

# **Theory Into Action: Best Practices in Fishing, Boating and Aquatic Stewardship Education Tools for Educators**

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**Abstract:** Under the guidance of Task Force 2, the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation initiated the *Defining Best Practices in Boating, Fishing and Stewardship Education Project* in 2001.

To launch this project, eleven aquatic, environmental and outdoor education professionals were commissioned to provide summaries of research and recommendations for the development of best professional practices for fishing, boating and aquatic stewardship education. Twenty-five researchers—including the authors—and educators then collectively reviewed the research and recommendations during a workshop. This group also recommended basic practices for: program planning, development and implementation; professional development; program evaluation; and educational program research. The result of this is a 180-page document available at [www.rbff.org/educational/BPE1.pdf](http://www.rbff.org/educational/BPE1.pdf).

The next step is to take the information from the Best Practices document and translate it into easy-to-use tools and guidelines for educators. The expected outcomes of this project are materials and training that allow aquatic educators to easily understand, apply, and communicate educational best practices in delivering their programs; and to use Best Practices to leverage greater support for their programs within their agencies and organizations.

## **PROJECT BACKGROUND**

In 1991, an Aquatic Educators Conference was held in Port Angeles, Washington. At that conference, one of the dominant discussion items behind the scenes was “What constitutes an effective aquatic education program?” Most states at the time were in the initial years of developing and conducting aquatic education programs, and there was little guidance readily available or usable to point program developers toward effective strategies. It was a common desire among the conference participants to get a better understanding of how to best use scarce

resources to further their aquatic education objectives. Now, eleven years later, we have a tool to do that: Defining Best Practices in Boating, Fishing and Stewardship Education.

First, a little background on how we got to this point. In 1998, the Department of Interior's Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Advisory Council completed a strategic plan for their Outreach and Communication Program. The initiative sought to increase participation in fishing and boating to complement ongoing conservation efforts by government agencies, and to pass on these American traditions and a legacy of stewardship.

The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) was created to carry out this initiative. Its mission is to increase participation in recreational angling and boating and thereby increase public awareness and appreciation of the need for protecting, conserving and restoring this nation's aquatic natural resources. RBFF has five goal areas; the first four are addressed by a group of stakeholders, known as Task Forces. In addition, RBFF recently developed a new Stewardship Team to explore the relationship between stewardship and participation.

**Goal 1:** Create top of mind awareness campaigns (ad program, external communications/PR, outreach)

**Goal 2:** Enable stakeholders to use research and best practices to educate people about boating, fishing and aquatic resource stewardship.

**Goal 3:** Provide research basis for making boating and fishing marketing decisions.

**Goal 4:** Educate stakeholders on marketing and outreach using RBFF products, tools and services.

**Goal 5:** Make availability of and access to information about boating and fishing locations easy and simple.

## **TASK FORCE TWO: THE EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

This paper specifically addresses the activities and products of Task Force 2, in addressing Goal 2. It will establish the historical context for the current focus of producing practitioner-level products from the Best Practices document.

Members of Task Force 2 come from a variety of disciplines and experiences in aquatic and boating education. They are:

**Mike O'Malley (Chair)**  
Watchable Wildlife Coordinator  
Washington Dept of Fish &  
Wildlife  
[www.wa.gov/wdfw/](http://www.wa.gov/wdfw/)

**Virgil Chambers**  
Executive Director  
National Safe Boating Council  
[www.safeboatingcouncil.org](http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org)

**Anne Glick**  
Educational Programs Coordinator  
American Sportfishing Association  
[www.asafishing.org](http://www.asafishing.org)

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**Elaine Andrews**

Environmental Education  
Specialist  
Environmental Resources Center  
University of Wisconsin  
Cooperative Extension  
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**Eleanor Bochenek**

Marine Scientist  
Rutgers University Inst. of Marine  
& Coastal Sciences

**Mark Cole**

CEO  
Inner City Fishing Institute  
[http://community.dallasnews.com/  
dmn/icfishin](http://community.dallasnews.com/dmn/icfishin)

