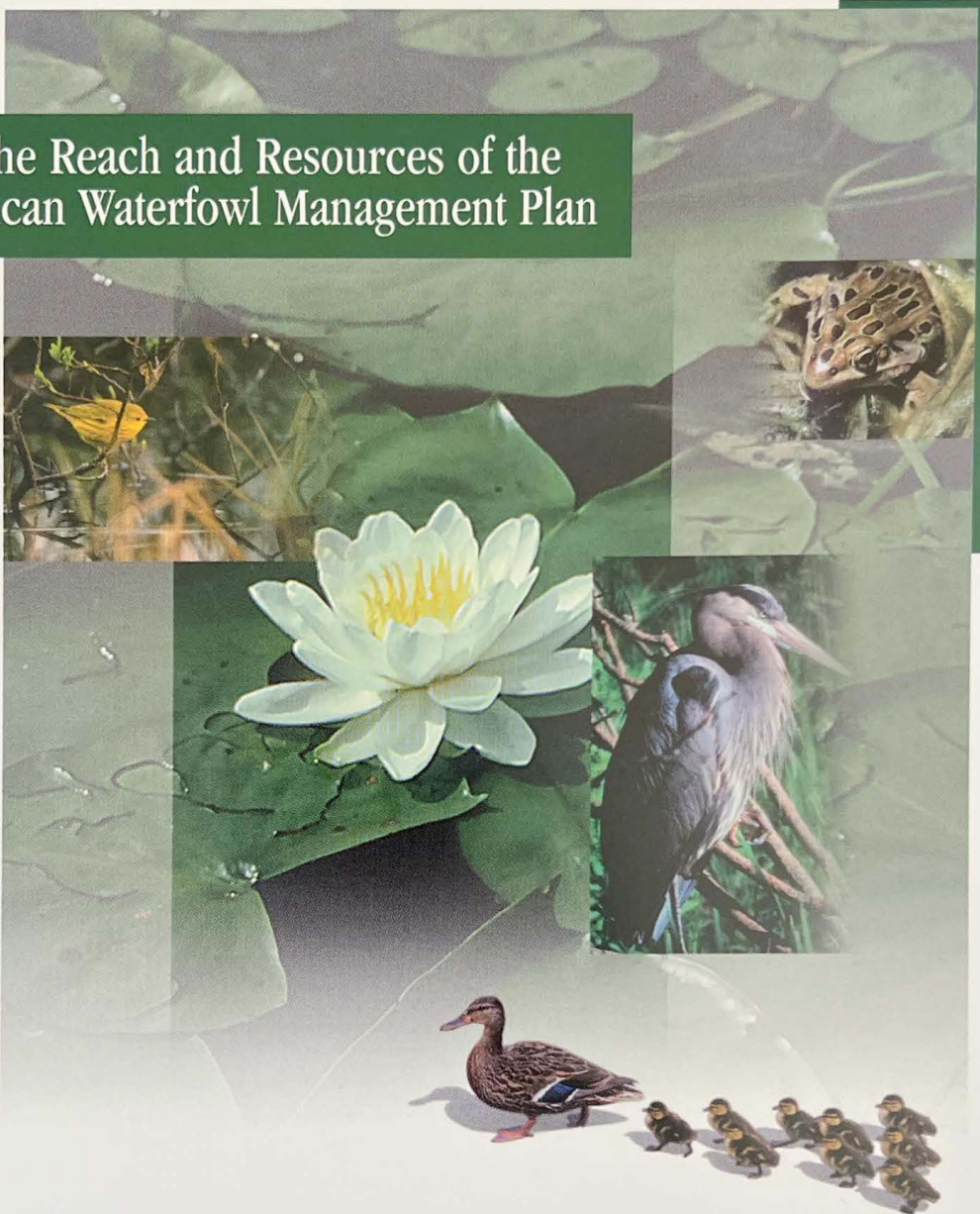


# Expanding the Reach and Resources of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan



## Public Outreach Project Final Report and Recommendations

*September 15, 1997*

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*In the old days, Tampa Bay was a unique place in the autumn and early winter, because the wildfowl would fill the bay, especially ducks, particularly early in the morning. Now, I very seldom see those big flights of wildfowl going in there and landing. I assume something must be causing them to die out, or not to be able to make the trip anymore. The logical thing would be an absence of wetlands for them to land in and feed on.*

*-Senior citizen, Florida focus group*

## The Pot of Gold

Everyone agrees outreach is critical to the success of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). Everyone agrees more funding and more partners are needed. Unfortunately, when it comes to outreach, people are often looking for the mythical "pot of gold"—the one, simple technique that will result in a windfall of money and support.

