

# FACTORS RELATED TO HUNTING AND FISHING PARTICIPATION AMONG THE NATION'S YOUTH

## PHASE II: FOCUS GROUP RESULTS



Peter Ring ©



PRODUCED UNDER A GRANT FROM THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE,  
DIVISION OF FEDERAL AID, FEDERAL AID IN SPORT FISH AND WILDLIFE RESTORATION

GRANT AGREEMENT 91400-01-0010  
CONDUCTED BY RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT  
HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA  
2003

# FACTORS RELATED TO HUNTING AND FISHING PARTICIPATION AMONG THE NATION'S YOUTH

## PHASE II: FOCUS GROUP REPORT



Produced under Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration  
Grant Agreement 91400-01-0010 (VA M-2-R FAIMS)

## Responsive Management



Mark Damian Duda, Executive Director  
Peter E. De Michele, Ph.D., Director of Research  
Carol Zurawski, Research Associate  
Martin Jones, Research Associate  
Joy E. Yoder, Research Associate  
William Testerman, Survey Center Manager  
Alison Lanier, Business Manager  
Steven J. Bissell, Ph.D., Qualitative Research Associate  
Ping Wang, Ph.D., Quantitative Research Associate  
James B. Herrick, Ph.D., Research Associate  
Jennifer Marshall, Assistant Survey Center Manager

130 Franklin Street  
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801  
Telephone: 540/432-1888 Facsimile: 540/432-1892  
E-Mail: [mark@responsivemanagement.com](mailto:mark@responsivemanagement.com)  
[www.responsivemanagement.com](http://www.responsivemanagement.com)

## **Acknowledgements**

Responsive Management would like to extend special thanks to the many people who have assisted in this project including the project managers Steve Farrell, Chris McKay, and Sylvia Cabrera of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kathy Love and Liz Lyons of the Missouri Department of Conservation, Doug Darr, of the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, Ellen Hatfield of Western Heights Elementary School in Eufaula, Alabama, Kirsia Bayer and Sue Rose of Hobart, Washington, Angela Simons of York, Pennsylvania, Patricia Vathis of The Pennsylvania Department of Education and John Walker of York Suburban Middle School.

The views contained in this report do not necessarily represent the views of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Although numerous people assisted with this project, any errors, omissions, or typographical mistakes in the reports are the sole responsibility of Responsive Management.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Methodology</b> .....	3
<b>Chapter 1:</b> Second Graders' Attitudes toward and Participation in Hunting and Fishing .....	5
<b>Chapter 2:</b> Fifth Graders' Attitudes toward and Participation in Hunting and Fishing .....	23
<b>Chapter 3:</b> Eighth Graders' Attitudes toward and Participation in Hunting and Fishing .....	39
<b>Chapter 4:</b> Tenth Graders' Attitudes toward and Participation in Hunting and Fishing .....	65
<b>Chapter 5:</b> Twelfth Graders' Attitudes toward and Participation in Hunting and Fishing .....	76
<b>Major Findings</b> .....	97
<b>Literature</b> .....	101
<b>Appendix:</b> Discussion Outlines.....	102



## **Introduction**

The future of hunting and fishing in the United States ultimately depends upon the commitment of future generations to these traditional fish and wildlife activities. The key to active participation in and commitment to hunting and fishing among future generations is fostering this commitment and participation among today's youth.

Research clearly indicates that active participation in hunting and fishing as an adult is directly related to active participation as a youth. More than 90% of today's adult hunters were initiated into hunting before the age of 20 (Duda and Young 1993). In fact, if an individual has not learned to hunt by the age of 20, there is a very low likelihood of hunting participation as an adult (Duda and Young 1993). Among today's anglers, 85% started fishing before the age of 12 while a full 92% started before the age of 17 (Responsive Management 1996a). Research also shows that not only is active participation by an adult determined by early exposure to hunting and fishing, but also the level of adult avidity is determined by level of exposure as a child (Duda and Young 1993). Youth who participate frequently as a child are more likely to avidly participate as an adult. Conversely those who start hunting and fishing later in life hunt and fish less as an adult and are more likely to cease hunting and fishing altogether (Duda et al. 1998). Clearly, exposure to these activities as a child is critical to participation as an adult. In addition, participation by adults is critical to the youth of the next generation, continuing the cycle of hunting and fishing recruitment and retention within the U. S. population.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the factors related to hunting and fishing initiation, participation, retention and desertion among U. S. youth ages 8 – 18. There are two major objectives of this study. The first objective is to identify the factors involved in the recruitment and retention of the nation's youth to hunting and fishing through primary and secondary research. The second objective is to recommend to the fish and wildlife management community programs and strategies that have the best chance of success in the recruitment and the retention of the nation's youth in hunting and fishing participation based on the research findings.

