

- Recruit
- Retain
- Reactivate



DEPARTMENT OF
**GAME & INLAND
FISHERIES**
CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.



An R3 Philosophy

BACKGROUND

1900	1916	1920	1924
The Lacey Act passes, banning the trafficking of illegal wildlife	June 17 - Landmark legislation creates the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries	First issue of "The Virginia Conservationist," official DGIF bulletin, is published	General Assembly passes most comprehensive, far-reaching game laws

Since its inception in 1916, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) has provided unprecedented opportunities to hunt, fish, and enjoy Virginia's wildlife through sound scientific research and wildlife management. As early as the 1980's the Department recognized the need to introduce people to outdoor recreation and their role in conservation and safety with the introduction of Virginia's first hunter education, angling education, boater education, National Archery in the Schools, habitat education, and K-12 Project Wild education curriculums.

DGIF continued its effort to provide opportunities and remove potential barriers to participation by establishing a youth combination license and allowing youth to harvest either sex deer during any deer season.

The youth and apprentice license along with dedicated youth and apprentice weekends were added to further encourage existing hunters to mentor a beginner.

The introduction of an online licensing system and mobile application for purchasing licenses and checking game, and a grant program designed to help fund programs that introduce youth to hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities, further established DGIF's commitment to providing opportunities for everyone to participate in outdoor recreation. DGIF continued to refine its efforts by establishing a Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (R3) initiative and hiring a fulltime R3 coordinator to oversee and implement an agency-wide approach to focus on increasing participation in hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, boating, and wildlife viewing. The following plan represents the continued R3 efforts of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

VISION AND MISSION

The R3 plan is a commitment to supporting the overall strategic **vision** of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries: ***To lead wildlife conservation and inspire people to value the outdoors and their role in nature.***

The R3 plan also supports the DGIF **mission statement**:

- 1) **Conserve** and manage wildlife populations and habitat for the benefit of present and future generations.
- 2) **Connect** people to Virginia's outdoors through boating, education, fishing, hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing and other wildlife-related activities.
- 3) **Protect** people and property by promoting safe outdoor experiences and managing human-wildlife conflicts.

In Virginia, R3 is **not another program**, but instead a strategic effort to **recalibrate** existing efforts and operations with a **common objective** to increase overall participation.

This new way of integrated thinking and operating is based on DGIF's long term strategic thinking and planning efforts between 2015 and 2017, which resulted in a revised vision statement, mission statement, and eight agency-wide priority goals.

Two of the eight priority **goals** for DGIF under the 2) **Connect** mission statement are:

2.1. **Recruit, retain, and re-engage** people who enjoy wildlife and boating activities;

2.2. Promote people's **awareness and appreciation** of their role in wildlife conservation.

Because of this, DGIF's R3 efforts are naturally aligned with the agency's overall strategic outlook. To operationalize this, DGIF maintains what is essentially an annual strategy document that outlines ways to support Goals 2.1 and 2.2 and focuses on making sure R3 is adequately considered at each **decision point**. In other words, R3 is an essential part of our overall strategic thought process and culture. This visionary approach encourages DGIF to organize, budget, plan, regulate, legislate, and communicate what we do, differently. At each **decision point**, DGIF strives to answer the question, "How will this benefit our R3 efforts"? The image below depicts how R3 is central to DGIF's primary decision points going forward.



The R3 plan in Virginia will use a **holistic approach** in order to recruit, retain, and reactivate people in hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, boating, and wildlife viewing activities. What this means is that DGIF considers all outdoor participants to be dynamic and the focus is not only on individual wildlife viewers, hunters, anglers, and boaters, but just as much on the...

Birder who takes up canoeing and fishing;

Kayaker who is into adventure tourism who takes up archery or recreational shooting;

Recreational boaters who take up freshwater fishing;

Recreational shooters who takes up hunting;

Hunters who take up recreational shooting;

And

Hunters and anglers who are already birders, wildlife photographers, and hikers.

Based on this, as the R3 plan seeks to increase participation in hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, boating, and wildlife viewing activities, DGIF maintains a dual focus. Introducing new Virginia residents and visitors to each of these activities is always a priority but DGIF must also leverage the inter-relationship among outdoor participants. R3 is an opportunity to unite ALL people who enjoy the outdoors in this effort to protect each activity for generations to come.