**Shari Dann**

Project Manager, Assistant  
Professor & Extension Specialist  
Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife  
Michigan State University  
[www.projectfish.org](http://www.projectfish.org)

**Carl Richardson**

Aquatic Resource Education  
Program Manager  
Pennsylvania Fish & Boat  
Commission  
[www.fish.state.pa.us](http://www.fish.state.pa.us)

**Rich Wehnes**

Stream Services Program  
Supervisor  
Missouri Department of  
Conservation, Streams Unit  
<http://www.mostreamteam.org/>

The initial meeting of Task Force 2 was held in February 2000. A variety of issues were identified as priority concerns. Task Force 2 defined an ambitious agenda to answer its charge: determine the best ways to “**Educate people about how and where to fish and boat.**” To begin, the task force defined recreational boating, fishing and stewardship education as:

“A complex process by which related skills, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors are enhanced, developed and supported through a planned series of experiences.”

Boating and fishing education was also characterized as:

- Complex
- Life-long
- Linked to stewardship
- Changes behavior over time

Task Force 2 determined that its charge was not to directly educate users or consumers, but to work through the educators or program providers. Task Force members identified these primary and secondary audiences for the work of this task force.

Primary Audiences:

- 1) Aquatic educators
- 2) Education Service Providers, including their supervisors and administrators
- 3) Agency educators – formal & non-formal, including: Extension, Parks & Rec.,
- 4) “Education brokers” – organizations responsible for providing education services

Secondary Audiences:

1. Task Force 4
2. Point of sale staff (state licensing process)
3. Partners
4. Enforcement
5. NGO’s with conservation education programs

## 6. Community-based organizations that provide education

The following items (some of which are completed; some are in process) were identified by Task Force 2 as necessary to facilitate a sound educational process:

- Develop a comprehensive inventory, database and directory of existing programs, events and curricula; as well as a plan for effective dissemination. Host a searchable database of these programs and curricula on the World Wide Web.

The need to catalogue what already exists was identified as a critical first step. A Request for Proposals was issued to begin an inventory, database and directory of existing programs, events, and curricula. The database is a directory for stakeholders, where they can locate appropriate programs in their field of interest or in a particular geographical location, and post their programs and products for others to know about and use.

RBFF extended its contract with Jake Faibisch of EcoWorm Communications to maintain the Educational Resources Database available at [www.rbff-education.org](http://www.rbff-education.org). Faibisch has also developed a brochure that will help explain and promote the database to increase postings and use. Already, with little promotion, the site receives nearly 1,000 visits per week and includes over 2,000 resources.

- Develop guidelines for research-based boating/fishing education programs utilizing best professional practices.

The task force also included in its initial plans the need to determine which processes provide the best experiences for conveying knowledge, developing skills, and changing attitudes and behaviors. It was decided that a broad approach, examining multiple disciplines, would provide the best sources of information. The following fields were suggested:

- community-based education
- traditional evaluation
- experiential education
- outcome-based education and evaluation
- drug prevention education
- watershed education
- environmental ethics education
- outdoor education/adventure learning
- risk education
- intervention
- therapeutic recreation
- sports sociology (preferences as to individual/team/watching)
- cognitive/affective/psychomotor domains
- demographic specific
- how to learn,

- leisure education
- non-formal education

To accomplish this, RBFF issued a Request For Proposals to compile the best professional practices that provide guidance to boating, fishing and stewardship. Tony Fedler of Human Dimension Consulting was selected to develop guidelines/standards for research-based education programs utilizing best professional practices.

The resulting 180-page document includes guidelines in program development, professional development, research, and evaluation.

RBFF staff initiated communications with educators over the past year, individually and at venues such as the AREA West meeting and NAAEE conference, to get feedback regarding the document and its usefulness. Overall, the feedback indicated that people think the idea of having best practices in education is good and that the information contained in the document is worthy, but every person indicated that he or she would never actually read it. Everyone agreed that the guidelines as written were not actionable.

- Based on this feedback, Task Force 2 requested a contractor to help take the information from the Best Practices and translate it into implement-able formats.

