THOUGHTS ON THE DWR

OUTREACH PROGRAM

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OVERVIEW

THE PAST

I grew up on a ranch in Sanpete. When we weren't hauling hay or tending sheep, we'd spend our days fishing in the Sanpitch River that ran through our property. Jackrabbits and muskrats would fall victim to the .22s we got on our 12th birthdays.

In the fall, we looked forward to several school days off for deer hunting. Later in the season, we'd stand guard at the farm to greet (and sometimes turn away) the dozens of pheasant hunters who would arrive each year from up north.

THE PRESENT

We still own the land, but the sheep and cattle are gone—wool is cheaper to import than to raise locally. I haven't tried fishing in the river for years — it's dry half the time now. Kids no longer get days off for the family deer hunt. A few pheasants are still on our farm, but they're trucked in each year for paying hunters.

The world has changed. It's more urbanized, and most people have lost touch with nature as part of their daily lives. Instead of working and playing outside, people spend time in air-conditioned offices and, with a bit of effort, make weekend commutes to the outdoors.

Despite the changes, Utah fishing has never been better. Deer herds are expanding. Elk sightings have gone from being a rarity to commonplace. Wild turkeys are a frequent sight along the state's back roads. Other wildlife species are flourishing.

None of this would be true if not for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. In some ways, things have never been better.

Along with a growing population, we face increased challenges in managing the conflicts that occur when expanding urban areas intrude upon wildlife habitats. Cougars prowl our suburbs. Deer eat our tulips and get hit by cars. People love these animals just as long as they're not in their yards and stay off the roads.

Invasive species have changed our landscapes and threaten our waterways. Drought and cheatgrass create conditions for frequent summer range fires while compromising critical wildlife habitats. Quagga mussels threaten our water infrastructure and our fisheries.

THE FUTURE

One thing is for sure. The past is history, and the present will soon join it. What the future holds is difficult to predict, but current trends and technological changes contain clues.

We live in an age saturated with information and with people glued to electronic gadgets. In the future, strategic engagement with the public will be essential. Whether electronically or through face-to-face interactions, our role in managing the state's wildlife will depend on broad public support and engagement.

The DWR must approach outreach with the same strategic vision, care, planning, and professionalism that we use with our wildlife, aquatics, habitat, administrative services, and law enforcement programs.

PROCESS

DWR OUTREACH
PROCESS

BIG-PICTURE VISION

EVALUATE NEW & EXISTING PROJECTS BY THEIR ABILITY TO IMPACT BIG-PICTURE GOALS.

TAILOR MESSAGES AND PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS TARGET AUDIENCE NEEDS AND CONCERNS.
AUDIENCES

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES
CLEAR, TARGETED, COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIES ARE NEEDED TO ACHIEVE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.

LEARN
study
CREATIVE
BRAIN
data
evaluate
mind
LEARN
IDEA
brainstorm
research
imagination
education
THINK
thinking
creativity
connections
science

THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD. PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION IS ESSENTIAL.
EXECUTION

HOW OUTREACH SHOULD WORK

IN SHORT, outreach is about engaging the public. This engagement might be in face-to-face interactions at DWR-sponsored events, or it might be something as simple as providing an interesting wildlife tidbit on Facebook. It might be as deep and meaningful as helping foster a lifelong passion for hunting or as practical as alerting the public to an issue that might affect them.

Whether planning a major DWR initiative, like Outdoor Adventure Days or a simple fishing news release, outreach efforts should be strategically planned and implemented in ways designed to support identified agency goals.

We should not approach outreach as a series of one-off, piecemeal projects. Instead, all projects should be the result of strategic decisions made as part of a bigger picture

BIG-PICTURE VISION

Creating favorable public opinions and fostering an appreciation for Utah's wildlife are always DWR outreach goals. Specific goals like increasing fishing license sales or enlisting public support in combating invasive species can change from year to year.

We should always consider the bigger picture when planning new outreach strategies and when assessing existing programs. Emergencies develop, concerns arrive out of the blue, and unexpected curve balls

get thrown, but even as we deal with these issues, we must not lose focus on the larger goals toward which we're working.

In addition to supporting the bigger picture, outreach strategies, objectives and tactics should consider target audiences, the realities of benefits versus costs, implementation, anticipated results, and subsequent analyses of their effectiveness.

IDENTIFYING TARGET AUDIENCES

Outreach isn't a one-size-fits-all proposition. Most everyone likes wildlife, but opinions, preferences, concerns, and interests differ dramatically within that group.

Some people hunt and some shoot photos. Some people fish, while others don't. The concerns of an urban legislator are likely different from those of a rural Utah farmer. The motivations of a teenager enrolled in a hunter safety course are unlikely to have much in common with those of a retired person who enjoys watching birds at her backyard feeder.

From social media posts to developing new community ponds, all outreach efforts should identify and consider the target audiences. Is there a demand for a new Walk-In Access property? How do we best engage anglers to support a regulation change? How do we speak convincingly to wolf lovers and wolf haters?

These are both questions that have to be asked and answered before engaging the relevant audiences.

STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES

Once we've identified target audiences, every outreach endeavor requires planning and analysis to develop strategies and determine objectives to reach those audiences.

Without fully understanding the problems at hand, disappointing results are far more likely than successful outcomes. Success often requires team collaboration, while other times, it involves individual decisions and efforts.

Sometimes strategies are routine and stem directly from broader objectives. Other times, the obvious doesn't hold up to analysis. Proposed objectives won't always match up with more comprehensive strategies and goals.

However it's done, all outreach endeavors need to be evaluated, thought through, strategized, and planned in ways that ensure a successful outcome while furthering agency goals.

EXECUTION

Even the best ideas will fail if the planning fails to include realistic expectations for bringing ideas to fruition.

Does a sufficient budget exist to cover the cost of a good job? Does a firm commitment exist to see the project through completion? Is talent available within the agency, or will contractors be needed? Are those involved already working full-time on other projects? Will this new project warrant setting another project aside.

Have reasonable completion time tables been set? How will they be met? Are long-term maintenance commitments and upgrade costs factored into projects? Do these projects include plans for re-evaluation and termination if they fail to meet predetermined expectations?

A grave mistake is diving headfirst into projects without sufficient consideration given to the effort required to ensure success or the effect on existing workloads.

COST vs BENEFIT

HOW DOES AN IDEA MEASURE UP?
GETTING THE MOST BANG FOR THE BUCK.

YES

NO

FOCUS ON THE BIGGER-PICTURE GOALS.
AVOID CONSTANT DIVERSIONS.

FOCUS

EMPLOYEE TIME &
RESOURCES

CONCENTRATE ON THOSE PROJECTS
THAT MAKE BEST USE OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES.