The image below is a reflection of how DGIF perceives the individual as well as integrated interests among hunters, anglers, boaters, wildlife viewers, and recreational shooters.



ASSESSMENT OF DGIF

In August of 2017, DGIF conducted a R3 workshop with staff and representatives from the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports, the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, and the Wildlife Management Institute to assess the current standing of the agency and learn about a new vision to DGIF’s outreach and

education efforts. Invited to the workshop were program managers, senior leadership and staff from Fisheries, Law Enforcement, Outreach, Planning and Finance, and Wildlife. The results of this workshop helped to formulate a detailed assessment of DGIF including a SWOT analysis which is briefly detailed below.

<p><u>STRENGTHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New mission statement • Dedicated staff to focus on R3 • Many potential partners in VA • New branding logo and marketing approach • Strong outdoor culture and history • Online license system • New staff structure within Outreach division 	<p><u>WEAKNESSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of evaluation, measurable outcomes and strategy for R3 programs • Lack of public knowledge and awareness of DGIF’s efforts • Lack of outreach and transactions to wildlife viewers • Lack of outreach, transactions and access for recreational shooters • Not perceived as advocate for wildlife viewers • No easy way to recruit new boaters • Lack of diversity among core constituents
<p><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships with NGOs, clubs, associations and other organizations • Growth of new audiences in Virginia • Fully utilizing the capabilities of online licensing system • VA Wildlife Grant Program • More collaboration among divisions • New content and marketing strategy • Outreach in urban areas of Virginia • Improved customer tracking 	<p><u>THREATS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging customer base among all 5 R3 activities • High churn rate among hunting and fishing licenses • 1 in 5 Virginians will be over 65 by 2030 • Declining interest in outdoor activities • DGIF capacity to handle new programs and R3 plan • Urbanization • Loss of access

R3 PLAN DESIGN: OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTIVITY OPERATIONAL

In order for DGIF to meet the goals of the plan and connect Virginians with hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, boating, and wildlife viewing, key DGIF staff, stakeholders and industry partners need to understand R3 and be prepared for the new expectations and direction of R3 programs and efforts. With this in mind, DGIF established a list of **Overall Implementation Objectives** focused on planning, organizing, educating, and prioritizing as it relates to adopting a comprehensive R3 focus.

One of the main priorities for overall implementation is to improve DGIF's interactions with customers and program participants, which can and has resulted in increased support for the agency, wildlife, and participation in outdoor activities. By strengthening these experiences with the public, all staff can play a valuable role in R3 and in delivering improved communication and resources that will focus on satisfying customer needs. A strategic program design as well as enhancement to specific processes can improve current and future R3 implementation. Through DGIF's initial efforts, programs can begin to evaluate their effectiveness in serving intended audiences and reaching desired objectives and outcomes. Ultimately, this will allow

programs to adapt, learn from others, and improve gradually.

Initial analysis of DGIF's programs and efforts from the R3 workshop in August of 2017 established an important starting point for strategic plan development. Activity breakout groups identified barriers and opportunities while the R3 and program coordinators conducted further evaluation of specific programs. This analysis, coupled with a comprehensive literature review of R3 strategies and research, guided DGIF's R3 plan development, including five additional **Activity Operational Plans.**

The five operational plans will each contain their own objectives and specific strategies along with implementation leads and budget considerations. These detailed operational plans will serve to increase participation for each activity in the future and set the stage for buy-in and shared ownership from staff across divisions as well as new roles for partners. The operational plans will lead to an improved approach which will establish desired outcomes and performance measures for new R3 efforts under each activity while working in conjunction with the overall implementation plan.

OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVE 1: Educate, Inform, and Improve R3 Capabilities within DGIF