Although there has been a proliferation in the number of studies on hunting and fishing participation in the past decade, almost all of this work has focused on adult participation. This project will focus on where hunting and fishing initiation and retention begin: with the nation's youth.

There are five phases to this project. Phase I consisted of a literature review of not only what is known about youth and hunting and fishing participation, but also what is known about youth participation in other activities, demographic trends affecting youth, and children's cognitive development and stages of learning. Phase II consisted of a series of focus groups of youth of various ages. Phase III consisted of a telephone survey of the nation's youth regarding their participation in and opinions on hunting and fishing and other outdoor activities as well as their attitudes toward wildlife. Phase IV of the project included extensive cross-tabulations of the telephone survey data. Phase V is the final report. The final report will be a concise and easy-to-read document that not only outlines the factors related to the specifics of youth hunting and fishing initiation, participation, retention and desertion, but as importantly will identify specific strategies to increase program and educational efforts to increase hunting and fishing participation among the nation's youth. This report will be based upon the solid foundation of original and secondary research that will be conducted and evaluated in Phases I-IV.

This project was funded under a grant from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Federal Aid, Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Grant Agreement 91400-01-0010.

## Methodology

This report is Phase II, the results of ten focus groups conducted across the United States by Responsive Management between April 2001 and March 2002. Focus group participants were recruited to represent several school grades, ranging from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. For each grade level, separate focus groups were conducted for hunting and fishing. The groups were conducted at the following times and locations:

- Second grade (Hunting): Eufaula, Alabama. May 2, 2001.
- Second grade (Fishing): Eufaula, Alabama. May 2, 2001.
- Fifth grade (Hunting): Seattle, Washington. July 30, 2001.
- Fifth grade (Fishing): Seattle, Washington. July 30, 2001.
- Eighth grade (Hunting): York, Pennsylvania. March 6, 2002.
- Eighth grade (Fishing): York, Pennsylvania. March 6, 2002.
- Tenth grade (Hunting): St. Louis, Missouri. April 23, 2001.
- Tenth grade (Fishing): St. Louis, Missouri. April 23, 2001.
- Twelfth grade (Hunting): Phoenix, Arizona. November 26, 2001.
- Twelfth grade (Fishing): Phoenix, Arizona. November 26, 2001.

The focus groups were conducted using a discussion guide designed to encourage the participants to provide their opinions on and attitudes towards factors that have influenced their interest in and participation levels in hunting or fishing. Although the discussions varied somewhat between focus groups (due to more sophisticated conversations with the higher grades), the topics of discussion focused on elements of actual participation, motivators and constraints to participation, as well as possible methods to increase youth recruitment into these activities in the future. See Appendices 1-2 for the detailed discussion guides.

Focus groups are an important method to begin studies because they allow for extensive open-ended responses to questions, probing, follow-up questions, group discussion, and observation of emotional reactions to various topics – aspects that cannot be measured in a traditional telephone or mail survey. Focus group research is considered “qualitative research.” Qualitative research sacrifices reliability for increased validity. This means that although focus group findings cannot be replicated statistically as can sample surveys (high reliability), they often provide researchers a more valid understanding of issues at the heart of the study (high validity).

All of the focus groups were audiotaped, and the Phoenix groups were videotaped as well. The analysis of these focus groups was an iterative process. The moderator took notes and observations at the time of the focus group. The audiotapes and videotapes were then reviewed and transcribed. After all of the audiotapes and videotapes were reviewed, they were analyzed for content, and the focus group report was written. The focus group report closely follows the discussion guide that was used during the focus group discussions. The content of this report is subdivided by grade level, with an analysis at the end. Direct quotes appear in *italics*, and in most cases, comments are written verbatim. The moderator's comments, when included, are written in parentheses ( ). Occasionally, for the purpose of clarity, there will be paraphrased

comments, which will be written in brackets [ ]. In several instances, parents of the focus group participants were invited to share comments, and these quotations are noted as such.