ASSESSING

PROJECTS

GOOD IDEAS ARE A DIME
A DOZEN. IT'S CHOOSING
THOSE THAT ACHIEVE
MEANINGFUL RESULTS
THAT MATTER.

DID IT WORK? CAN WE IMPROVE IT?
WHY DID IT SUCCEED OR FAIL? WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

POSTMORTEM

ASSESSING & EVALUATING PROJECTS

EVERYONE HAS GOOD OUTREACH IDEAS. How well those good ideas fit within the available time and resources needed to implement them is another matter? We become so busy with paperwork and doing the dubious, one-off tasks requested by others that we don't get around to the big, more important (but slightly less urgent) projects.

Prioritization needs to change if we're ever going to gain control of our time, prioritize objectives then successfully finish them.

COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

The number of possible outreach projects is enormous, but employee time and resources are sharply limited. Getting the most significant return on the investment is essential — making strategic decisions when taking on new projects critical.

We're way past the point where the Outreach Section is simply an in-house service shop that primarily implements other people's outreach ideas. In today's world, making the most significant impact with our limited resources requires a more strategic approach that weighs costs against projected benefits.

For example, a hunting slam that attracts a few hundred participants sounds like a success. When weighed against hundreds of

hours of employee time and the fact that most slam participants are already fully invested in hunting, that success begins to seem a bit less compelling.

Using that same logic on our wildlife viewing events, two or three dozen attendees might have a wonderful time, but who are these attendees? What did they take away from it? What were their opinions of the event? Did it satisfy their expectations? Do they subsequently become more involved with wildlife recreation? How did the event help the division?

Depending on the answers, these small events might be worth the time. If not, perhaps we should use that time in other, more productive ways. We need to begin gathering the necessary data to run cost-benefit analyses to measure their worth.

I'm not saying the slams, the viewing events, or any particular current outreach projects aren't worth doing. What I'm saying is we need to stop rushing into seemingly good ideas without thoroughly analyzing their returns on our investments.

MAINTAINING FOCUS

Our piecemeal approach to most projects diverts our focus from larger division goals. We become so busy implementing one-off ideas and objectives that we have no time to develop strategies and

implement the objectives needed to make measurable progress.

Instead, our focus switches away from the bigger picture and toward getting the latest must-do item done as fast as possible so we can move on to the next project in the queue.

EMPLOYEE TIME & RESOURCES

There's never enough time for every outreach idea that finds its way onto our desks. Employees become stressed and burned out — enthusiasm wanes and quality declines. At the week's end, the realization hits that we made little progress toward bigger-picture division goals.

An employee works 40 hours each week. Barring occasional overtime, that's it; there is no more time. Yet, never-ending initiatives and projects appear with seemingly little regard for the stack of projects which are already weeks behind.

Many of these projects would not pass muster when measured against their contribution to achieving bigger-picture agency goals.

Instead, they often originate as efforts to spend down program budgets. Similarly, they arrive as pet projects of division employees who want to promote their programs. This misallocation of limited time and resources needs to change.

When we turn down projects, division employees often bypass us to engage in amateur outreach efforts that ultimately take more time for us to fix than if we'd said yes to them in the first place. This also needs to change.

Given our limited resources and time, we must start assessing projects in ways that enable us to get the biggest bang for the buck. We need to intelligently use our time and resources, not squander them by jumping from one shiny object to the next.

POSTMORTEM EVALUATION

We should continually evaluate every outreach program or project to determine its cost-effectiveness and whether or not it's accomplishing its intended purpose.

If an outreach program works, we need to determine why it's working and use that information to make it even better. If another program fails to perform, we need to figure out how to improve it or terminate it and reassign those efforts to more productive endeavors.

Not only should the continued operation and existence of projects be determined by these analyses, but we should also learn lessons to apply to other outreach initiatives.

THOUGHTS

THOUGHTS & SUGGESTIONS

R3
**RECRUIT
RETAIN
REACTIVATE**

THE PROBLEM WE'RE FACING

ACCORDING TO U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 2011 statistics, well over 400,000 people in Utah go fishing each year. Out of this number, almost half do not renew their fishing licenses the following year.

Those same sources tell us that close to 200,000 people go hunting each year in Utah. Hunter retention and churn is somewhat better than with fishing. According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, 78 percent of hunters purchase a hunting license for at least two consecutive years. However, only 35 percent do so over five years.

Why is this? What can we do to bring new hunters and anglers into the sport? What can we do to retain those already involved and reactivate people who are no longer active?

Utah is not the only state facing these questions, and many intelligent people are figuring out the answers. There is no silver bullet. There are, however, dozens of small steps we should take that will add up to making significant differences.

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FISHING WOES

A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, the DWR contracted with a local advertising agency — Penna Powers — to survey Utahns' attitudes regarding wildlife, hunting, fishing, and the DWR. The study results indicated that the vast majority of Utahns (94 percent) have been fishing at least once. Two-thirds of those same people have gone fishing within the last five years.

This same study indicated that two-thirds of Utah men and 42 percent of women say they plan to purchase a fishing license this year, yet only a fraction of those people follow through with what they say they'd like to do. Our task is to make it easy for them to do what they already want to do.

Fishing license sales are good, and license sales have been increasing for the past few years. However, on a per-capita basis, we're not keeping up. A considerably smaller percentage of the public fishes now than 10, 20, or 30 years ago.

Nationally, as the graphic on the right indicates, it's much the same story. We need to reverse this trend in Utah. Luckily, we have it within our means to do this.
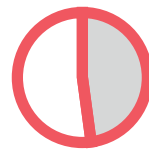
LAPSED ANGLERS ACROSS THE NATION

Anglers most likely to let their licenses lapse include females, urban residents and young adults between 18 and 24.

Anglers who purchased a fishing license only one time in a ten-year period.

49%

FIRST-TIMERS

Those planning to be licensed in 5 years — **73%**

Those actually licensed after five years — **32%**

46% DON'T RENEW

Close to half of all anglers do not renew their fishing licenses the following year.

WHO COMES? WHO GOES?

4% Anglers who bought a license each year for 10 years.

KIDS

First-time license buyers who fished as children.

80%

LOST REVENUE $

Lapsed anglers are people who were at were at one time motivated to go fishing. Some leave and never come back. Some return after a few years. Whatever the reason, they are our most promising audience to reactivate. Why do we lose so many of these people each year What can we do to bring them back into the sport?

U.S. Angler Population, Who Comes and Who Goes, American Sportfishing Association, March 2016

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SELLING MORE FISHING LICENSES

IF OUR PENNA POWERS SURVEY is accurate, and with somewhere around half of all Utahns indicating a desire to go fishing in the coming year, how difficult can the sale be? If half of Utah's residents want to go fishing, why do only 13 or 14 percent of them purchase a fishing license in any given year?

