

# R3 MARKETING PLAN

*Recruit, Retain, Reactivate for the Future*

July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2026



North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

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# Acronyms

ALVIN	Automated License and Vessel Information Network
BOW	Becoming an Outdoors-Woman
CPA	Conservation Policy and Analysis Office
CMDE	Communications, Marketing and Digital Engagement Office
CSS	Customer Service Section
DO	Director's Office
HAB	Habitat Conservation Division
IFD	Inland Fisheries Division
IT	Information Technology Office
LAWA	Land and Water Access Division
LED	Law Enforcement Division
NASP	National Archery in the Schools Program
NCWRC	North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PFA	Public Fishing Area
R3	Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation
RBFF	Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation
TLP	Tackle Loaner Program
WED	Wildlife Education Division
WMD	Wildlife Management Division





# NORTH CAROLINA **WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION**

## MISSION & PURPOSE

*To conserve North Carolina's wildlife resources and their habitats and provide programs and opportunities that allow hunters, anglers, boaters; other outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy wildlife-associated recreation.*



*To develop and administer programs directed to the conservation of fish and wildlife resources and their habitats.*



## INTRODUCTION

Wildlife-associated recreation is important for the health, well-being and enjoyment of North Carolina residents, as it is for all Americans. Participants in traditionally served forms of wildlife-associated recreation (hunters, anglers and recreational shooters) provide important sources of conservation funding through the purchase of licenses as well as excise tax revenue allocated to conservation through the Sportfish and Wildlife Restoration Programs. To increase participation in all forms of wildlife-associated recreation and ensure the continued status of North Carolina as a destination for that recreation, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) developed this Strategic Marketing Plan.

This plan focuses significant attention on marketing efforts to recruit, retain and reactivate “traditionally served” wildlife users and recreational shooters, and also places emphasis on strategies for broader audiences (“traditionally underserved” wildlife users) and the public. Recruit, retain and reactivate, referred to as R3, are activities that create new participants or increase participation rates of current or lapsed outdoor recreationists.

The NCWRC recognizes it cannot accomplish its R3 goals alone. Thus, it will be critically important to engage partners, stakeholders and other agencies to implement the plan fully and ensure the sustained success of the agency in fulfilling its mission.

# R3

RECRUITMENT.  
RETENTION.  
REACTIVATION.

*R3 activities seek to create new participants or increase participation rates of current or lapsed outdoor recreationists.*



# Marketing Plan Organization

This marketing plan is built around four core goals:

- **Fishing – Recruit, Retain and Reactivate Anglers.**
- **Hunting – Recruit, Retain and Reactivate Hunters.**
- **Shooting Sports – Increase Participation in Recreational Shooting and Archery.**
- **Other Wildlife-Associated Recreation – Increase Participation in Wildlife-Associated Activities.**

The plan is organized employing the following structure:

- **Objectives:** Explain purpose of what we are trying to achieve.
- **Tasks:** Specific things we want to accomplish to achieve the goal(s).
- **Metrics of Success:** Evaluation metrics utilized to determine success.
- **Target Audiences:** Articulate to whom our efforts will be directed.
- **Actions:** Steps required to meet the objective and ultimately accomplish the goal.

Parentheses throughout the plan denote the agency divisions and offices, stakeholders, partners and other governmental agencies that will play a role in said action.

## Overarching Objectives

The NCWRC is undertaking marketing efforts to achieve these overarching objectives:

- **Increase awareness and name/brand recognition of the agency.**
- **Increase participation in wildlife-associated outdoor recreation.**
- **Increase license sales.**
- **Engage and recruit diverse stakeholders in conservation.**
- **Increase and maintain agency relevancy.**

These overarching objectives will be achieved through collaboration within the agency, with our partners and stakeholders to accomplish the objectives, strategies, and actions under each of the four core goals (fishing, hunting, shooting sports and other wildlife-associated recreation) on the following pages.

### **R3 GOALS CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED ALONE.**

*The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission will engage partners, stakeholders and other agencies to ensure it is successful in meeting its goals.*



## GOAL:

### Fishing – Recruit, Retain and Reactivate Anglers.

**Objective 1:** Increase angling participation at NCWRC facilities, programs and events.

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**Task 1:** Improve awareness of NCWRC conducted angling events and programs statewide.