In the business world, the vast majority of success stories are built on a foundation of careful research, work, and experience—applied over the long term. Although there are occasional instances of overnight successes—pet rocks and "Beanie Babies" come to mind—these are the exception, not the rule. The best overall strategy is to spend the bulk of the available time and effort slogging down the road of methodical research, planning, and effort, while keeping an eye open for the next "pet rock" idea.

## Reaching Beyond the Low-Hanging Fruit

Past outreach efforts have contributed significantly to the success of the NAWMP. However, just about all of the low-hanging fruit has been picked. It will require greater effort to reach the next layer of branches. That has been the goal of this project—to lay the foundation for expanding NAWMP partners and support.

## The Need

Continuing the critical work of the NAWMP into the next century will require partners, funding, and support above and beyond the significant levels achieved in the past ten years. This need for expanded partnerships and support exists against a backdrop of declining government budgets for conservation.

## Meeting the Need: NAWMP Public Outreach Project

Outreach efforts have been an integral part of NAWMP implementation since its inception in 1986. However, existing outreach efforts will not be sufficient to sustain the level of support needed to achieve the goals of the NAWMP. The NAWMP Public Outreach Project was initiated in May 1995 by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies through a federal aid administrative funds grant by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This project was designed to assist NAWMP partners at all levels in identifying and securing additional support for the NAWMP—to expand outreach efforts, identify and recruit new markets, and increase involvement from markets not currently active to their full potential.

Specifically, the goal was to provide NAWMP managers with the tools needed to:

1. Increase the number and diversity of NAWMP partners.
2. Increase the amounts and sources of financial and in-kind support.

## Two-Phase Project

This project had two phases:

- Year 1. Conducted market research to assess public attitudes regarding waterfowl and wetland conservation and identified potential target markets, messages, and strategies for securing additional support. Market research information was collected through a literature search, focus groups, and a telephone survey.
- Year 2. Based on the results of the market research, conducted pilot projects in two joint ventures. The Joint Venture Pilot Projects were designed to take the market research and put it to work "on the ground." The Upper Mississippi/Great Lakes and Prairie Pothole joint ventures were selected as pilot projects. Information gathered in the market research was used as a foundation for assisting the pilot joint ventures in assessing, developing, implementing, and evaluating outreach efforts.

## Partnership Approach

Project administration, research, and management were accomplished through a collaborative effort among the following individuals and organizations.

- Project Coordination - Len Ugarenko/Margaret Hopkins, IAFWA
- Project Management - Rob Southwick, Southwick Associates
- Market Research - Mark Damian Duda, Responsive Management
- Outreach Strategies/Pilot Projects - Dave Case, D.J. Case and Associates

See the inside back cover for contact information.

## Market Research Results and Outreach Implications



*The things that are indigenous to the area do play a role in our whole ecosystem. To lose one species of anything should be avoided at all costs. I think if we lose one species, we're ultimately affected negatively, even if we don't know how.*

*-California focus group participant*

Market research was a critical component of this project. Three methods were used to collect and compile market research information:

*Literature Search.* A review of the literature pertaining to the history, progress, and future prospects of partnerships and collaborative efforts was conducted.

*Focus Groups.* Four focus groups were conducted: senior citizens in Florida, landowners in South Dakota, a cross-section of the "general public" in California, and corporate communicators in Florida.

*Telephone survey.* A telephone survey was conducted in March 1996. Approximately 100 adults in each of ten joint venture areas were surveyed. Standard survey methodologies were used to avoid sampling bias. Survey data were analyzed and cross-tabulated with demographic information from respondents.

The market research generated a tremendous amount of information—the original research reports total more than 500 pages. A *Project Handbook* was developed to condense the telephone survey results and facilitate its use at the joint venture level. The *Handbook* contains survey results of all joint ventures combined and separate sections for each of the 10 joint ventures: Atlantic Coast, Gulf Coast, Intermountain West, Lower Great Lakes, Lower Mississippi, Pacific Coast, Playa Lakes, Prairie Pothole, Rainwater Basin, and Upper Mississippi (the Upper Mississippi and Lower Great Lakes JVs were combined after the telephone survey was initiated).

Appendix A lists the various reports that contain the market research information, analyses, and outreach implications. Research methodologies are discussed in the appropriate reports. These reports are available upon request from the IAFWA.

Figure 1.

## Don't Be Misled

As you review selected results and implications, it is critical to keep the following in mind:

1. Information can be used in different ways at different levels:

- **Policy/program level.** Provide insights into which programs or policies might be most acceptable to various markets.
- **Strategic level.** Help identify target audiences, key messages, and communication vehicles to deliver messages to audiences.
- **Tactical level.** Given certain target audiences and their preferences, help determine visual images to use (such as what critter to depict), what programs to feature, or what words to use in the narrative of a brochure.

2. Inferences and conclusions you draw from the data will depend on the scope of your outreach effort and the specific objectives you want to accomplish. For instance, the research may reveal a message that is effective as an appeal for donations from a broad cross section of people nationwide. This same message, however, may be less effective among specific audiences or in specific geographic areas.

