**

Saturday May 16 WINTER ECOLOGY WITH ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE

AUGUST

Thursday July 30 5-8PM FARMERS MARKET & OPEN HOUSE Local farmers & food vendors will be at the wildlife park to sell their local foods & products. Admission will be **FREE FROM 5-8pm** so visitors can stroll around the park on a pleasant summer evening, while supporting our local farmers. **NEW!**

The Maine Wildlife Park is owned and operated by the **Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW)**, & is ~~not~~ a part of the **Department of Conservation Maine State Park system**. The Wildlife Park makes every effort to showcase the programs, projects and management strategies of the Fish and Wildlife Department. Admission fees, Nature Store sales, donations, grants, thousands of volunteer hours and the funds raised by the Friends of the Maine Wildlife Park make the park essentially self-supporting. A variety of in-kind administrative, engineering, human resource and other services are provided by MDIFW. We thank you for your support!

www.mefishwildlife.com

Source: Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, maine.gov/ifw.

The copy should instead include a brief text such as the following: *The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife manages the Maine Wildlife Park and all of the state’s natural resources. It ensures the health of Maine’s waters, fisheries, wildlife, and natural areas for the benefit and recreational enjoyment of the residents of Maine.*

The brochure should also include a statement about funding and how the agency is supported. Additionally, the Maine Wildlife Park has its own logo and branding style, which suggests that it is an entity separate from MDIFW. This should be discontinued in favor of consistent use of the MDIFW branding and messaging.

Strategy 5: Use variations of the recommended theme to reach residents who say they do not have time to participate in outdoor recreation. A key finding in the research was that many people perceive that they do not have time to participate in outdoor activities. The idea that social constraints are more important than structural or resource constraints is consistent with other state and national research. The “Healthy Maine” theme can be utilized in these instances to encourage audiences (particularly urban ones) to get outside and take advantage of all that the Maine outdoors have to offer.

Program Planning: Customize messages to target audiences. Focus on engaging and encouraging participation from the top priority target audiences. Promote the activities that have the most potential for growth. Also promote that MDIFW provides access opportunities (e.g., the Outdoor Partners Landowner Relations Program) to facilitate participation in certain activities. Make this information easily accessible via the MDIFW website and smartphone apps.

Strategy 6: Utilize the recommended agency spokespersons to reach different audiences with different messages and within various marketing publications. Depending on the audience and intended tone, various agency spokespersons can be deployed in service of campaigns with specific messages (e.g., a direct mail campaign to encourage hunters to renew their hunting licenses, or a promotion emphasizing 50 places to boat and fish within 50 miles of Portland).

Program Planning: Provide spokespersons with training in communications, script reading, and working with the media. After spokespersons are trained, work to create opportunities for them to communicate with the public. This can be done most often and consistently via social media: in addition to public appearances, spokespeople can be used in short videos delivering engaging quips to post on social networking sites in order create a positive public persona for MDIFW.

Strategy 7: Assist site visitors in finding recreation access sites by providing online maps. Online maps can show everything from the Maine Wildlife Park to MDIFW’s Wildlife Management Areas and fishing access sites. Ensure that online maps are presented in visible areas on the website so that participants can quickly obtain information and directions (such maps are also help to nonresident recreationists). As an example, see Georgia’s “Georgia Outdoor Map” (www.georgiaoutdoormap.com), a resource recreationists can use to search for information on where to participate. MDIFW may be able to use this resource as a basic template and expand the available information.

Program Planning: Provide instant access to site-specific information to immediately engage audiences. If MDIFW can provide convenient and accurate information on where to participate in outdoor activities, the agency’s website will become the go-to place for information and its connection with the “customer” will be stronger. In today’s market, location information that also includes user opinions is heavily consumed and fast becoming an expected feature. As an example, note the popularity of the “Yelp” smartphone app.

Strategy 8: Encourage core groups of avid participants to ask a family member or friend to go hunting or fishing with them.

Program Planning: Develop a campaign to reach avid traditional and non-traditional recreationists and encourage them to invite a friend or family member along to enjoy their favorite outdoor activity. On a continual and revolving schedule, MDIFW should send email and postcard reminders to avid participants about activities available in Maine, along with a reminder to invite a friend or family member. For example, communications in the springtime could focus on water sports by including tips about boating safety, “hidden” access points, and information about wildlife species that can be seen on the water in various spots. Included with this information would be the reminder to bring a friend to enjoy Maine’s waters.

Strategy 9: Introduce a highly visible opt-in option. The key to good marketing is data collection. An email address is the most important piece of information that MDIFW can have about Maine residents. Email remains the most effective avenue for reaching specific target audiences; without this data, MDIFW limits its ability to reach key groups.

The option to sign up for the agency’s email list should be presented at every opportunity. This option should appear on every MDIFW webpage and also on social media via links to opt in. Similarly, email addresses should be collected at all events, and the option to add one’s email to the agency’s list should be included with all press releases with the goal of having the information included in stories about the agency. By opting to join the email list, a person is sending the message that they want to be informed about what the agency does—a valuable door has been opened and a level of trust and two-way communication has been established.

Equally important is the ability to manage the vast amounts of data that MDIFW collects. A database with more than 500,000 emails gives the agency access to a vast audience, but without the ability to choose to whom to send information, it is almost useless. For example, if MDIFW wants to promote freshwater fishing opportunities to nature photographers, the agency needs the ability to mine its list to identify email addresses for photographers. This can be accomplished by using the original opt-in form to collect this essential information. The agency should not send an email about fishing to its entire email list because such an approach would reach audiences well beyond the target audience—deemed by the recipient to be irrelevant, the email could be categorized as spam. If this happened often enough, MDIFW could lose the person from its email list and, potentially, risk a degree of its credibility as well.