We could all provide likely reasons for this. Each of us wants to do things that get sidetracked by the realities of life. Lawns need mowing. Fences must be repaired and painted. Kids have soccer practice. Work takes up way too much time. Friends have other plans. The reasons are endless.

There's not much we can do to create more time in people's lives or untangle their already busy schedules. But this doesn't mean we're powerless to address the problem. What we can do is:

1. INFLUENCE PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES
2. MAKE PURCHASING A LICENSE BRAIN-DEAD EASY

INFLUENCING PRIORITIES — We already write news releases and blog posts telling people how fun fishing can be. We create videos showing them the excitement of catching a big fish. We have a website with an extensive fishing section containing all kinds of information. We routinely make social media posts and shoot videos that engage readers with quick snippets of what they're missing.

Unfortunately, this isn't enough!

Fishing is cool — All our relevant marketing should portray fishing and possessing a fishing license as one's credentials as a true sportsman.

We should subtly convey in our messaging that an expired fishing

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license is a sign of a wannabe. Possessing a license should be seen as evidence of being a bona fide outdoorsman or woman.

Compelling fishing videos — We should produce a series of quick, professionally done how-to videos to share on social media and our website to complement our in-person seminars. To start, each should focus on beginners and show how easy it is to take up fishing while having fun doing it. We should redirect and focus our video efforts on this more strategic approach instead of shooting random, one-off projects with little synergy or lasting impact

A new and better fishing website should be a top division priority. This new mobile-friendly website should be easy to use, targeted to anglers' concerns, and designed for smartphones in the field. The site should be interactive and include site users as contributing participants — not just readers of what we write.
We need to engage anglers as partners in their outdoor experiences and not just as the sellers of licenses and the enforcers of regulations.
   This new, engaging and interactive, mobile-friendly DWR website should be the state's primary and authoritative fishing portal. Among other things, it should include:

- Sign-ups for individualized emails relevant to that person
- User-generated reports right from the lake, reservoir, or stream
- Pushed notices to subscribers telling them what's close by
- Easily found regulations to supplement our fishing guidebook

- Interactive maps of lakes, reservoirs and streams
- Easy-to-follow directions to get anglers from here to there
- Short, informative, and fun-to-watch how-to videos
- Information about nearby activities
- Discount promotions from retailers
- Calendars and invitations to local fishing clinics and events
- A stand-alone mobile fishing app to complement the website

WASATCH FRONT
3-4 HOURS AWAY

LAS VEGAS
2–3 HOURS AWAY
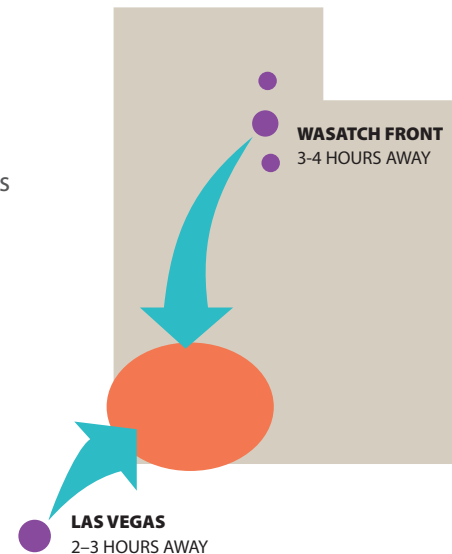
Out-of-state marketing — Partnering with the Utah Office of Tourism, State Parks, and select county tourism offices to market outdoor experiences in Utah should be easy. I've done some initial exploration of these issues, and people seem to be generally on board.
   The Clark County area (Las Vegas) alone is home to two million people who swelter in the summer heat. They head to southern Utah in droves during the weekend to escape the temperatures, visit national and state parks and, well, spend

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in Utah would trigger tens of thousands more people to begin thinking of Utah as a weekend getaway to escape the 110° F July temperatures.

We could entice many Nevada residents who travel to Brian Head for skiing to try ice fishing at Panguitch Lake. During most months, Quail Creek and Sand Hollow reservoirs make great weekend alternatives to Lake Mead.

We should engage Las Vegas newspapers and television stations with regular news releases written with their audiences in mind — promoting the great adventures lying just up the road. Establishing contacts with the local news media will take some effort. However, I suspect we will find success if we cite figures showing a significant segment of their audience regards southern Utah as a top weekend destination.

Our Cedar City office should spearhead this effort with a dedicated person assigned to the task. We should also enlist the help of State Parks and, possibly, Washington, Iron, Kane, Garfield, and Beaver counties to contribute additional materials — creating a joint news release schedule.

MAKE BUYING A LICENSE BRAIN-DEAD EASY — We haven't done well in this area, which is too bad. On the other hand, it means there are fantastic ways to make improvements. Some of the changes we'll need to make are easy, and some will be more difficult. However, the effort will produce beneficial results.

1. ENCOURAGE ANGLERS TO STAY LICENSED,
2. ELIMINATE TIME GAP BETWEEN LICENSES,
3. BUILD A BETTER FISHING LICENSE SALES PORTAL

Subscription model for fishing licenses — Magazines, journals, and newspapers have been doing this for decades. More recently, software companies have begun using this model.

Subscriptions are a proven method of generating revenue by

money while they're here.

Half the cars on any given spring, summer, or fall weekend at Panguitch Lake or Snow Canyon have Nevada license plates. Brian Head's ski season is primarily dependent upon Las Vegas area residents.

We could tap into this two-million-person Las Vegas market by promoting both cooler-weather summertime fishing and excellent ice fishing during the winter (neither of which are available near Las Vegas). A few mid-summer billboards along Las Vegas commuter routes showing a mountain lake with words about it being a two-hours away

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creating opportunities to remove the hassle of renewing a license (or subscription). They also help eliminate the gap between an expired license and a new one.

- • Discounts for renewing early
- • Auto renewal option using Brandt Information Services
- • Better incentives for multi-year subscriptions
- • Add coupons from Cabela's or Sportsman's Warehouse
- • Automatic emailed reminder notices
  - – 1 month before expiration
  - – 1 week before expiration
  - – 1 week after expiration
  - – 1 month after expiration
  - – Yearly thereafter if still expired

We should do everything possible to encourage anglers to stay licensed. Since nearly half of all license holders do not purchase licenses the following year, we need to leverage a buyer's initial enthusiasm by aggressively marketing multi-year license subscriptions. Only the most

avid anglers renew their licenses before they expire. Most wait until the next time they go fishing, which might be weeks, months, or years down the road. We need to close these money-losing gaps.

We should discount multi-year subscriptions enough to make it convincingly worthwhile to purchase. Our database figures and a little math could quickly determine the optimum discount for multi-year subscriptions to ensure that we make more money on average than we'd lose by letting licenses lapse at their current rate.