3. Research information is only one piece of the public outreach "puzzle." It can provide insight and understanding, but does not often provide solutions in and of itself. Information may be most useful in raising questions and helping to focus discussion. Using information as a basis for developing effective outreach strategies requires an understanding of the principles of marketing and communications at both the strategic and tactical levels.

Figure 1 contains some of the results from the telephone survey. Keep in mind the usefulness of this information depends on your objectives, target audiences, location, and scope of your efforts. Comments from focus group participants are sprinkled throughout this report.



*A Glimpse of How Residents in the United States Joint Ventures View Waterfowl and Wetlands Conservation.* Sample results from a random 1,000-person telephone survey (approximately 100 in each of 10 joint venture areas) conducted in March 1996.

When asked whether or not it was important to conserve wetlands, 95% of respondents said it was somewhat or very important.

The respondents who said it was important to conserve wetlands were asked WHY they thought it was important. The reason given by most people (51%) was that wetlands provided wildlife habitat. The second highest response (43%) was that wetlands were part of the natural ecosystem.

When asked whether or not it was important to conserve waterfowl, 96% of respondents said it was somewhat or very important.

The respondents who said it was important to conserve waterfowl were asked WHY they thought it was important. The reason given by most people (52%) was that waterfowl were part of the natural ecosystem. The second highest response (25%) was that waterfowl should be conserved for future generations. Women (30%) were statistically more likely to say "for future generations" than men (19%).

Hunters (100%), wildlife viewers (97%), and members of conservation organizations (99%) were more likely to say it was somewhat or very important to conserve wetlands. For other groups, there were no significant differences in their views on the importance of conserving wetlands. In other words, landowners, people who earn income from farming, urban residents, people with "no interest" in wildlife, and people who "never" give to a conservation organization, were just as likely as other survey respondents to say it was important to conserve wetlands.

When asked about the likelihood of taking specific actions in support of wetlands and waterfowl conservation:

- 66% said they would somewhat or very likely donate money to local efforts
- 55% would buy a collector's stamp
- 54% would write a letter
- 41% would donate money to efforts across the U.S.
- 38% would volunteer time

Respondents were asked whether they knew how wetlands and waterfowl conservation were funded in the U.S.:

- Don't know (47%)
- Donations (27%)
- Taxes (25%)
- Hunting and fishing licenses (7%)
- Hunting and fishing excise taxes (3%)

## Figure 1. (continued)

Of respondents who said they had hunted in the past two years,

- 20% said hunting and fishing licenses
- 10% said hunting and fishing excise taxes

When asked what kinds of wildlife they associated with wetlands, 41% of respondents mentioned ducks (most frequent response). Only 17% mentioned geese. Even hunters do not “automatically” associate ducks and geese with wetlands. One-third of hunters did not mention ducks and one-half of hunters did not mention geese as being associated with wetlands.

When asked who was responsible for managing waterfowl and wetlands, most respondents said they didn't know (58%). The next highest responses were:

- Ducks Unlimited (11%)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (11%)
- State fish and wildlife agencies (9%)

Respondents in the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture were most likely to say “Ducks Unlimited” (28%), while Playa Lakes Joint Venture residents were least likely (6%).

Respondents were asked about their willingness to take 11 different actions on behalf of waterfowl and wetlands conservation. For example, respondents were asked if they “support or oppose incentives for private landowners who actively conserve waterfowl and wetlands on their property” and whether they would be likely or unlikely to “volunteer time as a way to support waterfowl and wetland conservation efforts.” Results from individual questions are available in the survey report, but additional insight was gained when respondents' answers were cross-tabulated to see what types of people were more supportive of and likely to take action on behalf of waterfowl and wetland conservation.

- Hunters were more supportive (than non-hunters) of 2 actions, and were more opposed to 2 other actions.
- Members of sportsmen's groups were more supportive of 3 actions.
- Members of conservation organizations were more supportive of 9 actions.
- Urban residents were more supportive of 5 actions.
- Wildlife viewers were more supportive of 10 actions.
- People who had stated in another question that waterfowl and/or wetlands were declining were more supportive of 9 actions than people who said waterfowl or wetlands were stable or increasing.

Most respondents said they would be more likely NOT to buy a certain product if they knew the manufacturer used practices that harmed waterfowl or wetlands conservation:

- Yes (74%)
- Maybe (11%)
- No (12%)
- Don't know (3%)

Private conservation groups were listed as the most credible source of information about waterfowl and wetlands conservation (36% of respondents listed them), followed by state government (34%), federal government (15%), and media (7%).