Program Planning: Develop a data collection system that allows for effective data mining and launch a major opt-in campaign. Analyze the benefits and limitations of the current data collection systems. Review the GovDelivery system and determine how it may be more effectively utilized for detailed opt-ins. Determine how the information from MOSES can be combined with GovDelivery to conduct effective data mining of specific target audiences. Once both data systems can be adapted and used for intricate data mining, begin targeted email campaigns based on the recommended audiences and using the recommended messaging.

Strategy 10: Develop publications, videos, and podcasts to engage all audiences; recruit the staff needed to produce these items. Online “how-to” and “where-to” publications and videos are an essential step to helping residents start or continue participating in outdoor recreation.

Program Planning: Prioritize a series of publications, videos, and podcasts to top priority traditional target audiences (hunters, anglers, boaters, trappers). MDIFW has a tremendous amount of helpful information that it can supply to its target audiences. Given the explosion of content marketing (explained in detail in the public relations section of the document), it is extremely simple to offer videos through YouTube.com and LiveLink.com that impart helpful information to agency constituents. This means that top-quality information can be effectively distributed without need for cumbersome print runs, distribution plans, or expensive postage bills. MDIFW can efficiently produce a multitude of communications tools in relatively short periods of time, resulting in a constant stream of updated and appealing information that engages audiences. Indeed, the results from the quantitative and qualitative research provide detailed information on the conservation-, wildlife-, and natural resource-related topics that Maine audiences desire.

COMMUNICATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES

This portion of the plan addresses goals 1 (raise overall public awareness and support for MDIFW's programs, projects and mission among Maine residents) and 4 (develop a stronger relationship with Maine residents).

MDIFW can communicate effectively with Maine residents by utilizing the research results from this project. Its in-house resources (owned media) include the agency website and other online presence via blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, as well as various publications, news releases, and the staff of the agency.

Owned media specifically utilizes the information and products already owned by the agency (i.e., anything produced under the purview of MDIFW and accessible by the public). These are the most efficient avenues for communicating to the agency's various target audiences. Often the communication amounts mostly to simple output, that is, information distributed with little knowledge of whether or not it is effective. However, one of the goals of this plan is to allow MDIFW to receive a response from its audiences regarding the impact of information distributed.

It is important to keep in mind that owned media, like advertising, may not be trusted by those it is intended to reach. However, as the research currently shows, MDIFW enjoys a high degree of credibility among residents of the state. The agency is well regarded and has reasonably high levels of awareness and satisfaction among the general public and core constituents.

With dedicated communications efforts, these levels will improve even further. One positive finding is that, thanks to its already-high credibility rating, the agency has little to overcome in terms of existing hurdles. It has effectively bypassed the need to shore up its credibility and trust factor, and can focus simply on raising awareness, gaining support, and increasing participation in key activities. In other words, the primary obligation right now is for MDIFW to maintain what it has already accomplished.

The ultimate goal is to convert owned media to earned media, the result of residents deciding to support a cause or embrace a campaign. Earned media and specific recommendations for acquiring it are discussed in the later section on public relations efforts.

Recommendation 1. Drive a constant and consistent message that MDIFW is linked to the health of Maine's outdoors and the residents of Maine. To reiterate an earlier recommendation, the agency's theme moving forward should focus on the term "healthy," which ties together all essential benefits of the agency: the maintenance of healthy habitats, healthy wildlife, healthy Maine residents, and a healthy economy. This message should be handled by MDIFW and not by other entities—the agency should be its own spokesperson.

Recommendation 2. Do a better job communicating to constituents. Though most residents surveyed feel MDIFW will make good decisions without their input, the research also shows that MDIFW needs to do a better job of conveying to residents what the agency does. Time and funds need to be dedicated to this effort to ensure that impressions of the agency remain positive. More effective communication about the agency's work will also indirectly lead to more public support in terms of funding for conservation efforts.

Recommendation 3. Implement low-cost but high-profile efforts to reach constituents who are *not* traditional users but *are* outdoor recreationists with whom MDIFW has little or no relationship.

Communications efforts should ideally reach all audiences to raise awareness in general about what MDIFW is doing to protect Maine's wildlife resources. This may include campaigns involving both traditional and social media to promote non-consumptive nature-based activities in which MDIFW is involved; and working with local cable television and radio stations to develop public service announcements that can run at low costs and reach wide audiences (essential aspects to include in these spots are MDIFW's web address, its logo, and key agency taglines or themes).

Recommendation 4. Customize MDIFW communications to specific audiences. According to the research, there are key demographic and attitudinal differences between the southern, more urban region of Maine and the rest of the state. The implication is to make efforts to communicate differently to outdoor enthusiasts in the southern region of Maine compared to the messaging used for hunters, anglers, trappers, and other "traditional" constituents in the rest of the state. Accomplishing this may require significant funds, but the end result will be a higher statewide level of participation and support.

Recommendation 5. Educate audiences about funding mechanisms for protecting Maine's natural resources. Because keeping these resources healthy is a priority, Maine residents should know the "ins and outs" of how funding works. This should include the reality that funding is greatly dependent on Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Funds, a source that may not be adequate to accomplish all things for all recreationist groups in Maine.

Recommendation 6. Institute a funding mechanism that will allow MDIFW to service the majority of Maine residents who participate in activities other than hunting, fishing, and trapping. MDIFW states on its website that, "the need for additional funding to continue wildlife conservation efforts far outweighs available funds." Given overriding concern for the state to maintain healthy water resources, healthy habitats, healthy wildlife, etc., and considering generally high levels of high support for and credibility of MDIFW, now is the time to develop a funding source to support these priorities. Though a portion of this effort may be accomplished through internal agency efforts, MDIFW should nonetheless consider developing an advertising campaign to inform the public and garner support for additional funding mechanisms, thereby heading off any potential controversy at the pass. Note that this recommendation is directly in line with a recommendation from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Management Assistance Team stating that MDIFW's Department Division/Bureau Directors [should] work with the Commissioner's Office to establish strategies for seeking increased funding and staffing with the Legislature (Management Assistance Team, 2004).