Proposed formats include summary fact sheets, workbooks that will take aquatic educators through the program development/evaluation process as outlined in the first 20 pages of the report, and tools to help communicate the importance of the Best Practices, including a PowerPoint presentation. This contract is being fulfilled by D.J. Case & Associates, and is the main item of discussion for this paper. We will return to this after completing the entire context of Task Force 2's conceptual plan.

- Research the relationship between fishing and boating participation and stewardship attitudes and behaviors.

The Education Task Force included in its overall strategy to "Educate people about how and where to fish and boat" a review of the relationship between boating and fishing participation and stewardship attitudes and behaviors. A literature review of existing information was added to the contract to Tony Fedler and has been completed. A new Stewardship Team was established, has met and has developed a research agenda to address some of the needs found in the literature review.

Preliminary findings reveal that the existing literature is inconclusive, although the general trend was that non-anglers were more likely to express concern for the environment, while participants were more likely to take action on behalf of the environment. The next step will be to implement the recommended agenda to advance our understanding of what works and how to make it work better. The emphasis of this research will be on what experiences lead to stewardship of aquatic resources.

## THE BEST PRACTICES PROJECT

A “best practice” can be defined as a program or practice that has been clearly defined, refined through repeated delivery, and supported by a substantial body of research

### Identifying Best Practices: The Process

The *Best Practices in Boating, Fishing and Stewardship Education Project* focused on identifying accepted principles and standards generally applicable to boating, fishing and stewardship education.

Eleven experts with research and practical experience from diverse fields were contracted to make recommendations for best educational practices for curricula, programs, and leadership; practices that would affect change in aquatic resource and environmental knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Requirements were that recommendations were to be supported with scientific research, peer recommendations, and practical experience.

Experts were selected from fields such as:

- Boating education
- Aquatic education
- Environmental education
- Marine education
- Youth development
- Stewardship and environmental ethics education
- Adventure recreation education
- Minority education
- Outdoor education for people with disabilities

Each expert wrote a review paper, distilling the best professional practices from his or her field that would likely result in accomplishing the goals of boating, fishing, and stewardship education programs. The experts also wrote a brief overview of appropriate evaluation methods for gauging the effectiveness of boating, fishing, and stewardship education programs. Gaps in the literature pertaining to understanding the effectiveness of different educational approaches were identified and prioritized as future research needs.

After completing their papers, the experts were joined by 14 professional boating, fishing and aquatic education administrators and practitioners in a workshop designed to reach consensus on basic principles and best practices derived from the collection of written papers—and the group’s collective practical experience. During the workshop, participants identified **10 general guiding principles for education programs**. Additionally, the group recommended basic practices for each of four educational areas: **17 for program planning, development and implementation; 21 for professional development; 11 for program evaluation; and 6 for educational program**

**research.** Each of the principles and recommendations can be used in forming components of new programs or in evaluating existing programs.

Identifying widely accepted principles and standards for education can provide the guidance needed. These best practices can be used for planning, developing and implementing programs, providing ongoing professional development, conducting program evaluations, and identifying relevant research to further understand and improve the educational process. Best Practices are meant to enhance, not replace, existing efforts.

### **Taking It To the Street**

The Best Practices document is a comprehensive compilation of research results and expert opinion on best practices in boating, fishing, and stewardship education. It covers its topics thoroughly and is well based in research references. University professors, social science researchers, and other academicians are finding it very useful in their studies and projects. However, because of its theoretical basis and technical nature, this document is not well suited as a tool that front-line aquatic educators can use to help them incorporate best practices into their programs. Therefore, as mentioned previously, RBFF and its Education Task Force developed a request for proposals, solicited bids from contractors, and selected D.J. Case & Associates to work with experts to convert the technical information from the BP document into a series of actionable tools that will enable aquatic education practitioners to understand, apply, and communicate the BPs in delivering their programs. This phase of the project began in August 2002.