## Pilot Projects



The compilation and initial analysis of the market research results were completed in September 1996. Part of the initial compilation was a *Project Handbook*, which organized the market research information by joint venture (the *Handbook* is available from the IAFWA—see Appendix A). Between September 1996 and August 1997 the information was put to use in the pilot joint ventures. Following are highlights of the pilot joint venture projects. Comments on the success and application of the pilot projects are included in the Recommendations section of this report.

### Upper Mississippi/Great Lakes Joint Venture

Prior to this pilot outreach project, the Upper Mississippi/Great Lakes Joint Venture (UMJV) had not conducted extensive outreach efforts and did not have a formal outreach strategy. A communications team made up of the following people was put together:

- Jim Leach and Barb Pardo, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Roger Pederson and Bob Hoffman, Ducks Unlimited
- Joe Duggan, Pheasants Forever
- Bob Jackson, Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Dick Elden, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Their first charge was to develop an outreach strategy designed to help achieve the UMJV implementation plan.

Through a series of workshops and conference calls, the team looked carefully at past NAWMP and UMJV outreach efforts, market research results from this and other projects, and at the strengths and weaknesses of the UMJV. A draft of the strategy was distributed to the UMJV Management Board for review in March 1997 and was finalized in July 1997. For a copy of the outreach strategy, contact Barb Pardo at 612-725-3313.

The outreach strategy identified actions that the team felt should be pursued over the next three years (1997-1999) to expand the “reach and resources” of the UMJV. The strategy is *strategic*—it does not address everything nor include all worthy ideas.

Goals and guidelines for the strategy are included in Figure 2. Thirteen priority actions were identified. However, given limited time and funding for outreach, the team identified the five highest priority actions (Figure 3).

Work is now proceeding on all actions listed in the outreach strategy, but implementation of the five priority actions began before the ink was even dry on the strategy. Descriptions of two of the priority actions are included below. These illustrate the process and may be useful in other joint ventures.

Figure 2.

*Goals and Outreach Guidelines from the Upper Mississippi/Great Lakes JV Outreach Strategy.*

UMJV Outreach Strategy Goals

1. Increase the amount and sources of financial and in-kind support.
2. Increase the number and diversity of partners.
3. Increase the number of habitat projects in priority focus areas.

UMJV Outreach Guidelines

The following guidelines were used to develop the outreach strategy and should be used to guide implementation:

1. Use existing communications channels of partner agencies and organizations to communicate priority messages.
2. Focus efforts on priority outreach actions. There are many outreach actions, both ongoing and new, that will help achieve the UMJV implementation. This strategy focuses on a few priorities.
3. Frame and communicate the outreach strategy in a compelling and exciting manner.
4. Recognize the diversity of habitats and people in the UMJV—target messages to specific, priority audiences.
5. Articulate and emphasize the link between local projects, the UMJV, and the NAWMP.
6. Capitalize on the concentration of humans and industry/commerce in the JV area.

Figure 3.

*Five High Priority Outreach Actions from the Upper Mississippi/Great Lakes JV Outreach Strategy.*

Priority UMJV Outreach Actions

Five priority actions were identified by the outreach team. Development and implementation of these actions offer tremendous opportunities for achieving the level of support needed for the NAWMP and UMJV:

1. Develop and distribute customized information packages articulating the benefits of NAWMP, UMJV, and NAWCA to target audiences (*Action 1.1*).
2. Develop a “ground-up” initiative to recruit support from foundations and corporations (*Action 2.2*).
3. Initiate more “Duck Habitat Day” types of events to appeal to the young, urban, wildlife viewer audience (*Action 4.1*).
4. Explore the feasibility of cooperative, direct-appeal campaigns centered around local projects to motivate new audiences to support the NAWMP/UMJV (*Action 4.2*).
5. Initiate a “Spark” recruitment effort (*Action 6.1*).



## Priority Action: “Duck Habitat Day” Types of Events

The market research conducted for this and other projects indicated there was potential for recruiting some “nontraditional audiences” into the circle of NAWMP supporters. In particular, the research indicated that younger (under 50), urban/suburban residents who considered themselves wildlife viewers had some potential as NAWMP supporters. The outreach team discussed how to reach and engage these audiences on behalf of the NAWMP.

The team looked at an event that had been held in February of 1996 in downtown Minneapolis and involved UMJV partner organizations. It was called “Duck Habitat Day” and was put together through a partnership of corporate, government, and private conservation entities. The main attraction was that participants could build a wood duck box or blue bird box and take it home with them. The one-day event attracted over 5,000 participants.

The UMJV outreach team believed the Duck Habitat Day concept could be an effective strategy for attracting new audiences and funding sources to the NAWMP. The outreach team felt the appealing components of Duck Habitat Day that attracted people to participate likely were:

- conducted in/near urban areas
- hands-on activities
- family orientation
- positive messages concerning habitat
- feeling of accomplishment
- local action in their “backyard” that addresses big picture concerns--conservation of wildlife for future generations

It was also assumed that a significant portion of the 1996 Duck Habitat Day participants were from the young, urban/suburban, wildlife viewer audience. To test these assumptions, 190 participants at the 1997 event were surveyed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff people.