Recommendation 7. Develop high-quality, easily navigable online information. First impressions are important. The agency's website represents the face of the agency. Because today's consumers are Internet savvy, they expect websites to be modern, easy to navigate, simple, and aesthetically pleasing. Further, websites should include the latest technology, or they will not be engaged with long-term. For these reasons, MDIFW should develop a high-quality, easily navigable portion of the agency website that is specific to this campaign.

Utilize the “Healthy Outdoors for a Healthy Maine” theme on the existing MDIFW page and customize it in areas of the site where different target audiences seek information specific to their interests. These sections should include quality information links, attractive graphics and visuals, video, and options to join related social media groups and subscriptions. Overall, the site should be more user-friendly by including more helpful resources and by not being as copy intensive. It should be designed with the target audiences in mind. It should include “how to” video tutorials, basic fishing info, tips, podcasts, smartphone apps, FAQs, and any information helpful to recreationists. Because most of the strategies recommended in this plan heavily rely on the convenience and cost savings opportunities of the internet, it is imperative to have a website that will support the effort. MDIFW will need a web designer to implement this recommendation as well as staff to manage the website on a daily basis.

Recommendation 8. Support is high for MDIFW, but communication from the agency to its audiences needs significant improvement. Despite the fact that MDIFW currently enjoys high levels of support, the research showed a clear need for the agency to simply increase the overall amount of communicating it does with the public. Communication with the public was one of the few “deficit” areas in terms of the agency’s current performance.

Recommendation 9. Focus less on promoting recreational opportunities and more on communicating to the public about MDIFW’s biological, ecological, and environmental efforts. Maine residents want to know what the agency is working to “keep Maine, Maine.” Communicating how this is being done should remain a constant high priority.

Recommendation 10. Create an in-house planning team that meets regularly to coordinate all marketing, communications, and public relations efforts. MDIFW should put together a team of key players (I&E director, communications specialists, social and online media experts, public relations contacts, graphic designer, etc.) to commit to coordinating and planning all efforts together. Each step of the strategy should be implemented in a methodical and logical way—the team should work together to accomplish this over the long term. As an example, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources has a designated marketing team that meets both before and after the development and implementation of major marketing efforts.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

Strategy 1: Ensure that branding and theme are consistent. Utilize the recommended theme for all MDIFW communications efforts. The challenge will be to keep it similar across all agency communications, including throughout the online presence and any public persona. The brand (logo and taglines) should appear on all MDIFW materials and be customized and targeted to each audience. MDIFW should maintain a consistent look for all materials, with a theme that reinforces the agency brand.

Strategy 2: Implement a funding campaign. While some “traditional” agency constituents may express opposition to this action, MDIFW should nonetheless move forward with a plan to ensure financial sustainability by reaching out to all of its audiences. Effort will be

required to communicate to traditional users why this is necessary, and MDIFW should stress the imperative to keep Maine’s outdoors healthy and to effectively provide for all user groups. Regarding any opposition to this initiative, MDIFW should view negative feedback in the proper context of the survey’s largely positive findings regarding perspectives statewide—MDIFW is broadly supported by state residents, even if many of them do not properly recognize or understand the work of the agency.

As an example, the Arizona Game and Fish Department implemented the *I Support Wildlife* campaign (see Figure 6 below). Though a dedicated funding source may take years to approve through the state legislative process, MDIFW in the meantime should consider a program similar to Arizona’s, which requests a voluntary yearly donation. That agency also devotes an entire webpage to the program, with an explanation of its importance and how residents can contribute to conservation.

Figure 6: The Arizona Game and Fish Department’s *I Support Wildlife* Campaign

What is “I Support Wildlife”?

I Support Wildlife™ bridges the widening gap between wildlife facing new threats and a sharp increase in the cost of conservation. A one-year membership lets you explore Arizona’s unique natural heritage while taking action to preserve it for the future.

What is the Problem?

Arizona is home to more than 800 wildlife species, from Gambel’s quail to bighorn sheep. But their natural habitats — which stretch across 50 million acres of public land — are increasingly at risk. A rapidly changing world presents a host of threats to wildlife: Expanding cities, competing uses for open space and increasing demands for a limited water supply all play a role in this.

It is the job of the Arizona Game and Fish Department to protect, restore and preserve these species and the places where they live. But no Arizona tax dollars go to support this mission. Instead, the sales of hunting and fishing licenses are the primary source of funding. However, these funds are not keeping pace with the cost of wildlife management, leaving our native animals vulnerable at a critical time.

Your membership toolkit includes:

- I Support Wildlife™ window decal, to show you care.
- One-year subscription to *Arizona Wildlife Views* magazine, to keep you informed and entertained.
- Up-to-date fish-stocking reports, so you can find fish.
- Mobile-friendly GIS maps of wildlife management units, to help you explore wild Arizona.

Source: Arizona Game and Fish Department, www.azgfd.com/isupportwildlife

Strategy 3: Ensure that the MDIFW website is user-friendly, visually appealing and specific to the various target audiences. Develop a high-quality, easily navigable landing page specific to this campaign. Consider using *Healthy Outdoors for a Healthy Maine* as the overall theme of the existing MDIFW page, and customize tabs for various target audiences.

In addition to its current tabs, the agency should consider adding tabs that reflect the interests of non-traditional or non-consumptive users. (These audiences are currently only represented through the “Wildlife” tab of the site.) The website of the Missouri Department of Conservation, for example, includes a tab entitled “Discover Nature,” with links to information about wildlife viewing, nongame fish and wildlife, nature programs, and other outdoor recreation activities. It is also recommended that MDIFW develop a detailed section of the site for boaters, canoeists, kayakers, and others interested primarily in water-based

activities (but not necessarily fishing). Each tab should include quality information links, attractive graphics and visuals, video, and options to join social media groups. Website sections should avoid being copy intensive; they should be live rather than static, effectively pulling the reader toward the information presented. Website tabs should connect, visually or otherwise, to the theme of “a Healthy Maine.”