In addition to the experts on the Education Task Force listed above, RBFF is also soliciting the help of 30 additional experts from state agencies, private boating and fishing organizations, and academia, to help develop these tools. As of this writing, 27 of the 30 have been selected. The authors of the original papers in the Best Practices document were a high priority. It was important to RBFF that they be involved to help ensure that the content of their papers was not lost or misinterpreted as the information was repackaged. Following is the current list of members of the Best Practices Review Panel:

**Mike O'Malley**  
Watchable Wildlife Coordinator  
Washington Dept of Fish & Wildlife

**Mark Amaral**  
National Marine Manufacturers  
Association

**Kevin Frailey**  
Supervisor, Conservation Education  
Idaho Fish & Game Department

**Anne Glick**  
Educational Programs Coordinator  
American Sportfishing Association

**Jennifer Matthees**  
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Minnesota Department of Natural  
Resources

**Janice McDonnell**  
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Rutgers University

**Elaine Andrews**  
Environmental Education Specialist  
University of Wisconsin Cooperative  
Extension

**Julie Athman**  
Doctoral Candidate  
University of Florida

**Duncan Blair**  
Youth Program Coordinator  
Trout Unlimited

**Ed Carter**  
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**Virgil Chambers**  
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**Myron F. Floyd**  
Associate Professor & Director  
Center for Tourism Research and  
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**Rosane W. Fortner**  
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School of Hotel, Restaurant &  
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**Steve Hall**  
Education and Outreach Director  
Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

**Bill Hastie**  
Outreach Committee Chair  
National Marine Educators  
Association

**Georgia Jeppesen**  
Education Specialist  
Division of Education Outreach  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

**Marcus Kilburn**  
Chief, Education & Outreach Div.  
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**Tom Marcinkowski**  
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**Marni Goldenberg**  
Recreation and Leisure Studies  
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**Jo-Ellen Ross**  
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**Bill Siemer**  
Research Specialist  
Department of Natural Resources  
Cornell University

**Rich Wehnes**  
Fisheries Unit Chief  
Missouri Department of Conservation

**Barb Gigar**  
Aquatic Education Specialist  
Iowa Department of Natural  
Resources

RBFF has given each of these Review Panel members the following expectations for their participation in this project:

- Become intimately familiar with the original Best Practices document. (Each member was sent a complete copy.)
- Review all work done by D.J. Case and Associates over the following year. (Each of up to eight products may require up to three rounds of review.)
- Provide written input on draft materials within two weeks of request.

At its first meeting in November 2001, the Education Task Force identified a series of potential tools that could be developed to help aquatic education practitioners incorporate best practices into their programs. This list of potential tools serves as a starting point for the current effort. It is possible that the tools that finally result from this project may be somewhat different from this initial list, as edits, alterations, and alternatives may be discovered as the project progresses.

Following is a list of the potential tools that are currently being considered, along with a brief description of each.

- A. Program Development Workbook. This workbook will be an interactive, reusable tool that aquatic educators can use to help them develop effective programs and/or evaluate existing programs. It will translate the technical concepts identified in the Best Practices document into guidelines that practitioners can implement in their own situations. The workbook will have sections for various target audiences; for example: 1) section to assist practitioners who are just building a new program, 2) section designed to help ongoing programs identify and tackle problems using real-world examples (from aquatic education and other education disciplines), 3) section to help practitioners evaluate the effectiveness of their programs, 4) section to assist practitioners in finding additional information and resources. The primary consideration in the development of this workbook will be to make it easy for practitioners to incorporate best practice guidelines and recommendations into their ongoing work.
  
- B. Best Practices Fact Sheets. These fact sheets will be short summaries of the information contained in the 11 technical papers that support the Best Practices document. They will be used in association with the Workbook described above, and may take the form of checklists, summary sheets, or brochures. The precise nature and scope of the individual fact sheets may vary by objective and target audience. For example, one fact sheet may contain a self-evaluation checklist that an educator can use to help ensure that he or she has incorporated the appropriate best practices into a teacher training program; another may be an attention-getting “promotional” piece that an aquatic education program director can use to help persuade agency decision-makers to provide the support and funding necessary to improve/enhance the program. All of the fact sheets will combine content with creative design concepts to present the information in concise, easy-to-use, actionable formats.
  
- C. PowerPoint Presentation. A comprehensive presentation that includes text and design elements will be developed to help various target audiences communicate about the importance of Best Practices. Topics to be covered in the presentation include:
  - Why Best Practices are important.
  - History and development of Best Practices.
  - What Best Practices are (basic elements).
  - What is needed to implement Best Practices.