This informal survey provides some interesting insights into the effectiveness of Duck Habitat Days as an outreach mechanism. However, caution should be used when interpreting the results because the sampling technique was not completely randomized and the sample size was relatively small.

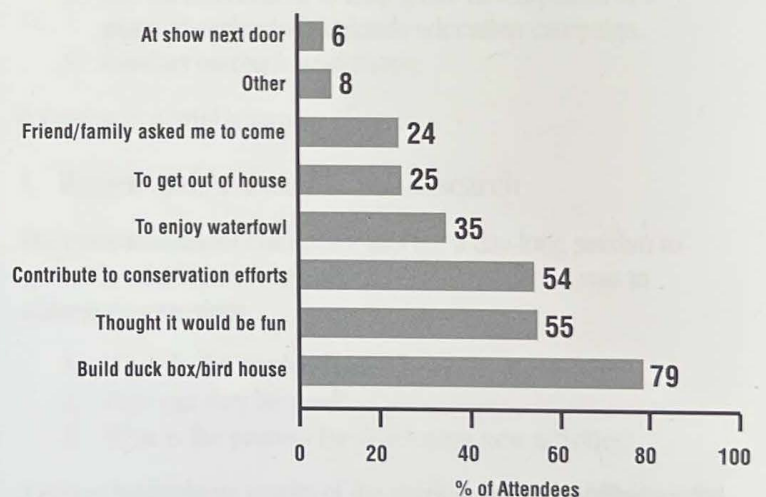
Given those precautions, here are some results from the survey and potential implications:

- Thirty-three percent of respondents said they had not hunted in the past two years, and 39% did not belong to sportsmen’s groups or conservation groups. Some of these respondents

have probably never hunted before. These are a primary target audience, because they are people who are probably not being reached by the current outreach efforts of NAWMP partners. Others may have hunted before, but not recently. These “fallen away” hunters are also a key audience. Because of their lack of recent involvement in hunting, they may not be reached by ongoing efforts, and may be very (perhaps the most) receptive to outreach efforts.

- The Duck Habitat Day event attracted people who said they are willing to donate time and/or money to waterfowl and wetland conservation. Seventy-nine percent of Duck Habitat Day participants said they were somewhat or very likely to donate time, and 82% said they were somewhat or very likely to donate money. One implication of this is that a Duck Habitat Day event should include a strong call to action—get people involved while they are present at the event and ready to contribute.
- Overall, people said they were attracted to Duck Habitat Days because they had the opportunity to contribute to conservation efforts in a fun, tangible way (building a duck box or bird house).

### Reasons for Attending



*I think it's going to get off the ground a lot quicker if you start with the local people and let it grow from there.*

*-California focus group participant*

Based on survey results and on societal trends, events such as Duck Habitat Days that are designed to attract and engage the young, urban/suburban, non-hunting wildlife enthusiasts have potential. The popularity of family-oriented festivals and fairs continues to increase. Duck Habitat Day sponsors and partners are looking to expand the number of Duck Habitat Day events from one to five in 1998. UMJV partners are also looking at other types of events that could expand on this concept. The major challenge for these types of events is how to capture the interest of participants and convert it to action on behalf of the NAWMP.

## Priority Action: Spark Recruitment Workshops

Objective 3 of the UMJV Outreach Strategy was to *Increase the number of habitat projects in priority focus areas*. Based on the success of past efforts to conserve wetland/grassland habitats in the UMJV, projects were the key. That led to the question: "What does it take to get more projects started?" After much discussion, the communications team agreed that the key to getting projects started were the people that the team referred to as "Sparks"—individuals who took the bull by the horns and got things done.

If the outreach objectives were to encourage more projects, then it made sense that the strategy should be to recruit more Sparks to start and implement more habitat projects.

The next step in the process was to determine how to recruit more Sparks. The team decided that existing, successful Sparks would be the best source for this information. Therefore, a two-day, facilitated workshop was held in August 1997 near Chicago. The workshop was attended by ten Sparks who had been involved in getting NAWMP projects implemented in the UMJV. Over the course of the workshop, the Sparks addressed a series of questions about why they were involved, why they were successful, and what it would take to recruit more people like themselves (Figure 4).

The workshop provided tremendous insight into what it will take to recruit and empower new NAWMP project leaders. It demonstrated that bringing people from different backgrounds and with different skills together to work in partnership can create a powerful force for wetlands and waterfowl.

Although the UMJV administrators learned a lot from the workshops, it was especially interesting to hear how much the workshop participants said they benefited from the two days together. It was clear that having Sparks spending time together will not only help recruit more people, but also will help invigorate and motivate those people currently out there doing great work.