Strategy 1.1: Formulate R3 planning and implementation support

- 1) **Action** – Develop an internal R3 steering committee that meets frequently and includes key staff that will have the ability to help implement R3 strategies and provide insight into strategic plan development.
 - a. Host meetings monthly to review R3 plan until final version is completed. Continue with frequent meetings to focus on execution of the R3 plan and review of the activity operational plans.
- 2) **Action** – Form R3 subcommittees (hunting, recreational shooting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and boating) to help review activity operational plans and execute R3 strategies.
 - a. Meet with teams to review and finalize first versions of operational plans.
 - b. Maintain communications with team members and identify roles for assisting in prioritization and implementation of certain strategies.
- 3) **Action** – Invite stakeholders from all five activities to DGIF headquarters for R3 partner summit.
 - a. Communicate need for new R3 planning and support. Overview of the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model (ORAM) will be introduced and breakout sessions will ask participants to map their own programs onto the ORAM to identify gaps and potential partnerships.
 - b. Share overview of overall R3 implementation plan's current objectives and strategies.
 - c. Send out post-event survey to further identify collaboration opportunities.
- 4) **Action** – Develop training and learning opportunities for all DGIF staff on R3 planning and implementation.
 - a. Host regular webinars via video conferencing technology to all staff on a variety of R3 topics and updates.
 - b. Meet with staff at regional offices prior to R3 rollout and in the future.
- 5) **Action** – Identify training and educational opportunities for R3 coordinator and key DGIF staff.
 - a. Participate in industry conferences, workgroups, and events that can help improve DGIF's R3 efforts.

OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVE 2: Conduct R3 Research and Situational Analysis of DGIF

Strategy 2.1: Ongoing analysis of R3 programs and efforts

- 1) **Action** – Analyze DGIF and its R3 programs and efforts to determine current impact.
 - a. Map all DGIF R3 programs and efforts onto the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model.
 - b. Identify barriers and opportunities within each activity pillar from staff at the R3 workshop.
 - c. Conduct SWOT analysis of each activity.
 - d. Analyze mapping results, R3 workshop, and RBFF Program Worksheets to help formulate operational strategies.
 - e. Develop list of current participation in outreach and R3-related activities for all DGIF staff.

- 2) **Action** – Maintain research and study of national R3 information, data, and trends.
 - a. Review collaborated, industry, and state-specific R3 plans and guiding documents.
 - b. Stay up-to-date with new R3 data, trends, and information sharing opportunities.
- 3) **Action** – Review R3 programs and efforts from partners and stakeholders in Virginia.
 - a. Create and maintain a database of R3 efforts throughout Virginia.
 - b. Identify pertinent program information to assist in R3 plan development and implementation. This includes identifying where programs are located, evaluation methods, target audiences, how well they measure outcomes, and capacity. This information will assist DGIF in identifying how best to use these partnerships to fill gaps and improve R3.

Strategy 2.2: Analyze information to better understand current and potential customers

- 1) **Action** – Utilize license trends identified from developing a license and registration data dashboard and by mining customer data in Legacy system and Go Outdoors Virginia.
 - a. Review license data to provide insights into R3 strategy development.
- 2) **Action** – Employ new methods to improve understanding of DGIF customers.
 - a. Use R3 planning to identify priority target audiences that need to be researched. Consider use of focus groups and comprehensive survey methods.
 - b. Implement questions that will assist the R3 plan into existing customer surveys.

Strategy 2.3: Review additional methods of measuring R3 objectives and future programs

- 1) **Action** – Analyze ability to measure R3 programs and specific outcomes outside license sales.
 - a. Paddlesports, wildlife watching, and recreational shooting efforts are priorities when it comes to developing new measurements of success.

OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVE 3: Improve Current and Future R3 Programs, Efforts, and Outreach

Strategy 3.1: Enhance management and staff structure to facilitate R3 implementation

- 1) **Action** – Create new unit to better align R3 position within DGIF.
 - a. Make key structural changes that improve R3 capacity and allow for coordination of efforts through a central unit.
 - b. Identify staff within new structure that can improve or expand their role and support new R3 strategies and objectives.
 - c. Create R3 budget code to support new objectives within sections and across division lines.
- 2) **Action** – Recommend that public outreach and R3 activities be incorporated into all Employee Work Profiles (EWP) in order to help change the structure of responsibilities for employees so that they can be better positioned to support R3 objectives and performance indicators.
 - a. Prioritize staff and departments throughout DGIF who should increase or shift outreach and responsibilities of R3 activities to align better with the objectives of this plan.

Strategy 3.2: Improve approach to public interactions and outreach to support R3

- 1) **Action** – Create a framework and standards for customer interactions and public outreach.
 - a. Establish best practices document and provide training for staff and volunteers to apply certain tasks and standards to all public outreach efforts, events, and interactions.
 - b. Explore ways to improve customer service over the phone, in-person, and digitally.
 - c. Convey need for staff to coordinate outreach efforts with R3 coordinator.
 - d. Provide informational tools and takeaways for public interaction.
 - e. Develop tools to measure return on investment for outreach. Use results to improve approach and impact.
- 2) **Action** – Identify how DGIF website should be improved to facilitate R3 objectives.
 - a. Conduct research to discover how target audiences view the current website and what information and content they need and expect to see.
 - b. Use research to help execute a concrete plan for website restructuring.