The presentation will be designed for the following communicators and target audiences:

<u>Communicators</u>	→	<u>speaking to</u>	→	<u>Target Audiences</u>
Aquatic educators				Aquatic educators
Aquatic educators				Supervisors

Academicians  
Anyone

Students in aquatic education  
Decision-makers

The presentation will be designed to be customizable, with multiple slides that can be mixed and matched to suit various audiences. Users will be encouraged to delete certain slides or sections in order to tailor the presentation to best communicate with a given audience. The overall presentation will also include a self-executable version that includes narration. Thus, a user could run the entire program as a stand-alone, or he could customize the presentation (selecting only certain segments) and then run it as a stand-alone, or she could customize it and present it verbally (without the recorded narration).

- D. **Workshop Guide.** This tool is based on the assumption that, in the absence of a delivery mechanism that clearly demonstrates how and why aquatic educators can/should use the materials described above, the materials will quickly find a spot on a dusty shelf. Even the best materials in the world will remain largely unused in the absence of hands-on training or “interpretation.” Busy professionals just do not have time to dig into the materials without significant motivation. However, a professional development mechanism such as a workshop can give them this motivation and show them the usefulness of the materials. This guide will help facilitators conduct workshops—it will be a “cookbook” for conducting a one- or two-day workshop that would walk end users through the Program Development Workbook and motivate them to adopt the information and materials into their programs. This Guide will include a detailed outline that clearly identifies the points that facilitators need to make and the appropriate tools to use in order to communicate effectively to the various target audiences. For some target audiences, a 2-day workshop may be appropriate, while others may be more effectively reached with a single day workshop. Therefore, this Workshop Guide will contain separate outlines and instructions for both an 8-hour and a 16-hour workshop.
- E. **Facilitator Training Workshop.** This is a classical “train-the-trainer” workshop that is intended to increase the speed at which the training workshops can be delivered to practitioners around the country. This one-day workshop will instruct facilitators in the effective use of the Workshop Guide--to show them how to present the Best Practices materials in ways that will be most effective in engaging participants in the content and encouraging them to set up additional workshops with practitioners in the future.
- F. **Aquatic Educator’s Newsletter.** Newsletters are often a good way to keep people informed about items of common interest, and it seems likely that a newsletter about aquatic education programs could be very beneficial (although continued pursuit of this potential tool will be based on an assessment of interest among end users). Case studies are an effective way to show program ideas that work (and don’t work), so the initial idea is to research, write, design, and lay out a prototype newsletter that will feature actual case studies and articles about effective aquatic education programs, including examples of strategies other aquatic educators have used that work. The newsletter might also include information on new resources and grant opportunities for aquatic educators. Upon completion, the prototype newsletter will be delivered to selected

target audiences around the country. These audiences will then be surveyed to assess whether the newsletter was valuable to them and whether it should be continued.

G. **Communication Plan.** This tool is intended to ensure that the materials developed in this project are distributed to the correct target audiences and in the most effective manner. D.J. Case & Associates will work with RBFF, the Task Force, and the Review Panel to identify (for each deliverable):

- Specific target audiences—who should get the materials.
- Key messages—what messages will pique their interest and engage them.
- Distribution strategies—how to best deliver the materials to them.
- Promotion needs—how to get the word out.
- Evaluation mechanisms—how can tools be evaluated over time.

In addition, RBFF will investigate the possibility of getting the Best Practices document (Fedler, et. al) published as a monograph in a Journal or other scholarly publication. Following is a list of publications that are being considered:

- Environmental Education Research
- Applied Environmental Education and Communication
- North American Association of Environmental Educators
- National Marine Educators Association
- Journal of Environmental Education
- International Journal of Environmental Education and Information
- Journal of Wildlife Management
- Journal of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Education
- Human Dimensions of Wildlife

H. **Evaluation Report.** This report will contain several levels of evaluation. Near the project's completion, D.J. Case & Associates will contact members of the Task Force and the Review Panel to ask their opinion on how effective the Best Practices materials are/will be in achieving the objectives set forth in the RFP. DJCA will add its own professional opinion on the effectiveness of the materials, areas where improvements could be made, and an assessment of the overall project. In addition, as each of the above tools is developed, attempts will be made to identify more specific and quantitative objectives and evaluation mechanisms for assessing effectiveness. For some tools, it may be possible to include results of actual evaluation by the project's end. For others, the evaluation report may contain recommendations for future evaluation.