Site visitors may become frustrated enough to leave the site if the information they seek requires more than a few simple navigations to find. Websites that fail to incorporate the latest technology will not be engaged with long-term.

MDIFW’s current social networking efforts have disproportionately represented the interests of traditional users. These efforts should be expanded to include more non-consumptive information. Some of the topic ideas in the list below promote MDIFW’s conservation successes and may also be relevant to the existing #Wildlife Wednesday effort that MDIFW promotes on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram:

- “Help us help wildlife” – tips on keeping backyard wildlife healthy
- The healthy rivers, lakes, and ponds of Maine
- Bird feeding
- Outdoor skills
- Swimming and boating in Maine: a resident’s guide
- 10 wildlife viewing spots off the beaten path
- Top hikes in Maine within a 60-minute drive
- Cooking with locally gathered and grown foods
- Ideas for your outdoor adventure: places to go, things to do
- Migration days
- Monarchs and pollinators
- Turtles – nest monitoring and what to do if you see a turtle
- Night hikes
- Ice safety
- All about bears and how to be “bear aware”
- Tree and bird identification

Strategy 4: Use MDIFW spokespersons as often as possible to deliver key messages. The quantitative and qualitative research suggest that a MDIFW spokesperson team consisting of a male game warden and a female biologist may be particularly effective. This combination would personify two important sides of the agency: the accessible and approachable side of the biologist as well as the necessary enforcement component embodied by the game warden. Note that one of the game warden cast members of *North Woods Law* may be particularly suited to the latter role, given the individual’s expected comfort in front of a camera.

Strategy 5: Increase communications to traditional audiences. Hunters, trappers and, perhaps especially, anglers are not as engaged as MDIFW may assume. In fact, in some cases they may be among the agency’s biggest detractors, at least insofar as their complaints tend to be detailed and specific to their activities of interest. Given that rather substantial

percentages of these groups could not correctly name MDIFW when asked, there would seem to be definite room for improvement among these audiences. To enlist them and align them with agency efforts, communications directed at them should explain what MDIFW does for the audience in question and why it is important to their activity and Maine as a whole.

In general, it is important to treat avid recreationists as preferred customers of the agency. When possible, these individuals should receive special treatment so that they feel they are important to MDIFW. This can be done by sending customized notifications and reminders, instituting value-added programs such as online mapping, or through discount programs for the purchases of apparel and/or publications.

Strategy 6: To increase familiarity with and support for the agency, the sheer output of relevant communications must be increased. Communications output from the agency has to increase significantly in order to engage the audiences it is trying to reach. Since the beginning of the development of the plan, there have been few if any updates to MDIFW's website. The only changes of note include a few reminders, reports, and pieces of news related to licenses on the agency's landing page. In other words, the information presented on the landing page tends to be dry and is not directed at specific audiences. Only one public interest story appears to be available, and it is inconveniently located. For MDIFW to increase its communications output, it must begin with its website: the latter should act as a conduit by offering a constant flow of information including, but not limited to, press releases, social media links, publications, and items directed at priority target audiences.

Strategy 7: Develop a concise mission statement that speaks directly to Maine residents, to be used on all communications pieces. The mission statement should be brief, easily understood, and applicable to all state residents. It should reinforce the relevance and importance of the agency, highlighting its responsibilities in natural resource, habitat and wildlife management, education, the maintenance of numerous outdoor recreational opportunities, and law enforcement. The mission statement should also use simple and direct language, as in the example below:

It is the mission of MDIFW to protect and manage Maine's waters, fish, forest, wildlife, and natural resources, and to promote participation in outdoor recreational activities for the health and enjoyment of Maine's residents.

The mission statement should be clearly visible on all official MDIFW communications and publications, clearly posted at all recreation areas, and included in all online formats.

PUBLIC RELATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES

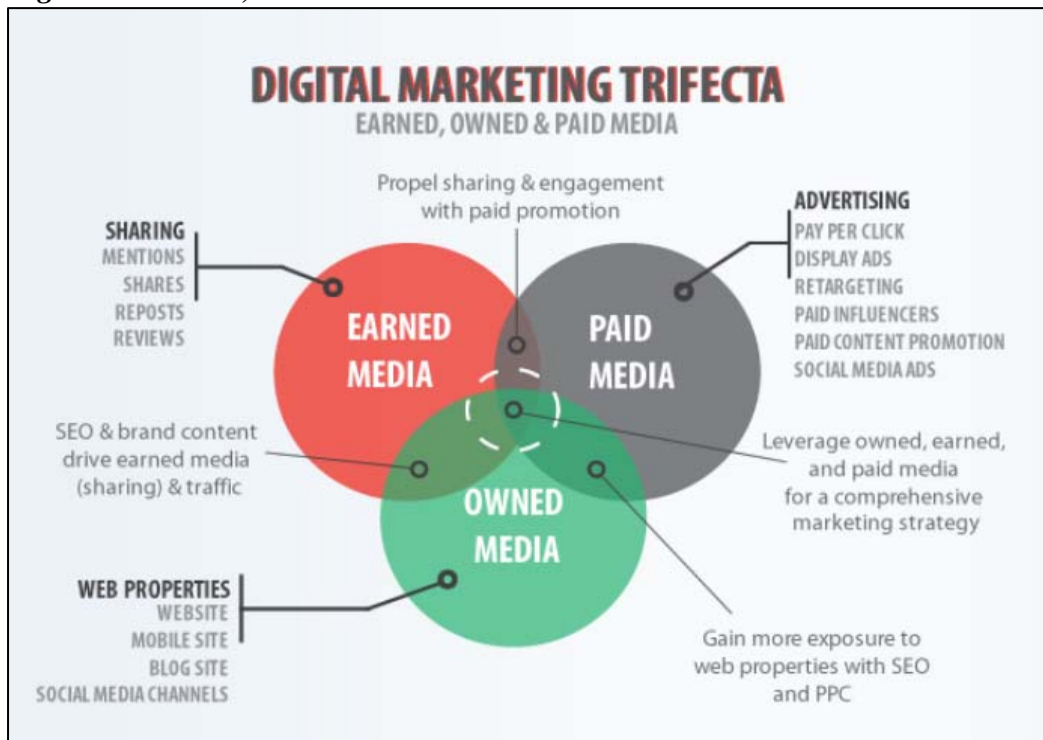
This portion of the plan addresses goals 1 (raise overall public awareness and support for MDIFW's programs, projects and mission among Maine residents) and 4 (develop a stronger relationship with Maine residents).