We could also partner with local outdoor retailers to include merchandise coupons for early online renewals or multi-year subscriptions. For example, "Get $20 off your next purchase at Cabela's with the purchase of a combination license."

An opt-in auto-renewal program would also help eliminate license churn. Brandt Information Services (BrandtInfo.com) offers this service to state agencies. Several states in the southeastern U.S. have done just this with good initial success. We need to find out more to best determine how this might work for us while addressing the accompanying credit card security issues.

Easy online purchases & renewals — Roughly half of our DWR website traffic comes from mobile devices like smartphones and tablets. This mirrors national trends which show no signs of slowing.

Unfortunately, our online license and permit sales portals are not mobile-friendly, which is a significant and costly stumble on our part.

This problem makes buying a Utah fishing license online with a smartphone frustratingly tricky. One of our priorities should be to do everything possible to make buying and renewing licenses easy. Again, Brandt Information Services can help us with this problem.

The complexity associated with a license purchase is another problem worth addressing. At best, buying a license should be a simple impulse purchase. Of course, it will always be a little more complicated than that, but we should do everything possible to make it easy.

Providing comprehensive online user account information (just like almost every online retailer does) would enable our customers to log

Your Utah combination license gets you
$20 off
any items totaling $150 or more
Bring this coupon and your Utah combination license on your next visit to any of our Utah stores. Offer expires December 31, 2017. The registration number on this coupon must match the ID number printing on your combination license.
Not valid with any other offer. Good only at Utah locations.
679201-873
Cabela's®

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in, then check a box or two before hitting the submit button to sign up for a hunt drawing or buy a license. We would already have their basic information, which they could update as needed while they're online.

Separating the fishing license front end of our licensing portal from the hunting license front end would remove much of the complexity. There would still be plenty of opportunity for cross-promotions and upselling, but focusing directly on ease in purchasing a fishing license will likely result in more online sales, which is what we want.

Sales through our license vendors work well and are a mainstay of how we've traditionally sold licenses. Even in today's online world, our license vendors handle the bulk of our fishing license sales.

Unfortunately, there is overhead associated with these vendors, and we cannot depend on the vendors to implement promotional discounts, collect email addresses, give sales pitches on purchasing combination licenses, multi-year subscriptions, or opt-in renewals. We can, however, do all these things online.

Fishing clinics and fishing clubs — We've had some success by hosting various evening fishing clinics. Even though they only reach a few dozen people, they're quality experiences for those who attend.

Even though these people are already, for the most part, licensed anglers, the clinics provide additional reasons and excitement for staying licensed and trying new kinds of fishing experiences.

A cost-benefit analysis should determine whether the efforts put into these clinics justify the resources put into them.

Our research shows that local fishing clubs associated with our

Community Fisheries have a good chance of turning kids into life-long anglers.

We should obtain available statistics. For example, how many children participating in these clubs become regularly licensed anglers during the next five- or ten-year period?

Community fisheries — Our community fisheries make it easy for kids to go fishing. My gut feeling is they're working out well for this purpose, but we shouldn't be making decisions on gut assumptions alone.

Like my other recommendations, I'm suggesting that we define our objectives for these ponds, then do a cost-benefit analysis on whether or not we're achieving those objectives with our investment of time, money, and hatchery resources.

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What constitutes a community fishery? What are the minimum criteria for designating a pond as a community fishery and stocking it with fish? Should the standards be the same for each region? Should rural ponds be held to the same standards as urban ponds.? How do we decide when enough ponds are sufficient for a given area? How do we decide when there are too few, and how do we evaluate various proposals or make our pitches to multiple municipalities?

After 15 years, it's time to evaluate where we've been, what we have achieved, and what we'd like the future of this program to be.

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BROADEN OUR HUNTER BASE

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

SELLING MORE HUNTING PERMITS is a tricky problem. According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, it's far more challenging to convince adult non-hunters to take up the sport than encourage already-existing hunters to expand their horizons into other hunting opportunities.

In Utah, the job might be a little easier. According to our Penna Powers survey, two-thirds of Utah residents say they have been hunting at some point during their lives.

A two-pronged approach to engaging new hunters (especially young hunters) and reactivating or redirecting existing hunters is appropriate.
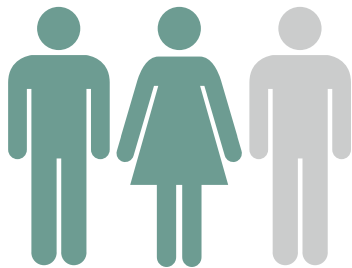
Two-thirds of Utahns surveyed said they have hunted at some point during their lives.

Big game — Deer herds are growing, and elk hunting has never been better. The DWR is succeeding in establishing and expanding other populations of various big game animals throughout the state.

In many ways, things have never been better, but we still have more people who want to hunt these animals than there are animals to hunt. Public interest in big game hunting is arguably a good problem

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(it's better than not having enough hunters), but it brings significant challenges to the agency and the Outreach Program.

In the future, Outreach efforts will increasingly include the need to help manage the expectations of those who apply for big game hunts.

Efforts are needed to convince hunters to apply for other hunts where the opportunity exceeds the demand. Redirecting big game hunters to waterfowl and upland game could take some of the pressure of our big game hunts.

Utah's growing number of big game animals also comes with a downside. We have a vocal segment of Utahns who see these animals as nuisances and highway collision dangers.

Other people have strong emotions regarding animal rights and animal safety. All too often, the general public is at odds over what to do and how to do it.

Due to the complexity of the issue, the passions involved, and the popularity of big game hunting, our outreach efforts must be nuanced and proactive, and when necessary, reactive.

Despite the problems, the silver lining is an interested public, which gives us opportunities to engage the media and the public with our messages about the many things we're doing to improve our big game herds, improve habitat and, otherwise, manage the state's wildlife in the best possible ways.

Upland game and waterfowl — Here we have room to grow with a wide variety of species that appeal to different hunters.

Of course, we need to keep existing participants engaged, and a cost-benefit analysis of both the waterfowl and upland game slams should give us information on just how effective these two programs have been in doing that.

Also, we need to stimulate existing hunters' interests in hunting other species. For example, waterfowl hunters are an ideal target audience for an upland game hunting promotional effort. We should use GovDelivery to aggressively market upland game bird hunting to waterfowlers and vice versa.

Dedicated Hunters — Over the last couple of decades, participation in the Dedicated Hunter Program has had its ups and downs as program requirements, limitations, and benefits have changed. It's a great program that brings significant value to the DWR in terms of work that might not be possible otherwise.

During the past several years, participant numbers are climbing upward toward the 10,000 mark, presenting problems. It's terrific that hunters are interested, but there are practical limits to the number of worthwhile, genuinely meaningful projects available for them to perform. Besides, the time required of agency employees to manage

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this small army of temporary workers becomes burdensome.