This list of tools is not necessarily set in stone. If it becomes obvious that changes are needed based on input from the Task Force, the Review Panel, or other stakeholders, this list may be altered or revised as appropriate. The primary concern of everyone involved is to find the best ways possible to incorporate best practices into education programs.

### **What the Experts Had to Say**

As of this writing, D.J. Case & Associates has conducted phone or face-to-face interviews with 19 members of the Review Panel. Following is a summary of the general results of these interviews.

What is your overall impression of the Best Practices document?

- Very impressive academically and technically, and well referenced.
- Some redundancies among papers.
- No transitions between or parallel structure among papers.
- Needs a broader introduction for people who were not at the BP workshop or who don't know anything about the effort.

Were there any topics that were not covered?

- Practical info on teaching people how to fish.
- Recruiting and retaining anglers.
- Working with urban audiences.
- How to reach seniors.
- Age-appropriateness of materials.
- Talked about the need for learning assessment, but didn't tell how to do it.
- Specific information on developing an evaluation piece.
- Standards or guidelines for best practices.
- Non-powered boating.
- How to train volunteer educators.
- Integrating aquatic education with other state agency programs.

Have you used the document in your own work? How? What were the results?

- Most haven't had an opportunity to use it in their current positions.
- Some pulled some pieces out to qualitatively assess existing programs.
- Several have used the references for background.
- Several have referred others to it.

What do you think of the format of the document?

- It's well-suited for a technical journal.
- Too technical for practitioners.
- It needs to be practical, useable, easy-to-read.
- It needs to be repackaged.

The interviewer gave a brief description of each of the proposed tools to be developed (see descriptions above), and asked the Review Panel member for comments and/or specific input.

Program Development Workbook

- Great concept.
- Need to identify the specific audience to serve.
- Be sure users can see where their needs are met in the various sections.
- A lot of work has already been done on some of these topics (program development, etc.). Don't reinvent these things. Help people incorporate key features that will help them. Show where they can go to dig deeper.
- Several recommended keeping is simple—don't make the organizational structure of the workbook too complex. Make it easy for users to see where they “fit.”
- Must show people how to use it.
- Incorporate NAAEE's non-formal program guidelines.
- Show how to use a program logic model.
- Need to provide standards for practices; then show how to meet them.

### Best Practices Fact Sheets

- Organize by categories, not by chapters of the BP document.
- Most thought it made sense to make them “promotional” in nature—to hook people. (But don't dilute the content just to be promotional).
- Need to have high production value.
- Coordinate these with the Workbook and the PowerPoint, as appropriate.
- Maybe have fact sheets on various successful programs for end users.
- May need more than 11 Fact Sheets. So many concepts and “levels” at which they could be presented.

### PowerPoint Presentation

- Have one overall presentation that has modules of content for various audiences, OR one overall presentation (as above) and one additional, self-executing version that is a brief, overall view of BPs and why they are important.
- Mixed reviews on the self-executing version.
- Make sure users know how they are supposed to use it.
- Don't make it too “fancy” (backgrounds, etc.) or people won't be able to customize it.
- Include sections that are inspirational.
- Show that BPs are research-based.
- Create a video – end users won't have PowerPoint projectors.
- Needs to reference Fedler's 5 tables.
- Not as important as the other tools listed.

### Workshop Guide

- Very important to give consistency to the workshops and materials that are presented.
- Could probably use the same workshop and guide for multiple target audiences—just customize how it is delivered.
- Give them basic tools and encourage them to customize.
- Include information on how to recruit participants.

- Who will conduct these over time?