“Public relations” refers to a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics (Public Relations Society of America, 2016). It has only been a formal practice since the early twentieth century, but has evolved quickly and is considered an essential practice by major corporations, non-profits, and small business alike.

The essence of public relations is building relationships and engaging audiences. In order to do this successfully, an organization must understand its audience and tie its efforts engaging audiences with knowledge of how its audience thinks and how it spends its time. If it can do this successfully, the organization can trigger a response or an action from the audience. This is why public relations is earned media and not paid media, as with advertising. In the case of MDIFW, the results may include support for the agency mission and goals and, importantly, increased funding for its many programs and activities.

Public relations has a natural place in efforts to raise awareness. If done properly, a public relations campaign can have a significant impact in terms of reaching target audiences and relaying messages about a company or organization. Public relations is executed with the goal of earning media rather than generating it. Unlike marketing and communications, public relations depends upon unbiased promotion done by third parties. An organization cannot generate its own earned media.

Another type of media is paid media, also known as advertising. In this case, an organization pays third parties to promote the organization's media through specific outlets in order to have a high level of confidence that its target audience will receive the organization's message. These two forms of media, along with owned media, can be integrated into effective campaigns. As shown in Figure 7 on the next page, earned media is the most valuable of the three.

Figure 7. Earned, Owned and Paid Media

Source: Titan SEO, 2015.

The goal of public relations is to obtain earned media attention and exposure. Media is “earned” in that objective reporters are persuaded to write favorably about the organization in question. Earned media translates into positive publicity and has traditionally been the result of news releases, story pitches, press conferences, and modern outlets like blogs and social networking. The basis of public relations has always been on building amicable relationships with reporters, editors, bloggers and other neutral journalists.

The benefit of earned media is that it is the most credible format from the point of view of consumers. The power of earned media is based on the fact that credible and non-biased sources are influencing people and encouraging them to talk and share information about a company or organization. For example, according to the Edelman Trust Barometer, an annual global study, an implicit endorsement via the mention of a company or organization by authors on social networking sites, content sharing sites, and online-only information sources resulted in more credibility than if the message was self-published via owned media or if the message was deployed via paid advertising (paid media) (Edelman, 2015).

Nothing is ever guaranteed with earned media. Often the effort to create a press release or special announcement does not result in earned media. However, when earned media works, the resulting publicity is unequivocally the most powerful and valuable of any format.

In the past, public relations was used only when there was a specific need, such as an event, a new product, or an announcement. Public relations components were sometimes added to advertising or marketing campaigns as an afterthought. However, since the dawn of the Internet Age, the practice of public relations has changed substantially, to the point that it is now considered an essential part of any campaign and is often directly intertwined with marketing efforts (Stein, 2016).

Using a traditional form of public relations and also integrating it with marketing is known as “content marketing.” By understanding its market, MDIFW can develop focused public relations efforts resulting in valuable content that compels and educates the agency’s target audiences.

The purpose of content marketing can be compared to the inception of blogging. Bloggers began by creating unique content for special interest groups that was often educational, helpful, and compelling. The most successful bloggers attracted audiences and readerships that, thanks to their appreciation of the content being produced, opted to keep “following” the blogger, thus taking action to continue receiving emails or other information. Over time, many successful bloggers developed enormous audiences that in turn became online communities. Followers were often loyal enough that they spent money on downloads, books, paid memberships and other items offered by the bloggers. The key was that bloggers initially attracted readers by offering content that was helpful and compelling.

In the same way, the end result of successful content marketing is earned media and accompanying increased exposure for an agency or organization. A properly executed modern public relations campaign will be an enormous asset to MDIFW because, unlike marketing, a public relations campaign will be cost-effective and provide excellent return on investment. Time for staff to execute the effort and the technology required will be the most significant costs. Compared to marketing, much less funding needs to be set aside for public relations efforts. The agency simply needs to focus on developing content that is relevant, compelling, and useful to its audiences.

In addition to being cost-effective, content marketing offers relative ease in campaign evaluation and its calculable return on investment. If MDIFW is able to develop successful content marketing, it will be able to immediately evaluate the effectiveness of its efforts through the number of Maine resident (“leads”) who indicate being engaged by opting in or “self-selecting.” MDIFW will know whether a campaign was successful based on the number of leads generated or people engaged. The whole process of creating a campaign from beginning to end is efficient. The results will also point to the extent to which MDIFW will need to refine its approach by changing the content, such as by switching the topic or adding greater detail.

Another key element of an effective public relations plan is establishing a positive relationship with the media. Putting effort into the maintenance of a media relationship will help establish professional rapport based on trust and accuracy, rather than antagonism and negativity. A basic step in developing a positive relationship is providing information to media outlets and writers in a timely manner, and ensuring that information remains easily obtainable.

In summary, MDIFW should consider as a top priority the need to increase the amount of earned media it generates. The coveted “third-party endorsement” is essential to accomplishing public relations goals. With both traditional and modern options (content marketing) available to MDIFW, public relations campaigns implemented correctly are highly likely to increase awareness of the agency’s many conservation and outdoor recreational responsibilities.