**Metrics of Success:** Success will be measured by marketing analytics and increased participation in agency-conducted, angling-related events and programs.

**Target Audience:** Current, lapsed and potential anglers.

**Actions:**

- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan to promote fishing events and follow up with registrants and participants. (CMDE, CPA, IFD, WED)
- Diversify fishing events with different fish species. (IFD, WED)
- Host additional fishing events statewide. (WED, IFD, CMDE)



## Task 2: Increase sponsorships of fishing initiatives, events and programs with partners.

**Metrics of Success:** Success will be measured by the number of sponsored fishing initiatives, events and programs per year and participation rates.

**Target Audience:** Partner organizations (NC State Parks, Municipal and County Parks & Rec, Army Corps of Engineers, etc.).

### Actions:

- Develop relationships with current and potential partners. (WED, DO)
- Develop NCWRC-branded event “package” for sponsored fishing events. (CMDE, WED)
- Target marketing to promote sponsored events. (CMDE)
- Use partnerships to increase spatial coverage of sponsored events to include one NCWRC-sponsored or partnered angling event each year within 50 miles of any city or town with a population exceeding 10,000 residents. (WED, IFD, CMDE, LAWA)
- Develop and maintain at least 100 TLP partnerships within the next five years. (DO, WED)
- Target marketing to promote current and new TLP partnerships. (CMDE)
- Increase awareness of urban fishing opportunities (develop urban fishing atlas, fishing signage and local/town/city government support). (CMDE, IFD)
- Monitor and track use of TLP equipment and effectiveness of program with partners. (DO, WED, CPA)
- Evaluate the effectiveness of partner fishing initiatives, events and programs by monitoring participation rates and license purchasing patterns of participants. (DO, WED, CPA)
- Collect participant data at NCWRC-conducted and sponsored events for targeted marketing. (WED, CPA, IT)

## Task 3: Increase awareness of Public Fishing Areas (PFAs).

**Metrics of Success:** Increased awareness of PFAs as determined by marketing analytics.

**Target audience:** Public.

### Actions:

- Create and implement a targeted marketing campaign to promote fishing opportunities throughout North Carolina. (CMDE)
- Highlight and promote one unique fishing opportunity at a PFA in each district annually. (WED, IFD, CMDE)
- Increase awareness of urban fishing opportunities (develop urban fishing atlas, fishing signage and local/town/city government support). (CMDE, IFD)

## Objective 2: Increase the number of licensed anglers in North Carolina.

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### Task 1: Reduce barriers to entry and participation in angling.

**Metrics of Success:** Increase number of fishing license holders by 5% over the previous five-year average. Success will be measured by license sales data from ALVIN.

**Target audience:** Individuals 16 years of age or older.

#### Actions:

- Develop messaging for segmented marketing. (CMDE)
- Develop messaging and materials to facilitate understanding of complex fishing regulations for potential and new anglers. (IFD, CMDE, CPA)
- Improve user experience of ALVIN. (IT, CMDE)
- Develop a license app. (IT, CMDE)
- Incorporate an auto-renewal option for all license buyers to simplify the purchasing process. (IT, CSS)

### Task 2: Increase resident license sales to North Carolina college and university students and active-duty military personnel.

**Metrics of Success:** Success will be measured by license sales data from ALVIN.

**Target audience:** Non-resident North Carolina college and university students and active-duty military personnel.

#### Actions:

- Promote the opportunity for target audience to purchase a resident fishing license while in state. (CMDE, IFD, CPA, CSS, IT)
- Create marketing campaigns geared toward interests of target audience. (CMDE)
- Add field in ALVIN to track license purchases by target audience. (IT)

### Task 3: Decrease churn rate among fishing license holders.

**Metrics of Success:** Decrease fishing license churn over the next five years. Success will be measured by tracking fishing license sales information collected from ALVIN.