Strategy 3.3: Ensure current and future R3 efforts are strategic and outcome based

- 1) **Action** – Use select DGIF programs as pilots to showcase a strategic R3 approach.
 - a. Determine specific target audience and seek ways to understand their needs and motivations. Adjusting programs to tailor to audience motivations will be key.
 - b. Establish precise short-term and long-term objectives and outcomes at the start (where do we want to be? what do we want audience to do?). Identify outcomes the audience needs to advance along the ORAM and overcome barriers (skills, knowledge, behavior, attitude change). Use a results chain to help plan the effort. Example - “Right” audience -> positive experience -> greater interest/motivation -> participation in new activities -> increased skills -> license sale
 - c. Ensure short-term and long-term objectives are reflective of overall mission and goal statements.
 - d. Establish plan to achieve objectives that includes strategies and action items. Include a marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion).
 - e. Identify how programs fit into the ORAM and how strategies align with those corresponding audiences and components.
 - f. Define role and expectations for staff and external partners in each R3 program and effort.
 - g. Develop budget to properly identify staffing and resources for R3 efforts.
 - h. Measure and evaluate how effective efforts were in reaching objectives. Establish indicators of success and measure outcomes.
 - i. Adapt and modify program or effort based on measured results (adaptive management).
- 2) **Action** – Develop data dashboards to more effectively measure outcomes of R3 programs and efforts.
 - a. Use data dashboard to help evaluate R3 efforts’ impact on license sales and participation rates at a broad scale.
 - b. Use dashboard, or similar tracking mechanism, to measure other objectives for R3 programs such as target audiences.
- 3) **Action** – Implement new participant surveys into programs and efforts.
 - a. Coordinate with human dimensions staff, industry experts, and other state agencies to develop effective survey methods for current and future programs and efforts.

- b. Utilize online event manager software (currently Kalkomey) to administer surveys, when applicable.
 - c. Provide staff with training on evaluation procedures.
 - d. Use feedback and evaluations to adaptively manage programs.
- 4) **Action** – Utilize online event manager software to host registrations for all R3 programs and collect participant information for targeted marketing efforts.
- a. Explore possibility of creating a link between online license sales system and event manager software to track participants directly.
 - b. Engage partners with information about the online event registration through DGIF with the goal of putting their events through this process.
 - c. Create a database of R3 participants that can be used in targeted marketing, surveys, and customer relationship management (CRM).
- 5) **Action** – Enhance email collection to support R3, marketing, and customer relationship management (CRM).
- a. Advocate for improved email collection techniques for all outreach and R3 programs.
 - b. Create systems to collect emails when online event registration is not an option.
 - c. Further cultivate email databases and strategies to support CRM and targeted marketing efforts.
- 6) **Action** – Establish “next steps” and linkages for programs and public interactions with DGIF.
- a. Continually identify opportunities for improved communication. Prioritize and develop what information is needed and how to best communicate that information for each initiative and target audience.

Strategy 3.4: Formulate and strengthen partnerships

- 1) **Action** – Formulate relationships with key partners that can help execute R3 policies, fill in gaps, and provide key support to R3 participants (mentors, social support, activities, events, information etc.).
- a. Create an advisory group from partners who “buy in” from R3 summit and provide insight into R3 plan as well as the post-event survey.
 - b. Edit R3 operational plan strategies based on partner review and commitments.
 - c. Further develop program partners to address specific needs and achieve strategic goals.

Strategy 3.5: Fully embrace online license system capabilities to support R3

- 1) **Action** – Develop comprehensive approaches to positively impact participation.
- a. Use licensing sales system to develop new retention and reactivation strategies.
 - b. Explore data to find opportunities for cross-promotional marketing tactics across activities.
 - c. Develop ways for existing customers to encourage, refer or incentivize non-customers.

Strategy 3.6: Modify the focus of the Virginia Wildlife Grant Program to support R3 objectives

- 1) **Action** – Incorporate R3 program improvements and strategies into the grant program.
- a. Require grant proposals follow the R3 plan guidance on program design and evaluation.
 - b. Explore options for additional means of communication to grant program participants.