1. We should perform a cost-benefit analysis of the program to determine how well it works and how the DWR benefits.

2. From that analysis, determine the optimum number of participants. My gut feeling is that we're reaching that number and might have passed it, but we need better data to make that determination with any degree of certainty.

3. We should maximize our return on investment by only listing worthwhile projects that genuinely benefit the DWR and the state's wildlife.

4. Depending on the cost-benefit analysis results, a smaller, more focused Dedicated Hunter Program might ensue. We could then market this program as a status symbol for the serious few who qualify.

5. We should consider mandatory periods in which Dedicated Hunters must perform their project hours. As it is now, spring projects go unfilled while we scramble to develop projects during the late summer for procrastinators. During the sign-up period, we should consider requiring that each Dedicated Hunter pick two months during the year in which to complete his or her projects.

6. Implement a separate but parallel volunteer program for those who only want to help. This approach has been discussed and agreed upon for years. It's time to make it happen.

Walk-in Access — Our Walk-in Access program has grown from a few test properties in the Northern Region to a statewide effort. It's time for a cost-benefit analysis of this more extensive program.

In many ways, the program differs from region to region in ways that seem arbitrary rather than planned. We need to develop a statewide plan that considers what we expect to achieve from these properties, then structure the program to achieve these goals.

What kinds of properties do we need, and how many can we support? What properties work as hoped and which ones don't. Are there ways to standardize the contracts to make the management of the program more straightforward and more efficient? Who uses these properties? Are these properties benefiting our customers and the agency?

Walk-in Access

RH Johansen property

Public access to the private property behind this sign exists through an agreement between the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and the landowner. Please respect this private property.

FISHING   WILDLIFE VIEWING

UTAH DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Important!

Observe the following rules while accessing this Walk-in Access property.

Permitted activities: ☐ Hiking   ☐ Fishing   ☐ Upland game   ☐ Big game   ☐ Waterfowl   ☐ Trapping

Registration required?   ☐ No   ☐ Yes   ☐ Registration box   ☐ Notify landowner (see registration box)

Additional information? _____

You are a guest on this private property. Please respect it and the landowner by leaving no litter, keeping vehicles on roads, closing gates, following all rules and using common sense.

Scan the QR code for additional details regarding this property or visit *wildlife.utah.gov/wia* for information on this and other Walk-in Access properties.

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We should also solicit feedback from visitors to these properties by providing an online comment form accessible via URLs and QR codes listed at the property check-in stations.

We also need to brand and market the Walk-in Access Program to establish a common visual identity with signage recognizable from one property to another.

Shooting centers — Develop a strategic, long-range marketing plan for our shooting centers that considers the target audiences, what we're trying to accomplish with existing budgets, and the competition from other private shooting ranges.

1. We should make a concerted effort to get more reliable and professional staff and volunteers.

2. A few Spanish-speaking shooting range personnel would make a great way to attract the local Hispanic population while educating them about the ins and outs of firearm safety and Utah hunting.

3. We need to upgrade their images with professional visual branding and marketing comparable to commercial facilities.

4. We should explore revenue-generating avenues to make the shooting centers profitable in much the same way commercial ranges have done.

NASP — This program has become surprisingly popular — especially among girls. It's turned into a significant activity at many Utah schools, with lots of enthusiastic participation.

We have enough statistical data to assemble evidence on whether this program results in a subsequent hunting interest, completion of hunter education requirements, and obtaining a hunting license and or permit.

It's the balance between our efforts with this program and its demonstrated value as a recruitment tool that should, at least in part, guide our future participation in and promotion of the program.

THOUGHTS & SUGGESTIONS

DWR WEBSITE

THE DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES website, like many government websites, was built in a piecemeal fashion over the past two decades. It evolved to its present state as we added content and capabilities to provide more information on who we are and what we do. There was never a master plan regarding how the pieces fit together into a coherent, complementary whole.

More than 50% of all web traffic is now coming from **smartphones and tablets.**

Google Analytics data, 2016

As a result, our current website is a mishmash of spotty content and capabilities added in response to separate requests, one-off needs, and personal interests. The content part of the website is a sprawling labyrinth of random information due to the way it evolved. It's challenging to navigate, overly complex, and a bit like a disorganized drawer full of odds and ends accumulated over the years.

The current website has the equivalent of tens of thousands of pages of information. According to our analytic data, most of it is rarely visited since it's irrelevant to our customers' website searches.

Our site analytics show that the vast majority of the site's visitors arrive to buy hunting and fishing licenses and get information on how and where to fish and hunt.

Current web traffic on the internet has shifted from desktop computers to mobile smartphones and tablets. Our existing website, including the hunt drawing and license sales area, is difficult to nearly impossible to use on a smartphone.
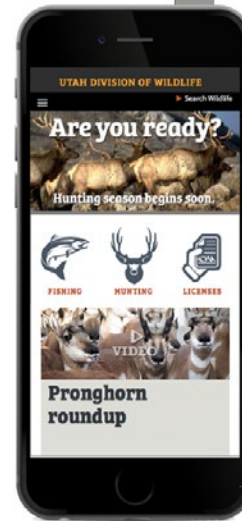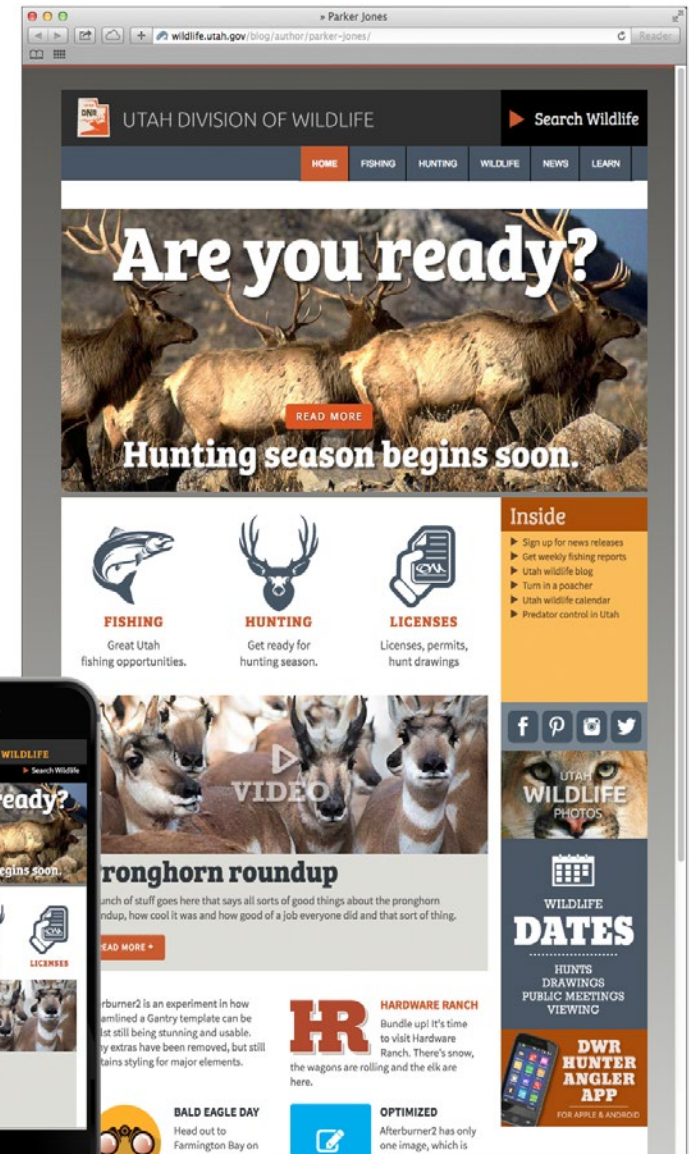
THOUGHTS & SUGGESTIONS