**Target Audience:** Current and lapsed resident fishing license holders.

#### Actions:

- Identify the fishing license churn rate and the prohibiting factors that influence recurring license buyers. (CPA, WED, CSS, IT)



- Incorporate an auto-renewal option for all license buyers to simplify the purchasing process. (IT, CSS)
- Review demographic information of anglers who churn to identify areas of opportunity. Use this information to refine marketing approaches. (CMDE, CPA)
- Employ email marketing to send purchasing reminders and encourage lapsed anglers to renew their license. (CMDE, IT)
- Increase profile of quality fishing opportunities on social media platforms. (CMDE, IFD)
- Employ marketing campaigns developed by RBFF. (CMDE)
- Measure success of email campaigns with marketing analytics. (CMDE)

#### **Task 4: Increase non-resident awareness of North Carolina’s fishing opportunities.**

**Metrics of Success:** Increase fishing license sales to non-residents by 5% over the previous five-year average. Success will be measured through marketing analytics and by tracking non-resident fishing license sales information in ALVIN.

**Target Audience:** Non-residents.

#### **Actions:**

- Develop regional marketing materials for various digital communication channels that highlight North Carolina’s abundant fishing opportunities, accessible waters, and reasonably priced, non-resident angling licenses. (CMDE)
- Partner with travel and tourism industry to market opportunities in publications and through social media platforms. (CMDE)
- Partner with other state wildlife agencies and wildlife organizations to promote unique opportunities. (CMDE)





## Task 5: Engage anglers through the Pechmann and Pisgah Education Centers.

**Metrics of Success:** Success will be measured through marketing analytics, survey data, and comparison of visitor information with license sales data in ALVIN.

**Target Audience:** Center visitors, families, women and retirees.

### Actions:

- Develop and employ targeted marketing campaigns to increase center visitation. (CMDE)
- Host fishing programs targeting families, women and retirees. (WED)
- Register and track participants using a NCWRC ID number. (IT, WED)
- Follow up with targeted marketing to visitors. (CMDE)
- Survey center visitors to evaluate programming effectiveness. (CPA)





### Objective 3: Increase diversity of angling participants.

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#### Task 1: Recruit anglers from underrepresented gender, racial, ethnic and age groups.

**Metrics of Success:** Success will be measured by collecting participant data, marketing analytics and demographic and sales information collected in ALVIN.

**Target Audience:** Underrepresented potential anglers.

#### Actions:

- Assess demographic information to identify opportunity areas for the recruitment of underrepresented gender, racial, ethnic and age groups into the angling community. (CPA, WED, IT)
- Work with stakeholders in these underrepresented racial and ethnic groups to determine needs and desired methods of communication. (CPA, CDME)
- Incorporate diversity into promotional, communication, marketing and educational materials. (CPA, CMDE)
- Develop and implement segmented fishing programs and marketing materials. (CPA, WED, CMDE)



*The Wildlife Education Division, along with other agency divisions, partners with N.C. State Parks each April to hold the “Family Fishing Fiesta,” a one-day event featuring many outdoor activities with fishing as the highlight, to reach Hispanic communities in the Triangle area and beyond.*





## GOAL:

Hunting – Recruit, Retain and Reactivate Hunters.

**Objective 1:** Increase participation at NCWRC facilities, programs and events for hunting.

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**Task 1:** Raise awareness of NCWRC-conducted hunting opportunities, events and programs statewide.

**Metrics of Success:** Success will be measured by marketing analytics and increased participation in agency conducted hunting-related opportunities, events, and programs.

**Target Audience:** Current, lapsed and potential resident hunters.

**Actions:**

- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan to promote hunting opportunities, events and programs, and follow up with registrants and participants. (CMDE, CPA, IFD, WED)
- Develop initiatives that promote the accessibility of small game hunting opportunities across the state. (WMD, LAWA, WED)
- Promote NCWRC's Deer Management Assistance Program. (WMD, CMDE)
- Promote private lands staff assistance with habitat and deer management for interested landowners. (WMD, CMDE)
- Work with interested landowners to develop and assess a program to allow public hunting access on private lands. (WMD, N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, N.C. Wildlife Federation, Independent Insurance Agents of North Carolina, CMDE)
- Develop and implement educational opportunities that assist landowners in managing land for wildlife. (WED, WMD, LAWA)

**Task 2: Increase sponsorships of hunting initiatives, events and programs with partners.**

**Metrics of Success:** Success will be measured by the number of sponsored hunting initiatives, events and programs per year and participation rates.