Ultimately, these efforts will assist MDIFW in accomplishing objectives without putting a strain on the agency’s budget. For example, if MDIFW launches a marketing effort to encourage anglers to try canoeing or kayaking, this should be heavily promoted to various media outlets. In this case, MDIFW could target Maine members of the Outdoors Writers of America Association and the New England Outdoor Writers Association. Public relations should always go hand-in-hand in with all of MDIFW’s marketing and communications efforts.

Recommendation 1. Designate a PR manager/director for a consistent and balanced effort. It is important that MDIFW consider hiring or designating a manager/director to manage the media, public relations, and content marketing (along with marketing designee). This will result in consistent messaging and will also help build cohesiveness throughout the effort.

Recommendation 2. Maximize efforts and minimize costs by partnering with other agencies and industries. Develop a list of supporters with whom MDIFW can partner to sponsor seminars, contests, special events, advertising and other special promotions MDIFW will undertake as part of the plan. The benefit of this is the earned media acquired by the public relations efforts of partners.

As an example, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) works closely with tourism and visitor’s centers to promote their “Fishing Capital of the World” marketing effort to tourists. The agency also works with industry partners and sponsors to promote their five-year fishing license promotion in which the first 3,000 licenses sold include a value-added package designed to encourage anglers to upgrade to a five-year license. These incentives are paid for by industry donations and sponsorships, but make Florida’s efforts to increase awareness and participation stretch further despite limited staff and resources.

The MDIFW partners should reflect various assets, from big box stores such as Cabela’s and Walmart to specialty outdoor retailers such as REI, fishing equipment manufacturers, small local retailers, and guide companies. All of these potential partners rely on earned media and are constantly working to make it benefit their businesses.

Recommendation 3. Take advantage of special events and dates that already exist. Effort should be made to utilize known events and special dates to customize public relations efforts. Tying in MDIFW messages with those that already create special interest or generate news will increase the probability of obtaining earned media. Specifically, content marketing material should be distributed so that it reaches the target audience approximately one to two weeks leading into the chosen date or event. This ensures that the media will receive the

information when they are planning their stories. Finally, remember to consider the target audience when developing stories and reaching out to the media.

Recommendation 4. Improve the relationship MDIFW has with the media. MDIFW should consider the media a partner in achieving its mission—this is especially the case with the outdoor media. It is important to take the necessary steps to form a continued and positive relationship. This will not be the case with all writers, but even for those antagonistic few, it is important that MDIFW remain positive. The research shows the MDIFW’s approval ratings and credibility among the public are comfortably high—the agency should communicate with the public from a position of authority, and most importantly, confidence.

Recommendation 5. Make information readily available and easily accessible for the media. The MDIFW’s most effective source for providing information is its website, though no section for the news and the media currently exists. There should be a “go to” place for the media to obtain information for stories. Not only does this provide a needed service, but it sends the message that the MDIFW has professional communicators—the media will appreciate the effort.

Recommendation 6. Media train numerous key personnel so that they are comfortable speaking with the media and the public. Designate specific people for specific media. Though many staff currently avoid talking with the media, training can provide the confidence needed to promote positive and professional relationships with the media.

Recommendation 7. Use public relations opportunities to promote non-consumptive, special interest stories. Currently, the MDIFW website and social media outlets are heavily skewed towards traditional, consumptive outdoor activities. Because it should be a priority to talk to a wider segment of the Maine public, increasing the amount non-traditional conservation information is imperative.

Recommendation 8. Develop a yearly review on the accomplishments, goals, and objectives of MDIFW and make it available on the agency’s website. Maine residents want to know what is going on with Maine’s natural resources. Results from the focus groups showed that a yearly report on the state of Maine’s natural resources and information regarding what MDIFW is doing to protect them would help build awareness and support for the agency in general.

Recommendation 9. Continue to work with the media to promote fish and game issues and stories of interest to hunters, anglers, and trappers. MDIFW already focuses much of its current public relations work on these media outlets, and as result, the related target audiences. However, these constituents remain critical to the agency, and the research results suggest that their knowledge of agency activities could improve. Therefore, these efforts should not be discounted.

PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES

Strategy 1: Create a new section of the MDIFW website designated specifically for news and the media. Currently, only the latest news is easily accessible. The media should be able to find information quickly without having to search the website for an undue amount of time. This will save MDIFW time in addressing media inquiries. The following information should be made available:

- Archived press releases – this will allow the media or the public to access information at any time without having to contact someone on staff at MDIFW.
- Fact sheets – these address all the most important issues with a historical archive for past sheets.
- Backgrounders – these provide in-depth information on newsworthy and special topics.
- Infographics – these provide easily readable and concise synopses of difficult topics.
- Highly visible email address – these allow press to easily access the MDIFW press team.
- Newsletters – these can be targeted to various audiences with the goal of creating a consistent way to communicate with the media and public.
- A running news tab from various social media outlets – a quick and easy way to help stakeholders stay informed and a way to build influence on social media outlets.
- Blog links – having blogs reside here is a strategic way to provide information, assuming the blogs remain active.
- Photo library – an easy way to provide approved and aesthetically interesting photos the media may use for stories.
- Annual report – this should reside along with reports that are currently available under the “About Us” link.
- Glossary – important terms often used in press releases and often misused by the media. This will set up MDIFW as the “go-to expert” on various fish, wildlife, and natural resources topics.

Strategy 2: Focus on creating content marketing and distributing it to target audiences.

MDIFW has a plethora of information to potentially make use of in content marketing. The agency may effectively reinforce the link between itself and the residents of Maine by reminding citizens of everything the agency does to protect natural resources and keep them healthy. This can be accomplished through the distribution of photos, videos, infographics, and other media incorporating the recommended messages and information. By consistently and continually creating this type of information, the MDIFW will develop excellent fodder for various media to carry its messages.