A primary source of agency funding comes through the sale of permits and licenses that go through our websites to one extent or another. With that being the case, we need to design and build websites to accommodate the devices people use to access the web.

NEW APPROACHES —An effective web presence should be strategic, well-planned, and focused. The current junk drawer approach no longer

works. Instead of a monolithic website that tries to be all things to all people, we should break up the website into a series of related portals specifically geared to efficiently engaging our customers.

Agency website — A primary DWR website that contains information about the agency and the work it performs is, of course, still needed. This website will house a more efficient, streamlined version of the existing website.

Fishing website — We should create a separate website designed specifically to engage anglers and market fishing. This site will, of course, be extensively linked from the official DWR website but focused on angler interests.

The site will be a marketing tool that engages anglers through various means. We will sell fishing licenses from this site. We will give people information on where to fish, what they might catch, and what they need to know to be successful and stay legal.

We will have regular fishing report updates from our biologists in the regions and the general public. It will have a solid social media component.

We will design it for mobile, in-the-field use that enables anglers to upload photos and videos of their fishing trips, see what's biting just down the road, and for asking questions.

It will enable people to sign up for fishing-specific emailed information. It will make extensive use of interactive maps that show people where to go and how to get there.

Despite its focus on fishing, the site will take the broader view of fishing being part of a more extensive outdoor experience. We will have information on other associated activities that non-fishing members of the family can enjoy, like hiking, camping, picnicking, 4-wheeling, wildlife viewing.

Hunting website(s) — After the fishing website, let's use what we learn to design and build a similar site (or sites) focused on the needs of hunters and marketing hunting opportunities.

We might break down this website into big game, small game, and

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waterfowl sections.

Like the fishing website, this site should be a mobile-friendly marketing tool to get people excited about hunting and telling them how to do things. If we do it right, it will make an excellent complement to the Utah Hunting & Fishing app.

We would sell licenses and permits, promote upcoming drawings and integrate the drawing website into the new hunting site.

This site would have a solid social media component encouraging shared adventures, uploading photos, getting involved. It would explain what people need to know to apply for hunts in ways that focus on recruiting, retaining, reactivating hunters.

It would also be a place to conduct contests, slams, and various other fun promotional activities and events.

Other websites — We have certain facilities and programs that don't fit conveniently into what I've described above. These are things that deserve to stand on their own as somewhat different and require a different approach.

For example, the Great Salt Lake Nature Center and Hardware Ranch need their own small websites. The shooting centers might also benefit from their own websites.

We must, of course, avoid an explosion of sites that risk management and branding difficulties. These smaller exceptions to our general vision should be assessed one at a time to determine whether they're needed, their intended purpose, and to choose the resources necessary to build and maintain them. We don't want websites built around individual programs. We need websites built around goals and geared toward providing experiences to targeted audiences.

Hunting & fishing app — The agency has had good luck with its Utah Hunting & Fishing app. With many thousands of downloads, it's proven its worth in popularity and end-user engagement.

Rather than making the app more extensive and more complex, we should consider splitting it into two separate mobile apps — a hunting
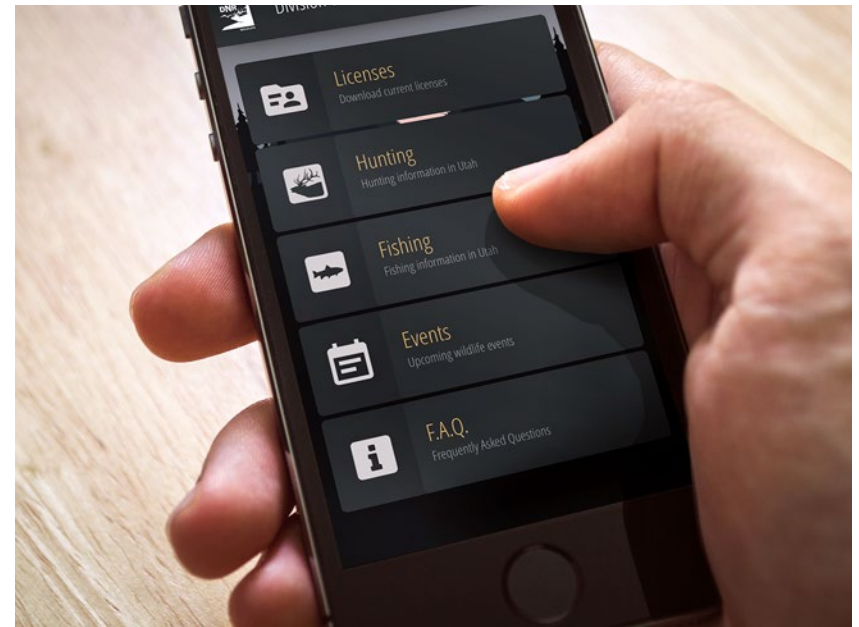
app and a fishing app.

There are overlaps, of course, but fishing is a different activity from hunting, and each is extensive enough to warrant separate treatment. The fishing app could even be a scaled-down and tighter version of the fishing-focused website I'm proposing.

Getting started — Given that we can easily sell many more fishing licenses, we should start there before moving on to the hunting website or revamping the main DWR website. Unfortunately, we can't do it all at once—these kinds of websites take time and money.

With our Penna Powers survey indicating that about half of Utahns express a desire to go fishing, we have a large audience of potential customers. We need to reach out with tools that promise to engage them.

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ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

DWR events — Collect participant information from DWR-sponsored events through a simple handout that leads to a survey regarding the event.

Who are the people who attend our various events, like the state fair, wildlife viewing opportunities, open houses, and Outdoor Adventure Days? What do they think of the events? What complaints and suggestions do they have?