**Target Audience:** Partner organizations (Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Hunters for the Hungry, Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, N.C. Wildlife Federation, National Deer Association, etc.).

**Actions:**

- Develop relationships with current and potential partners. (WED, DO)
- Develop NCWRC-branded event “package” for sponsored hunting and hunting-related events. (CMDE, WED)
- Target marketing to promote sponsored events. (CMDE)
- Use partnerships to increase spatial coverage of sponsored events to include one NCWRC-sponsored or partnered hunting event each year within 50 miles of any city or town with a population exceeding 10,000 residents. (WED, IFD, CMDE, LAWA)
- Evaluate the effectiveness of partner hunting initiatives, events and programs by monitoring participation rates and license purchasing patterns of participants. (DO, WED, CPA)
- Collect participant data at NCWRC conducted and sponsored events for targeted marketing. (WED, CPA, IT)

**Task 3: Increase awareness of accessible accommodations and opportunities on game lands for hunters with limited mobility.**

**Metrics of Success:** Increased disabled access on game lands. Continued engagement with disabled community and follow-up data collection to determine success of actions.

**Target Audience:** Hunters with restricted mobility.



#### Actions:

- Form Disabled Hunter Task Force/Workgroup to assist with specific actions. (LAWA, CPA)
- Digitize existing accessible infrastructure to facilitate awareness. (LAWA, CPA)
- Market and promote the availability of accessible lands, disabled permit hunts, track chairs and accessible, portable blinds. (LAWA, CSS, WED, CMDE)
- Provide and promote unique hunting opportunities with different species to generate interest or renew interest in hunters who may no longer be engaged or able to participate. (LAWA, WED, CMDE)
- Develop partnerships with agencies, NGOs, etc. that identify and sell, lease, or offer private hunting land to promote other options for places to hunt. (WED, CMDE, WMD)



## Objective 2: Increase the number of licensed hunters in North Carolina.

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### Task 1: Reduce barriers to entry and participation in hunting.

**Metrics of Success:** Increase number of hunting license holders by 5% over the previous five-year average. Success will be measured by license sales data from ALVIN.

**Target audience:** Individuals 16 years of age or older, including Hunter Education course graduates.



**Actions:**

- Develop messaging for segmented marketing. (CMDE)
- Develop messaging and materials to facilitate understanding of complex hunting regulations for potential and new hunters. (WMD, LAWA, CMDE, CPA)
- Improve user experience of ALVIN. (IT, CMDE)
- Develop a license app. (IT, CMDE)
- Incorporate an auto-renewal option for all license buyers to simplify the purchasing process. (IT, CSS)
- Initiate and promote a hunting mentor program for small game, and measure/track participant engagement. (WED, CMDE, CPA)
- Develop ongoing marketing campaigns and educational opportunities for Hunter Education course graduates. (WED, CMDE)

**Task 2: Increase resident license sales to North Carolina college and university students and active-duty military personnel.**

**Metrics of Success:** Success will be measured by license sales data from ALVIN.

**Target audience:** Non-resident North Carolina college and university students and active-duty military personnel.

**Actions:**

- Promote the opportunity for target audience to purchase a resident hunting license while in state. (CMDE, CPA, CSS, IT)
- Create marketing campaigns geared toward interests of target audience. (CMDE)
- Add field in ALVIN to track license purchases by target audience. (IT)

**Task 3: Decrease churn rate among hunting license holders.**

**Metrics of Success:** Decrease hunting license churn over the next five years. Success will be measured by tracking hunting license sales information collected from ALVIN.