As the survey identified water resources as a top area of interest/concern among Maine residents, media blasts in the spring and summer regarding Maine’s water resources should be scheduled around special holidays and events. This timing would effectively reach a top target audience: those who are involved in water-based recreation. Public relations efforts should focus on the creation of press releases as well as features on state water resources produced by Maine bloggers. MDIFW should also consider submitting letters to newspaper editors and working with outdoor writers on op-ed pieces.

A relationship with outdoor media may help MDIFW to develop a stronger relationship with anglers. The agency may also use its e-mail list of anglers who have purchased licenses over the past five years to send messages about the health of Maine’s water and fish populations.

Strategy 3: Hold Media Appreciation Day Events. Invite the media to join designated biologists to accompany them in the field on fish or wildlife studies. This approach can generate highly interesting content for the coveted earned media. Invite them on special media-only outings during which they can try boating, kayaking, fishing, and wildlife viewing on MDIFW-managed properties. During the planning session prior to the beginning of the project, staff who were present stated that MDIFW has to take better advantage of all the intrinsic positive qualities of nature in Maine by promoting them. Events can be scheduled annually or may coincide with other special events.

Strategy 4: Focus the majority of the public relations effort on non-traditional users. In order to engage these users, public relations efforts should be focused on expanding the MDIFW website. Additionally, all current social media outlets should be expanded to include a plethora of information about what the agency does in order to communicate that Maine’s outdoors are healthy. Other key materials include information on nongame species, and options for water-related outdoor activities (especially canoeing and kayaking).

Strategy 5: Promote special interest stories and events related to how MDIFW manages and protects state natural resources. One of the ideas addressed at the July planning session was that MDIFW is a source for many highly promising special interest stories:

- The loon, recognizable to most Maine residents, should be used as a species to “hook” interest in agency activities before expanding to other species and topics of interest.
- Fish and wildlife viewing cameras throughout the state can serve the same purpose; the media should be alerted when notable things are happening, such as the hatching of new nestlings or bears returning to a den for hibernation. These opportunities reinforce the message of a “Healthy Outdoors for a Healthy Maine” by allowing target audiences see so for themselves.
- With additional personnel it will be possible to take better advantage of events like children’s author Cynthia Lord’s visit to the Maine Wildlife Park. The agency should capitalize on events involving high-profile public figures and Maine natural resources. In this case, the public figure is recognizable to younger audiences, a key segment of the population. In the future, MDIFW should pursue media interviews with respected and/or recognizable figures who are willing to share their positive impressions of the Maine outdoor experience.



EVALUATION

As addressed in the introduction of the plan, evaluation is essential to determining whether MDIFW has achieved its goals and objectives. Below are .

Trends in Opinions, Attitudes, and Participation Rates

To stay abreast of trends in Maine residents' attitudes and their participation rates in various outdoor recreation activities, it is recommended that the general population and constituent surveys for this study be implemented again, either in full or in part, at regular intervals over the coming decade. Results from these follow-ups may be compared to the current data in order to determine areas of unmet or underserved need. The surveys developed for these study consist of questions on many topics integral to the goals of the study, such as awareness of MDIFW, opinions on its programs, issues of importance, and current performance of the agency, as well as information sources and the credibility of such sources (these latter topics may be especially likely to change over time). In short, the surveys were designed as repeatable tools for continuous monitoring and evaluation of efforts—the researchers recommend that these surveys (or portions of them) be implemented at later periods as critical follow-up.

Outcome Evaluation

Outcome evaluation addresses the effectiveness of marketing, communications and public relations efforts by investigating to what extent the program is achieving its outcomes. These outcomes are the short-term and medium-term changes in program participants that result directly from the initiative (My Environmental Education Evaluation Resource Assistant, 2016).

There are a multitude of approaches for conducting short-term and medium-term evaluations. Many are easy to implement, can be done at low cost, and provide immediate results. Mile Creek Communications recommends applying this type of evaluation to obtain immediate results in order to tweak a current campaign, launch one that is similar within a short time period, gain immediate feedback for an event or program, better understand and track the speed of a response, gain immediate insight into the thoughts and feeling of an audience, track comments, or to determine whether there was a direct return on investment for future budgetary planning.

Recommendations for conducting outcome evaluation:

- 1. Evaluate response rates:** This method can be applied to campaigns that encourage recipients to click on a link to take action. This type of evaluation compares the response of the test and control groups. The difference between the two provides an idea of whether a campaign resonated with the test group and whether the call to action was successful. If there was a response to a campaign and the difference caused the test target audience to take the desired action, the positive difference amounts to a “lift,” and the strategy had a positive effect. If there was no difference, then the strategy had no positive effect. Examples of initiatives in which response rates may be evaluated include email campaigns encouraging opt-in choices, email reminders to renew licenses and registrations, event announcements, and any communication done via email.

- 2. On-site surveys:** These can be distributed to attendees of events, visitors at MDIFW venues, or anywhere MDIFW is drawing an audience. They provide immediate feedback that can be analyzed and evaluated. These apply to situations in which MDIFW may be interested in feedback on a program or visitors' experiences at MDIFW-owned. When possible, surveys should always collect key contact and demographic information (e.g., email address, age).
- 3. Data-mining:** Utilizing agency databases is an excellent technique for evaluation. This is most applicable when attempting to determine the increase in sales of licenses or registrations. Comparing and contrasting the increase or decrease in sales can be done following lapsed angler or hunter campaigns to determine the level of lift, if any.
- 4. Analytics software:** Analytics software can help analyze the effectiveness of online campaigns. It can be used to generate user information on websites, and many social networking sites have their own analytics available. In other cases, companies may offer analytics software free of charge. For example, Google, Facebook and Twitter offer analytic capabilities. Sites such as Bit.ly and HootSuite offer analysis of links posted in social networking sites.
- 5. Promotional codes:** These can be used online and on printed material in order to determine a response rate. Retailers routinely use these codes to track sales. The MDIFW website may incorporate the use of promotional codes by requiring hunters, anglers, or other constituents to input such codes if they are included with customer appreciation pieces or other initiatives applying to these groups. Input of promotional codes indicates not only that the target audience received the information, but that the information provided was desirable, addressed a need, and generated a response to the MDIFW "call to action."
- 6. Hashtags (#):** This is another means of allowing MDIFW to follow interest in a campaign centered on social media. It provides information on how the hashtag is trending, how often it is shared, and whether comments posted by online users are primarily positive or negative.
- 7. Usage information:** This analysis can be conducted on the number of visitors accessing online mapping pages. This will help identify who is using the maps. Offering the option to "check in" and comment also helps analyze how and where the maps are most effective.
- 8. Media analysis:** Success of a public relations campaign depends on the number of "mentions" and clips in both traditional and online media, where the mentions or clips occurred, and the quality of the placement. The goal is for high quality versions of these items to appear in sources the target audience(s) uses to gather information. This will not only help to determine how public relations stories are picked up, but also key media by niche topic and region of the state.