These are questions for which we don't currently have good answers. A simple handout to people prompting them to take a follow-up survey might yield valuable information. If possible, getting that


information from people in person can work, but more often than not, it's not practical. An online survey for participants to complete over the next several days might be the best alternative.

This information would be valuable for several reasons:
1. Assessing the success of the event.
2. Assessing people's impressions
3. Determining repeat customers
4. Marketing purposes if we get their email addresses
5. Gathering feedback and suggestions on important issues
6. Helpful in making a cost-benefit analysis of the event

Concerted effort to engage Utah Hispanic community — Utah's Latino community is somewhere around 14 or 15 percent of the state's population, yet the DWR makes little effort to engage this growing group of Utah residents.
1. Hire a native Spanish-speaking outreach coordinator
2. Create a Spanish social media site from a Hispanic perspective
3. Make efforts for a DWR presence at Hispanic events
4. Host Hispanic fishing events at community ponds and reservoirs
5. Efforts to recruit Latino-frequented stores as license vendors

15%
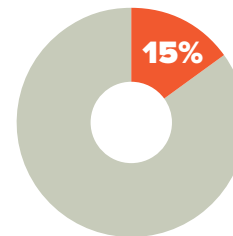
Don't ignore Utah Hispanics.
They currently comprise **14–15 percent** of Utah's population, and that percentage is growing fast.

U.S. Census data

A couple of years ago, we hired Lighthouse, a local survey company, to conduct two separate focus groups composed of Hispanic people. The full results of that survey are at *https://wildlife.utah.gov/pdf/HispanicFocusGroup.pdf*.

I won't go into detail here because it warrants considerable

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discussion, but we need to follow through on engaging this segment of Utah residents.

The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) has conducted studies on Hispanics and fishing. They have developed considerable information on engaging this audience and providing marketing tools and templates specifically designed to do so.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation also has published a report on the Hispanic market and shooting sports: *https://wildlife.utah. gov/pdf/NSSFHispanicMarketStudy.pdf*.

Reaching out to this group should one of the DWR's top outreach priorities.

Customer account portal —This presents some technical challenges, but we should create a system that enables each of our customers to have an online account page.

This password-protected account portal would list each customer's name, past licenses/permits and purchases, bonus & preferences points, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, payment information, account preferences, and mailing list subscriptions, among other things.

Building a customer portal this comprehensive will be costly and require solving technical details and integrating disparate databases. Even so, companies from Amazon to our own PEHP have done exactly that.

Contract with Peak Democracy to solicit online customer feedback on important issues: *https://OpenGov.com*. They provide a well-organized and well-designed system for public online surveys and soliciting suggestions and participation on important issues of public concern.

This could easily comprise an important, transparent, and broad-based supplement to things as diverse as our Regional Advisory Council meetings to gathering information from concerned anglers.

Salt Lake City, for example, uses OpenGov as the basis for the Open City Hall part of its website: *https://.opentownhall.com/portals/79/forum_ home*.
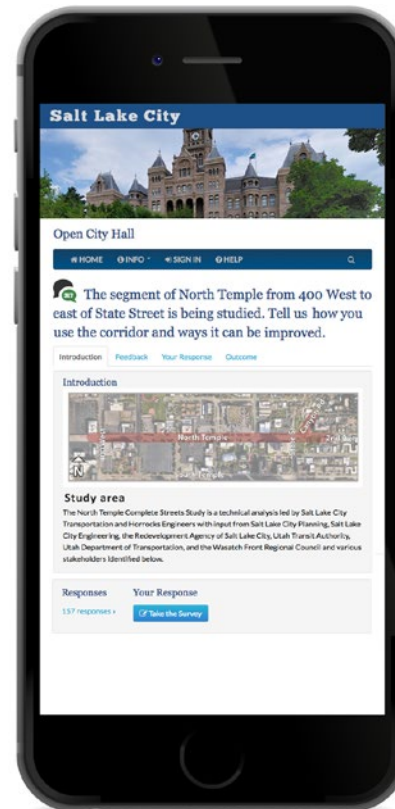
GovDelivery provides an efficient, robust, well-designed, and well-implemented system for mass electronic communication and marketing to hundreds of state government agencies in the U.S.

Communicating with our customers through email and text messages — whether by sending fishing and news reports to subscribers or marketing upcoming hunt drawings — has proven highly successful. It's also been responsible for increasing drawing applications to the tune of many tens of thousands of dollars.

Using GovDelivery services will enable us to expand our electronic communications and do so in highly optimized ways that will produce results.

We've been in contact with GovDelivery for several months, and have been working with both Utah State Purchasing and the Utah Division of Technology Services on an IT purchase exception agreement.

Brandt Information Services offers state wildlife agencies various licensing and recreational solutions to increase participation and revenue through innovative marketing and event participant management — including automated license renewals and integration with GovDelivery.

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Social media — The DWR has struggled with social media and had great success with it. Five years ago, a division social media presence was little more than something to consider. Today, it's become an essential part of our communication strategy.

Our combined social media presence — Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram — reaches hundreds of thousands of readers with quick snippets about wildlife and news from the DWR.

Like the division's website, it has primarily evolved in a piecemeal fashion, with the Salt Lake office taking the lead and with each of the regions and some of our programs and facilities starting up their own social media presence.

Social media's rapid growth has turned initial experiments into established ways of doing things that might or might not be the best approaches, given what we've learned.

It's time to take an assessment of where we've been, what we're doing now, and what we're trying to achieve.

Let's create videos with personality and emotion. These videos should portray fishing and hunting as part of a more comprehensive outdoor adventure — one with a heritage that ties us to the land and those who came before us.

Compelling videos that resonate with our target audiences should portray hunting and fishing as part of who we are and what we are meant to do. To see examples of these kinds of emotionally compelling videos at *https://donnievincent.com/pages/teasers-trailers*.

There's little synergy in a series of one-off video productions. Instead, we should develop a strategic approach to video that best utilizes our existing resources in ways that contribute to achieving our bigger-picture goals.

