



## Expanding Your Reach to Diverse Audiences

This Info Sheet gives a brief overview of the wealth of helpful information you can find in *Best Practices Workbook for Boating, Fishing, and Aquatic Resources Stewardship Education (Workbook)*. See the back for details.

*Invite representatives from the target audience to assist in all aspects of planning and implementing the program.*

Diverse participants add value to any program—they strengthen individual members, the community, and the sponsoring organization. Currently, participation in boating and fishing is dominated by white males. Females, people with disabilities, and racial and ethnic minority groups offer tremendous potential for increasing the number of people who boat, fish, and become stewards of natural resources.

Consider the trends:

- Racial and ethnic minority populations, particularly Hispanic populations, will dramatically increase their share of the U.S. population over the next several decades.
- The number of females exceeded the number of males in the U.S. as of July 1, 2001.
- If current recreation preferences and rates of participation continue into the future, there is a possibility of lower demand for resource-based activities such as fishing and boating.
- If participation continues to decrease, the cost of providing fishing, boating, and stewardship opportunities will be shared by a smaller and smaller portion of the population.
- Approximately one out of every five Americans has a severe disability. Persons with disabilities are found in every socioeconomic group, age group, ethnic group, and religious group.

Working with diverse groups provides opportunities to broaden the base of political support for boating, fishing, and stewardship of aquatic resources.

### ► How to Expand Your Reach to Diverse Audiences

**Involve the Target Audience**  
Whether you are targeting women, Hispanics, African-Americans, or people with disabilities, invite representatives from the group to assist in all aspects of planning and implementing the program.

**Make Them Feel Welcome**  
It's important that minority groups feel welcome in all aspects of boating, fishing, and stewardship participation. Managers and providers of educational programs must be aware of the social climate their settings create. Consider instructor behavior, facility personnel behavior, and the potential interaction with other individuals at the location where the instruction will take place.

**Help Them Overcome Barriers and Constraints**  
Barriers can include finances, transportation, companions, concern for safety, knowledge, skills, and abilities. One of the best ways to understand what barriers or constraints a target group might have is to discuss the issue with representatives from the group.

*Cultural factors such as norms, beliefs, value systems, and socialization practices may be even more significant than socioeconomic constraints*

**Involve Positive Role Models**  
Recruit positive role models (local role models who are active in boating, fishing, or stewardship—not celebrity role models) who represent your target audience to assist in delivering your program.

**Help Create Social Support**  
If people attend your aquatic education program but their friends and family are negative toward their participation in fishing, boating, or stewardship, it is unlikely they will participate long-term. Begin to develop social support by involving their family, friends, and community. When you help participants develop networks of others in their group (women, people with disabilities, teen Hispanics, etc.) you open up lines of communication, which provide social support and ways to overcome barriers and constraints.

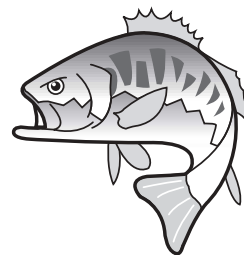
**Reduce Cultural Boundaries**  
Effective programs reduce boundaries that can occur when members of two or more cultures meet. For example, an instructor who can speak both English and the native language of the participants (including sign language) removes a major barrier.

**Reflect the Culture**  
Cultural factors such as norms, beliefs, value systems, and socialization practices may be even more significant than socioeconomic constraints. Each culture may participate in the activities for different reasons. Find out what is important to each culture and help them achieve that through the activity.

*Never underestimate a person's abilities.*

**Celebrate Individual Differences**  
Celebrating differences is especially important with people with disabilities. Emphasize providing support so the individual can fully engage in the activities of their choosing. Never underestimate a person's abilities.

**Make Programs Inclusive and Accessible**  
Standards exist for making physical structures such as bathrooms, education centers, and boat ramps accessible, but few standards apply to the natural environment and/or outdoor recreational activities. The *Workbook* lists numerous Web sites and other resources that are available to help overcome almost any circumstance. It is exciting what can be accomplished.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION...

This information sheet is just the tip of the iceberg. MUCH more information on planning, developing, and evaluating education programs can be found in the *Best Practices Workbook for Boating, Fishing, and Stewardship Education*. The more Best Practices you can incorporate into your program, the greater the chance that your program will achieve the goals you set for it.

To review and/or order copies of this and other Information Sheets, the *Workbook*, or other Best Practice tools and materials, go to: [www.RBFF.org/educational/bestpractices.cfm](http://www.RBFF.org/educational/bestpractices.cfm) or contact RBFF at: 601 N. Fairfax St. • Ste. 140 Alexandria, VA 22314-2054 • 703 519 0013