**Target Audience:** Current and lapsed resident hunting license holders.

**Actions:**

- Identify the hunting license churn rate and the prohibiting factors that influence recurring license buyers. (CPA, WED, CSS, IT)
- Incorporate an auto-renewal option for all license buyers to simplify the purchasing process. (IT, CSS)
- Review demographic information of hunters who churn to identify areas of opportunity. Use this information refine marketing approaches. (CMDE, CPA)
- Employ email marketing to send purchasing reminders and encourage lapsed hunters to renew their license. (CMDE, IT)

- Increase profile of quality hunting opportunities on social media platforms. (CMDE, IFD)
- Employ marketing campaigns developed by Association for Conservation Information. (CMDE)
- Measure success of email campaigns with marketing analytics. (CMDE)

#### **Task 4: Increase non-resident awareness of North Carolina's hunting opportunities.**

**Metrics of Success:** Increase hunting license sales to non-residents by 5% over the previous five-year average. Success will be measured through marketing analytics and by tracking non-resident hunting license sales information in ALVIN.

**Target Audience:** Non-residents.

##### **Actions:**

- Develop regional marketing materials for various digital communication channels that highlight North Carolina's abundant hunting opportunities, accessible public land and reasonably priced, non-resident hunting licenses. (CMDE)
- Partner with travel and tourism industry to market opportunities in publications and through social media platforms. (CMDE)
- Partner with other state wildlife agencies and wildlife organizations to promote unique opportunities. (CMDE)

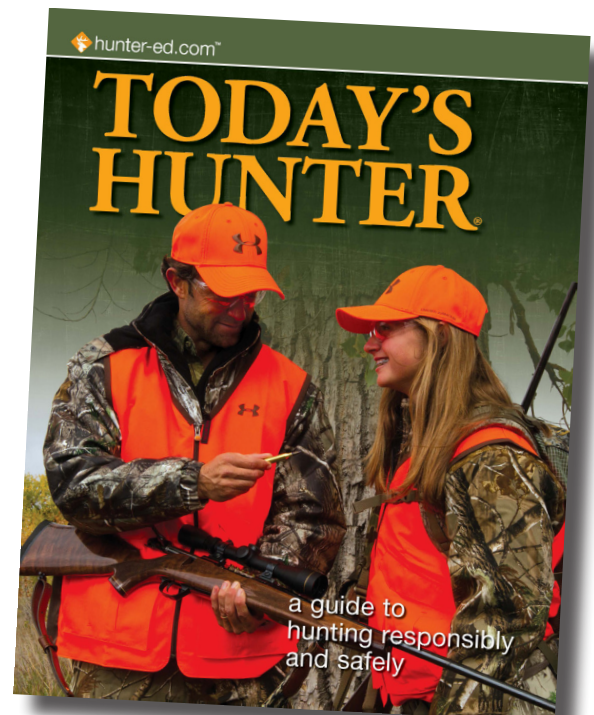
#### **Task 5: Increase Hunter Education course participation among Hunting Heritage Apprentice Permit Holders.**

**Metrics of Success:** Success will be measured by comparing Hunting Heritage Apprentice Permit holder information from ALVIN with Hunter Education participant lists.

**Target Audience:** Lapsed and current Hunting Heritage Apprentice Permit holders.

##### **Actions:**

- Identify barriers to Hunter Education. (CPA)
- Market Hunter Education courses to Hunting Heritage Apprentice Permit holders. (WED, CMDE)
- Engage audience with hunting skills-based programs and opportunities. (WED, CMDE)





## Objective 3: Increase diversity of hunting participants.

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### Task 1: Recruit hunters from underrepresented gender, racial, ethnic and age groups.

**Metrics of Success:** Success will be measured by collecting participant data, marketing analytics and demographic and sales information collected in ALVIN.

**Target Audience:** Underrepresented potential hunters.

#### Actions:

- Assess demographic information to identify opportunity areas for the recruitment of underrepresented gender, racial, ethnic, and age groups into the hunting community. (CPA, WED, IT)
- Work with stakeholders in these underrepresented racial and ethnic groups to determine needs and desired methods of communication. (CPA, CMDE)
- Incorporate diversity into promotional, communication, marketing and educational materials. (CPA, CMDE)
- Develop and implement segmented hunting programs and marketing materials. (CPA, WED, CMDE)
- Increase number/spatial distribution of classes designed to introduce and recruit diverse audiences to hunting. (CMDE)
- Recruit Hunter Education instructors from underrepresented communities to better represent and communicate with their local communities. (CPA, WED, CMDE)
- Target follow-up marketing to Hunter Education graduates to encourage continued engagement and license purchase. (CPA, WED)







## GOAL: Shooting Sports – Increase Participation in Recreational Shooting and Archery.

### Objective 1: Increase participation in shooting sports.

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#### Task 1: Raise awareness of shooting sports.