*Great workshop; feel very honored to be included; makes one want to go out and look for new projects.*

*-Spark Recruitment Workshop Participant*

## Figure 4.

### *Results from a Two-Day Spark Recruitment Workshop sponsored by the UMJV in August 1997.*

#### Why did they get involved?

When the Sparks were asked why they had become involved in NAWMP projects, they said the main reasons were:

- They were asked
- They like pulling people together (forming partnerships)
- Fun
- Feel they have a responsibility
- Leave this place better than it was/Put something back
- "Ducks in my heart"

#### Why were their projects successful?

Prioritized list of why participants felt they and their projects have been successful:

1. Get the right people involved—dedicated/qualified
2. Have a personal commitment
3. Experience/training in business deals
4. Ability to approach people—confidence
5. Like to "wheel-n-deal" with people

#### How do we recruit more people like you?

When Sparks were asked how to recruit more people like themselves to start or help with NAWMP projects, they said:

1. Emphasize local projects instead of statewide efforts.
2. Seed projects in certain areas—provide \$/support to local areas where you want to get projects started.
3. People asking people is the key.
4. Meet with the DNR director—get a DNR person assigned to work on NAWMP projects.

#### Recommendations to Board?

Sparks were asked what recommendations they would give the UMJV Implementation Board:

1. Identify gaps in existing projects—where are additional projects needed?
2. Work on a state-by-state basis—not all states are the same.
3. Involve Natural Resource Conservation Service—key partner.
4. Develop a "12-step program" for NAWMP success—the keys to success in putting together a NAWMP project.
5. Take the successful "Sparks" workshop on the road.
6. Produce a video capturing the "keys to success" mentioned above.

## Prairie Pothole Joint Venture

The Prairie Pothole Joint Venture (PPJV) has conducted significant outreach efforts for a number of years. A communications committee of the joint venture board was formed in 1988 and a detailed communications strategy was developed in 1989. The communications strategy was updated in 1994. Products and activities have included everything from calendars and videos to project dedications and media relations efforts. The pilot outreach project was conducted through the communications committee, which included:

- Carol A. Lively and Jim Leach, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Jeff Nelson, Ducks Unlimited
- Larry Hamilton, Bureau of Land Management
- Kathleen Rude, Environmental Writer
- Terry Riley, Wildlife Management Institute
- Terry Messmer, Utah State University
- Tom Landwehr, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Three major efforts were undertaken as part of the pilot project:

1. Review and analyze the market research and use it as a basis for future outreach efforts.
2. Use the information to help guide development of a planned wetlands/grasslands education campaign.
3. Conduct outreach workshops.

Following is a brief summary of each.

### 1. Review and Analyze Market Research

The communications committee met for a day-long session to review the market research information. The intent was to address the questions:

1. What do the market research results mean?
2. How can they be used?
3. What is the process for developing new activities?

A report highlighting results of the market research was prepared and distributed to communications committee members prior to the day-long session. The report was updated based on the session and subsequently distributed to the Management Board for review (see March 14, 1997 report cited in Appendix A).

At the March 1997 meeting of the Management Board, a request was made to Management Board organizations asking them to review the report within their organizations to see if and how they could use the information to recruit more partners and support. Feedback from Management Board members since last

May indicates that although the information was useful, it did not result in immediate actions for most of the organizations. (Additional actions may be undertaken over a longer timeframe.) Subsequent discussions in the communications committee about what the market research results mean and how to use them indicated a need to update the long-term outreach strategy, which the committee is planning to do.

## 2. Wetlands/Grasslands Education Campaign

One of the primary ways the market research information was used was to help develop a wetlands/grasslands education campaign that the PPJV had been planning to implement. The information was used to help frame the strategic aspects of the campaign and as a basis for developing messages used in specific outreach products such as a video and printed materials. The campaign and products are now being developed.

## 3. Conduct Outreach Workshops

The goal of this outreach project was to “provide managers with tools needed to recruit more partners and support.” The communications committee felt it was important to get the results of the market research information to the managers on the ground—the people who have day-to-day contact with the public.

To that end, two full-day workshops were held: one in July 1997 in Bismarck, North Dakota and one in August 1997 in Chaska, Minnesota. Twenty-one participants attended in North Dakota and seven in Minnesota. Participants were invited via mail on fairly short notice. Feedback from workshop participants indicated participation likely would have been greater with more advance notice and dates at more convenient times of the year.

The objectives of the workshops were for participants to:

- Know how different publics view waterfowl and wetland conservation.
- Feel excited about using the information in existing and new outreach efforts.
- Implement specific ideas in their outreach projects or efforts to increase partners and support.