### Facilitator Training Workshop

- Most RP members said that these were a MUST.
- Several said to work with target audiences up front to better determine what they need.
- Differing views on how long it should be (from several hours to several days). Need to cram in the important stuff and just give pathways to the rest.
- Need to identify funding—training is expensive.
- Must consider how to get people to the workshops.
- Show how to teach concepts, but also how to recruit participants. Pay people to attend?
- Incentives for holding workshops?
- Ask participants what they need to implement the workshop or programs.
- Tell participants what is expected of them in the workshop.

### Aquatic Educator's Newsletter

- Most thought it would be useful—create a pilot version and let the audiences decide.
- Can be difficult, time-consuming, and expensive to sustain. ID who will fulfill over time.
- Several recommended considering a list-serve instead of a newsletter.
- Make hard copy or electronic copy optional—let users choose what they want.
- Use case studies from the trenches—successes and failures.
- Make it free and widely available.

### Communication Plan

- Very important to identify the specific audiences for each tool.
- Survey or sample the audiences as to which tools they need and how to deliver them.
- Create a “catalog” to distribute all over – let people check-off what they want.
- Important to create awareness of this program and tools and why practitioners should care.

### Evaluation Report

- All agreed that evaluation was very important.
- Anecdotal assessment of overall project may be useful.
- Try to identify and implement quantitative evaluation of individual tools over time to determine if tools are changing behavior.
- Need to know more about tools before making specific recommendations.

### Are there other ways we could deliver information that might be more effective?

- Make sure everything is available on the Web—use the Web to promote availability.
- Distance education, webcasts, online learning.
- Consider an online program self-evaluation checklist.
- Presentations at professional conferences.

- Create a list of everyone involved in AE across the country – agencies, organizations, etc., to include in a Sourcebook.
- Get HOF-NOD, WILD, WET, etc. to add module(s) on best practices.

#### What entity should provide support over time?

- RBFF (others said this might limit use because of boating/fishing perceptions); must identify some other entity to take it over if RBFF is no longer around.
- Future Fisherman Foundation (well-positioned because of MOU with RBFF)
- NAAEE (North American Association of Environmental Education)
- AREA (Aquatic Resource Education Association)
- NMEA (National Marine Educators Association)
- National Wildlife Federation
- Project Wild/Wet
- IAFWA Education Committee
- NCTC (National Conservation Training Center)
- University Connection (or Student interns?)
- NASBLA
- USFWS Federal Aid
- 4-H
- Boating & Fishing organizations
- Contractor—put out an RFP and see who applies.

#### What kind of support will be needed?

- Not many Review Panel members had specific ideas about this.
- Program didn't work like I thought it would, so now what do I do?
- Need for additional materials.
- Problems with materials.
- Equipment.
- Funding sources.
- Promotion.

The results of these interviews will be combined with input from the Task Force and other stakeholders to help refine and guide development of the tools to be developed.

### **Where To From Here**

This project began in the beginning of August. Now, at the end of September, significant progress has been made and there is a lot more to come. The Education Task Force just held a meeting at this conference to take the first steps toward tool development. Results from the Review Panel interviews mentioned above were injected into the Task Force meeting, and members gave D.J. Case & Associates the direction it needs to develop detailed outlines of the tools to be developed.

The outlines will be distributed to the Review Panel for review and comment. Then, over the course of the next 6-8 months, D.J. Case & Associates will work in an iterative process with the Review Panel, the Task Force, and other stakeholders to complete the tools. As the tools are developed, a communication plan will be assembled to identify who should receive the various materials, the best ways to distribute them, and how they might be evaluated. Upon completion of the tools and the communication plan, the tools will be distributed/implemented, and evaluation commenced as appropriate. A final report on this project is anticipated on or before July 30, 2003.

### **We Need Your Input!**

It's very important that educators provide input on these products as they are developed. RBFF has set up a page on its web site where the draft tools will be posted as they are developed. Please go to this site, review the materials periodically over the next year, and provide comments as appropriate. **The materials will be posted at [www.rbff.org/educational/bestpractices.cfm](http://www.rbff.org/educational/bestpractices.cfm).**

*Note: At the conclusion of this presentation, a new AREA working group to work with the Best Practices was established.*