Redefine Outreach Manager positions — We should explore the pros and cons of redefining the outreach managers as regionally located members of a statewide outreach team whose specific skills can be used
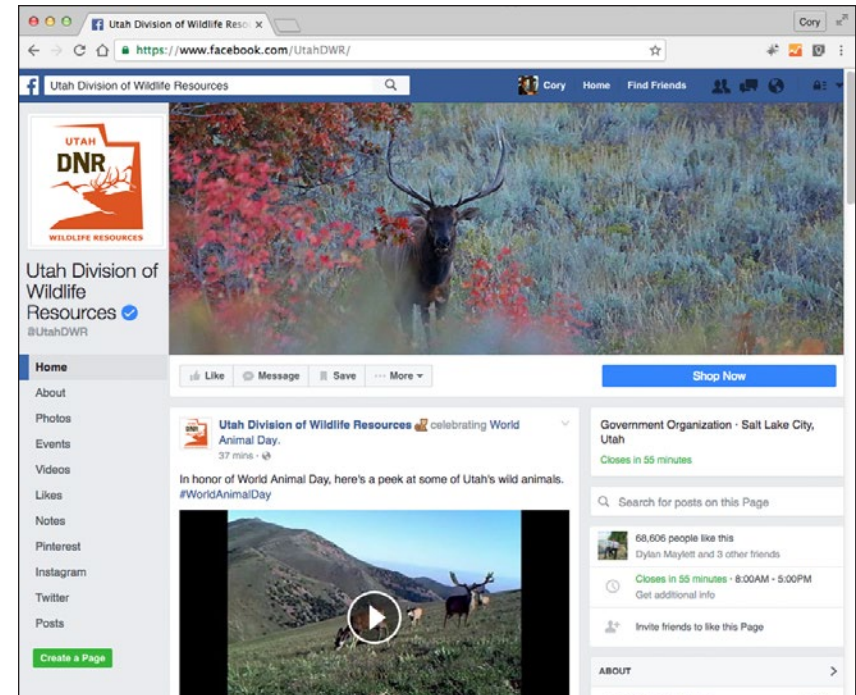
in the outreach manager's region and shared across the state as needed.

In addition to filling region-specific duties, outreach managers should be hired, in part, for particular skills that will fill gaps in the existing statewide team in ways that complement statewide efforts. We expect our outreach managers to do everything from editing videos to guiding tours to writing news releases.

We shouldn't expect each outreach manager to be a jack-of-all-trades. It's unrealistic to assume that any single outreach manager can do everything equally well.

Instead, we should hire outreach managers who can cover the regional basics as needed while also possessing special skills, interests, and talents of the kind suitable for contributing to a well-rounded statewide team.

THOUGHTS & SUGGESTIONS

Hardware Ranch — A winter visit to see the elk is a tradition for many northern Utahns. But do we need to market the sleigh rides more effectively? Is attracting more people to Hardware ranch an objective? Is Hardware Ranch set up to accommodate more visitors? Do disease-related issues put the feeding program at Hardware Ranch in jeopardy? Do we envision a time when this feeding will stop?

We should ask ourselves these kinds of questions since the answers will provide a road map for the future.

The GSL Nature Center has enormous potential for public education and engagement, but have we ever really defined what we're trying to accomplish there?

We're in the process of building a very nice building, but isn't the whole point of the Nature Center the wetlands themselves. A nice, climate-controlled facility and a big parking lot will be useful, but the real value of the Nature Center lies in its proximity to the surrounding wetlands.

The Nature Center could quickly become a popular weekend destination for families and couples looking for an interesting way to spend part of an afternoon exploring trails, reading interpretive panels, and seeing wildlife on leisurely self-guided tours.

The next phase for the Nature Center should emphasize the outdoor wetlands experience. With a bit of imagination, it's easy to envision a public education facility that does just that — both indoors and out.

An excellent example of creativity in making the wetlands themselves the star of the show lies few miles to the north at the Nature Conservancy's Great Salt Lake Shorelands Preserve. The photos above show just a few outdoor attractions that beckon people into the GSL Shorelands Preserve marshes.

I'm not suggesting that we duplicate what the Nature Conservancy has done, but I am suggesting that we use some creativity to design an engaging, attractive, and educational outdoor wetland experience for people to enjoy.

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Citizen science — As an agency, we've often made good use of volunteers, but public engagement in research projects is relatively new. The Outreach Section's only experience with promoting citizen science projects was a collaborative project with the Hogle Zoo to collect amphibian information via a mobile app.

As we move forward, we should explore other ideas that the biologists in the agency might have on "crowdsourcing" valuable data. These projects would need to produce meaningful results to make them worthwhile. To be successful, they would need to lend themselves to the kind of work that would generate public interest and follow-through.

I'm not suggesting the Outreach Section initiate these projects — the agency biologist should do that, of course. However, the Outreach Section could advise biologists on what projects might or might not lend themselves to a successful promotional effort. We could also promote these projects through our usual channels to generate public interest in public participation in various projects.

Hunting & fishing guidebooks — The future of these guidebooks lies online. It's time we bite the bullet and move ahead with the conversion of these printed booklets to a searchable, mobile-friendly online form, as several other states are doing.

There might very well be room for a printed fishing booklet or general hunting pamphlet. However, the bulk of the information should be online, where it can be searched, retrieved, updated, and structured to provide people with what they need to know in easy-to-use and straightforward ways.

Online guidebooks will involve more than simply digitizing the printed booklets. Instead, it will involve restructuring the information in ways that are best suited for searchable electronic consumption instead
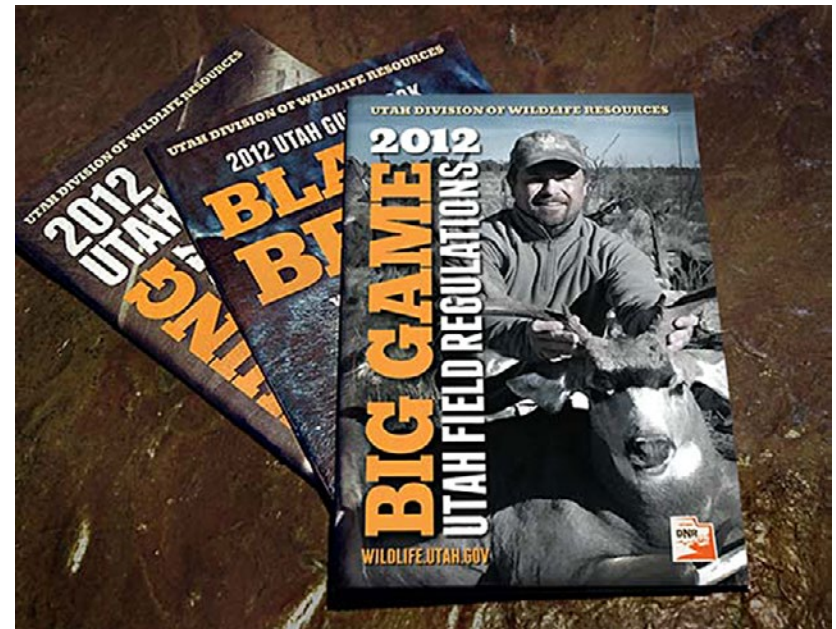
of being read in a static, printed form.

The initial cost, time, and learning curve might be difficult, but once implemented, a database-driven guidebook would cut down on both production time and the considerable expense involved in printing and distributing the booklets.

Electronic guidebooks will also present additional opportunities to use interactive GIS-based maps useful for hunters and anglers. We could also modify the Utah Hunting & Fishing mobile app to import and delete these searchable guidebooks at the push of a button.