The workshops included sessions on:

- Outreach—what does it take to be effective?
- Market research results and implications—how people in the U.S. and PPJV area view waterfowl and wetlands conservation and the implications of these views.
- Next steps—how participants can apply the results to their outreach efforts.

Based on comments made at the workshops and written workshop evaluations (see Figure 5), it is clear that on-the-ground managers recognize the importance of outreach and feel that time and money should be devoted to it. In addition, managers recognize that they are not experts at outreach strategies and efforts, and feel they need assistance in outreach planning and implementation.

Figure 5.

*Summary of Participant Evaluations from PPJV Outreach Workshops in North Dakota and Minnesota, July and August 1997.*

Do you know how different publics view waterfowl and wetland conservation?

84% Yes  
12% No  
4% Other

Do you feel excited about using the information in existing and new outreach efforts?

84% Yes  
0% No  
16% Other

Do you plan to implement specific outreach ideas developed during the workshop to increase partners and support?

92% Yes  
0% No  
8% Other

Do you feel that people in other joint ventures would benefit from this workshop?

95% Yes  
0% No  
5% Other

Some Comments from Workshop Participants

- “Most biologists aren’t very good at marketing (from planning to implementation). It would be very helpful to have some fundamental concepts explained and explored and further discussion of (the) communication strategy process.”
- “Need to take (to) higher levels. This is manpower intensive and to be more effective, we’ll need more help at a time when pressure from above is to downsize.”
- “The whole area of outreach is critical to future success. Any help, anywhere will be useful.”
- “One thing that needs to be pointed out is that most of us do not do this as a full-time job. Therefore, we need some kind of quick and dirty guide to help us.”
- “[I’d like to see more information in the workshop concerning] ways to reach out to the folks we work with locally—we discussed some of that in the workshop, i.e., getting to know locals on a personal level.”

- “Natural Resources folks are in the infancy of outreach. They need help in developing a planning process.”
- “Frankly, we can never meet, talk and learn enough about this subject—it is ultimately the most important challenge that we have.”

## Recommendations



*I love what you said about keeping things at the local level because that's the key to making it work.*

*-Landowner, South Dakota focus group*

Following are recommendations for outreach efforts to expand the reach and resources of the NAWMP. These recommendations are based on the market research, principles of marketing and communications, and results from pilot joint venture projects. They are aimed at maximizing the use of the foundation that has been built through this outreach project.

The recommendations are grouped into two categories:

- Messages and strategies—guidelines on what to say and how to say it
- Conducting NAWMP outreach efforts—how to go about it

### Messages and Strategies

The specific messages selected and strategies pursued depend on the objectives and audiences; however, following are some broad guidelines/considerations that can be applied (at least to some degree) to all levels.

1. Emphasize the partnership aspects of the NAWMP. In fact, wear it on your sleeve—it would be almost impossible to over-emphasize. The research from this project and others indicates a very strong preference among the American public for environmental conservation efforts that are carried out through partnerships. The success of the NAWMP to date is a reflection of this. Use words such as balance, collaboration, cooperation, and partnerships to capture these feelings. Also, position the role of government agencies as financial supporters and partners—not as the leaders out in front of the effort.
2. Utilize “big picture” concerns. In the market research, when those people who said it was important to conserve waterfowl or wetlands (almost everyone) were asked *why* this was so, the most commonly given responses were ones that dealt with ecosystems, habitat, and future generations of humans. Outreach efforts should tap into these big picture/emotion-laden motivations.
3. Link NAWMP objectives with other societal issues (education, economics, community benefits) whenever possible. Because of competition with other “worthy causes” for time and money, and because many people consider the environment to be a “secondary” issue, NAWMP efforts should be positioned as being part of a larger package—as providing more benefits than just those expressed in the NAWMP objectives.

4. Stress the water quality and flood control benefits wetlands provide. Market research indicates relatively few people are aware of the water quality and flood control benefits of wetlands, but when they are made aware, they feel it is one of the top reasons for conserving wetlands. This provides a golden opportunity to link NAWMP efforts with other societal benefits.
5. Stress the local connection of NAWMP efforts. Market research survey respondents wanted to donate their money to local efforts. It is important for outreach efforts to stress the local implications of NAWMP activities, even when the benefits appear to be concentrated far away.
6. Target “nontraditional” audiences. The market research indicates there is potential for recruiting young, urban/suburban, wildlife viewers as NAWMP supporters. These people are more aware of the need and express more willingness to help. Recruiting these audiences will likely require “nontraditional” techniques such as Duck Habitat Day. Outreach efforts should be carefully planned and evaluated to determine their effectiveness in reaching and engaging these audiences.
7. Communicate benefits and successes. People want to know how their efforts are making a difference, and every success helps build momentum. Take every opportunity to announce, promote, and communicate your successes and the benefits of your efforts—to both internal and external audiences.
8. Show the “human side” of NAWMP advocates. Professional wildlife managers are the most credible advocates for waterfowl and wetlands conservation. People will be more likely to support (or not oppose) your efforts if they see you as sincere, caring, and motivated by commitment to conservation of natural resources. Put more emphasis on communicating the caring and committed sides of the wildlife professionals and less on the scientific and programmatic sides.