**Metrics of Success:** Success will be measured by marketing analytics and increased participation in shooting sports programs and use of ranges.

**Target Audience:** Public.

#### Actions:

- Identify baseline awareness of and barriers to participation in shooting sports. (CPA)
- Use partnerships with external organizations to collect information on shooting sports and participants. (CPA)
- Work with partners to market public shooting ranges. (CMDE, DO)

## Task 2: Increase participation in shooting sports programs and events statewide.

**Metrics of Success:** Increase number of programs and events and participation in programs and events statewide.

**Target Audience:** Potential shooting sports participants.

### Actions:

- Develop marketing messaging and materials to address barriers and increase awareness of shooting sports programs and participation. (WED, CMDE)
- Collect information on program participants to effectively market opportunities and encourage participation. (CPA, CMDE)
- Develop marketing materials for each range to highlight specific opportunities offered. (CMDE, WED)
- Develop marketing materials to promote NASP and employ marketing campaign to increase participation for schools and students. (WED, CMDE)
- Increase usage of ranges for basic and advanced Hunter Education courses. (WED)
- Develop and implement a National Hunting and Fishing Day event at the John Lentz Hunter Education Complex with marketing outreach. (WED, CMDE)

## NC Youth Hunter Education Skills Tournament







## GOAL:

### Other Wildlife-Associated Recreation - Increase Participation in Wildlife-Associated Activities.

#### Objective 1: Increase participation in wildlife-associated recreation.

---

##### Task 1: Raise awareness of wildlife-associated recreation opportunities.

**Metrics of Success:** Success will be measured by marketing analytics and increased participation in agency-conducted opportunities, events and programs.

**Target Audience:** Public, social networks of existing wildlife-associated recreationists, wildlife viewers, traditionally underserved wildlife users, non-wildlife associated outdoor recreationists, and urban residents in close proximity to opportunities.

##### Actions:

- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan to promote wildlife-associated recreation opportunities, events and programs, and follow up with registrants and participants. (CMDE, CPA, WED)
- Develop initiatives that promote the accessibility of these opportunities across the state. (WED, CMDE)
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current NCWRC events and identify opportunities for improvement. (CPA, WED)



## Task 2: Increase participation in wildlife-associated recreation and programs.

**Metrics of Success:** Success will be measured by participant numbers in organized programs/events and surveys to target audience following specific marketing efforts.

**Target Audience:** Social networks of existing wildlife-associated recreationists, resident wildlife viewers, traditionally underserved wildlife users, non-wildlife associated outdoor recreationists, and urban residents in close proximity to opportunities.

### Actions:

- Promote available opportunities to wildlife viewers, hunters and anglers. (CMDE)
- Develop and promote the web-based, wildlife-associated recreation programs (citizen science, eBird, nest cams, N.C. Bird Atlas, etc.). (CMDE, WED, DO)
- Develop messaging and marketing materials to implement a campaign to promote wildlife viewing and wildlife-associated recreation opportunities. (CMDE)

## Objective 2: Increase support of wildlife conservation in North Carolina.

---

### Task 1: Promote the agency, its mission and its work.

**Metrics of Success:** Success will be measured by name recognition and increased participation in services, programs, opportunities and events.

**Target Audience:** Public.

### Actions:

- Develop messaging to convey the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. (CMDE)
- Promote conservation success stories. (HAB, CMDE)
- Create campaign highlighting how North Carolina is managing Species of Greatest Conservation Need. (CMDE, WED, WMD, IFD)
- Utilize partnerships to highlight successful conservation efforts. (CMDE, DO)
- Create agency podcast(s). (CMDE)

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