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ABOUT RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT

Responsive Management is an internationally recognized public opinion and attitude survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues. Our mission is to help natural resource and outdoor recreation agencies and organizations better understand and work with their constituents, customers, and the public.

Utilizing our in-house, full-service telephone, mail, and web-based survey center with 75 professional interviewers, we have conducted more than 1,000 telephone surveys, mail surveys, personal interviews, and focus groups, as well as numerous marketing and communication plans, needs assessments, and program evaluations. Clients include the federal natural resource and land management agencies, most state fish and wildlife agencies, state departments of natural resources, environmental protection agencies, state park agencies, tourism boards, most of the major conservation and sportsmen's organizations, and numerous private businesses. Responsive Management also collects data for many of the nation's top universities.

Specializing in research on public attitudes toward natural resource and outdoor recreation issues, Responsive Management has completed a wide range of projects during the past 25 years, including dozens of studies of hunters, anglers, wildlife viewers, boaters, park visitors, historic site visitors, hikers, birdwatchers, campers, and rock climbers. Responsive Management has conducted studies on endangered species; waterfowl and wetlands; and the reintroduction of large predators such as wolves, grizzly bears, and the Florida panther. Responsive Management has assisted with research on numerous natural resource ballot initiatives and referenda and has helped agencies and organizations find alternative funding and increase their membership and donations. Additionally, Responsive Management has conducted major organizational and programmatic needs assessments to assist natural resource agencies and organizations in developing more effective programs based on a solid foundation of fact.

Responsive Management has conducted research on public attitudes toward natural resources and outdoor recreation in almost every state in the United States, as well as in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Japan. Responsive Management has also conducted focus groups and personal interviews with residents of the African countries of Algeria, Cameroon, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Responsive Management routinely conducts surveys in Spanish and has conducted surveys in Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese and has completed numerous studies with specific target audiences, including Hispanics; African-Americans; Asians; women; children; senior citizens; urban, suburban, and rural residents; large landowners; and farmers.

Responsive Management's research has been upheld in U.S. District Courts; used in peer-reviewed journals; and presented at major natural resource, fish and wildlife, and outdoor recreation conferences across the world. Company research has been featured in most of the nation's major media, including CNN, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and on the front pages of *USA Today* and *The Washington Post*. Responsive Management's research has also been highlighted in *Newsweek* magazine.

Visit the Responsive Management website at:
www.ResponsiveManagement.com

ABOUT MILE CREEK COMMUNICATIONS, LLC

Mile Creek Communications, LLC is a leader in strategic marketing and communications services for the conservation community and outdoor recreation industry, as well as related services such as planning, development, promotion and evaluation. Its mission is to assist fish and wildlife and natural resource agencies, the outdoor recreation industry and non-governmental conservation organizations in planning, developing, funding, and promoting successful programs and communications efforts. Founded in 2006 by Jodi Anne Valenta, Mile Creek Communications has helped clients with program launches, management and evaluation, strategic planning, print, electronic and social media, grant writing and management, editorial writing, and more.

Mile Creek Communications has developed marketing and communications plans for the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, to name a few. Mile Creek Communications oversaw the development of the Best Practices Workbook for Hunting and Shooting Recruitment and Retention and developed a training course and webinars to assist state fish and wildlife and natural resources agencies with implementation. It also developed case studies for the National Shooting Sports Foundation to showcase successful Hunting Heritage Partnership (HHP) projects and surveyed grantees to determine the effectiveness of HHP. Mile Creek Communications also conducts a yearly progress report of state fish and wildlife and natural resources agencies for the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance to determine the success of its *Families Afield*. Mile Creek Communications has been featured on Discovery Health.com, PlanetGreen.com, TheExaminer.com, The Pittsburgh Tribune Review, and the Women's Outdoor Wire.

Mile Creek Communications president and owner Jodi Anne Valenta has 20 years of experience in the human dimension field of fish, wildlife, and natural resource management. Jodi earned a Master of Science degree in wildlife ecology and conservation from the University of Florida and has a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Syracuse University, with a minor in environmental studies.

She has consulted on several award-winning marketing and communications projects and been directly involved in dozens of high-profile education and outreach programs geared toward increasing awareness of and participation in the outdoors. Over the course of her career Jodi has earned nearly \$4.5 million in grant funds for non-profits, state agencies, and trade organizations. Jodi has directed many nationally acclaimed programs, including STEP OUSTIDE, the Hunting Heritage Partnership Program, and Families Afield. Jodi has served on the board of directors of Becoming an Outdoors-Woman, the Chronic Wasting Disease Alliance, the Council for Conservation and Education, Inc., National Fishing Week and the Ballot Issues Coalition and American Wildlife Conservation Partners. She has served on the Education, Outreach and Diversity Committee, the Angler Boater Participation Committee, and the Hunting and Shooting Sports Participation Committee of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the Communications Task Force for the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation.

Visit the Mile Creek Communications, LLC website at:
www.MileCreekCommunications.com