projects, and of effective outreach projects in general, include:

- There is a solid base of information about audiences on which to base decisions.
- A systematic process that incorporates the principles of marketing and communications is used to develop and implement outreach efforts.
- Key NAWMP partners are involved in analyzing the issues and developing the outreach strategies, which leads to two positive outcomes:
  - 1) a common understanding of the audiences you want to communicate with and how they view the issues of concern; and
  - 2) a common direction to take on messages, delivery mechanisms, etc. This allows all partners to focus limited time and financial resources in the most effective direction.

The model used in the pilots is not new. It has been used on many NAWMP-related outreach efforts and has been the key to their success. However, using such a process will become even more important in the future as we strive to maintain enthusiasm and “reach beyond the low-hanging fruit.”

*We feel we have a very practical and workable Outreach Plan with direct linkages to the market research results. We plan to continue with implementation of the action items, and will revisit the Plan at regular intervals.*

*-Barb Pardo, Assistant JV Coordinator, Upper Mississippi Joint Venture*

## Conducting NAWMP Outreach Efforts

9. Conduct more outreach projects at the joint venture, state, and project levels in the same way the pilot joint venture projects were conducted. The pilot projects were systematic efforts to broaden support for NAWMP activities. The important characteristics of the pilot



10. Gather market research information specific to priority audiences and geographical areas. The market research conducted for this Outreach Project was nationwide in scope. The research data were able to be separated out and categorized by joint venture (see the *Project Handbook*), which provided great insights for people working at the JV or smaller level. However, because of the nationwide scope of the project, cross tabulations and detailed analyses were not possible at the JV level due to small sample size. Both of the pilot joint ventures pointed out the need for more information specific to their audiences and issues. Using the market research from this project as a foundation, future projects can focus on customized information. For example, in the PPJV, the telephone survey and landowner focus group pointed out the need for better information on landowners. Ducks Unlimited is currently conducting a telephone survey of landowners in North Dakota and South Dakota to guide development and promotion of their easement programs.

11. Involve people in the planning and implementation process. This applies to both outreach efforts and NAWMP implementation in general. Although this recommendation makes intuitive sense, it is often overlooked or avoided. The public input process takes a lot of time and effort, but it is critical to success, especially concerning broad-based, grass-roots efforts. People want us to do things *with* them, not *to* them.

*Market research results might have been more valuable had they been more geographically focused and designed with management board or subcommittee input. ...perhaps additional joint ventures considering this kind of assistance will be able to customize the research.*

*-Barb Pardo, Assistant JV Coordinator, Upper Mississippi Joint Venture*

12. Expand the number of people devoted to outreach efforts. You have to spend money to make money, and expanding the reach and resources of the NAWMP will require additional resources to be applied. This should include providing more full-time managers of outreach efforts and explicitly expanding other staff roles to include outreach duties.

13. Commit to the long haul. Outreach is usually a difficult, time-consuming process. You cannot depend on pots of gold. The Pilot Project summaries (see Pilot Project section) make the process sound more linear and easy flowing than it actually was. There was a strong spirit of purpose and cooperation, but it still took a lot of time, effort, and discussion to come to agreement.

The NAWMP has enjoyed great successes—the key is to build on those and continue to move forward in a systematic fashion. Outreach must be an ongoing process. The NAWMP community must continue to build a social/outreach foundation just as it continues to build the biological foundation.

14. Actively seek and encourage external partners to take the lead on local projects—tap into the energy, commitment, time, and expertise of people willing to work on NAWMP projects. Spend time and money finding, recruiting, and maintaining these key people. (See the description of “Sparks Recruitment Workshops” in the Pilot Projects section of this report.)

15. Provide more outreach support and training for managers on the ground.

*Most biologists aren't very good at marketing (from planning to implementation). It would be very helpful to have some fundamental concepts explained and explored and further discussion of the communication strategy process.*

*-PPJV Outreach Workshop Participant*



## Conclusion



The effectiveness of this Outreach Project should be measured against the goals it was designed to achieve. Specifically:

- Do managers now have the tools needed to recruit more partners and support?
- Have more partners and support been gained as a result of this project?

The tools are available to managers. The foundation has been laid through the market research and the experience gained through the pilot joint venture projects.

The degree to which the Outreach Project results in new partners and financial support remains to be seen. It will depend on how the recommendations are implemented and on the amount of support given to outreach efforts by top management.

If the information and experience gained through this project are applied on the ground and supported from above by management, the prospects for expanding the reach and resources of the NAWMP are indeed bright.



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