## **Chapter 1: Second Graders' Attitudes toward and Participation in Hunting and Fishing**

### **Factors Associated with Participation in Hunting**

#### **Participation and Interest in Hunting**

Hunting participation varied considerably among the second grade focus group participants. Many of the second graders had never been hunting, although several had hunted before. Despite the fact that several children had never hunted, there was a high level of interest in going hunting, especially in tree stands. In addition, the focus group participants felt that other children their age would likely be interested in going hunting. This positive attitude towards hunting may suggest that very young children have an open-minded attitude towards hunting.

Many of the children participated in other outdoor recreation activities, such as camping, hiking and fishing, and said that they enjoyed those activities a great deal. In fact, hunting and fishing seemed to be activities closely tied with other outdoor activities, especially hiking and camping. Of the children who had previously hunted, the most common animals they hunted were birds and deer. The children who hunted said they usually hunt with a shotgun, bow and arrow, or a BB gun.

*"I like fishing. (Do you ever go camping?) In the summer. (Do you ever go hunting?) No."*

*"I like fishing. (Have you ever been hunting?) No, I think I might hunt this summer."*

*"I go hunting. (Tell me about that. Do you go a lot or a little?) I take my BB gun. (What do you shoot?) Birds."*

*"I go camping. (And do you go fishing?) Yes. (How about hunting?) I've never done that."*

*"Every time we go camping, we go hunting, and after that we go fishing. Whenever I try to shoot an animal, my mom won't let me shoot the birds. (Tell me more about hunting.) I shoot deer. (With a gun or a bow and arrow?) I shoot with a bow and arrow. (Have you been hunting for a long time?) No, I've only started this past year. (So you went last year. Did you get anything?) I killed a deer. (Did you like it; was it fun?) We ate it. (You like deer because it tastes good?) Yes."*

*"I go camping. (How about fishing?) Never been. (How about hunting?) Never been."*

*"(Do you think that you might ever want to go hiking or fishing or hunting?) I like to go hiking and hunting. (Tell me about hunting.) When I go hunting I usually build kind of a tree house, and one time I shot two bears in one day. (So you were up in a tree?) No, I*

*was up in a tree stand. (So have you been hunting for a long time?) Yes. (Whom do you go with?) My dad. (And what do you hunt with?) A shotgun.”*

*“(Do you like to go fishing or camping?) Yes. (Which one?) All of them. (Ok, so you’re an outdoors woman?) Yes. (You like to go fishing?) Yes. (You like camping.) Yes. (How about hunting, have you ever been hunting?) No. (Do you think that you would like to, do you think that would be fun?) Yes.”*

*“I like to go camping because I haven’t been in a long time. (So what about fishing?) Yes. (How about hunting?) I’ve never been. (Do you think that you would want to?) I don’t know. If I was in a tree stand I might.”*

*“I like to fish. I like to camp. I’d like to hunt if I was in a tree stand.”*

*“(Raise your hand if you think that you would like to go hunting? - 10 kids would like to go or have been. So would other kids act the same as you?)”*

*“I think they would.”*

*“(So it sounds like a few of you have been hunting and some of you haven’t but you said it sounds like it would be fun. You talked about going in a tree stand and you talked about getting a deer and eating it, and he goes with his dad. Does that sound like something other kids would do?)”*

*“Yes.”*

*“Yes.”*

## **Perceptions of Hunting**

Understanding youth’s attitudes towards hunting is important because these perceptions likely influence whether or not they participate, as well as *why* they do or do not participate. When asked why they think that people go hunting, the second grade participants provided several different reasons. However, the children’s answers generally fell into two categories: hunting for necessity, and hunting for pleasure. For example, the children felt that people hunt for food and clothes, as well as to have fun, to be outdoors, and to bring home a trophy such as antlers.

*“(Why do you think that people hunt?)”*

*“For food.”*

*“To make clothes out of them [the animals].”*

*“Just to be outside in the afternoons.”*

*“Just to have fun.”*

*“To kill deer and take their heads off and put them on the wall.”*

*“To eat.”*

*“To take the antlers.”*

*“To eat them [the animals].”*

### **Positive Aspects of Hunting**

The positive aspects of hunting named by the focus group participants reflected the youths' own perceptions of why they think that people hunt. For example, almost all of the second graders said that they liked to hunt because they like the taste of deer meat, and one of the perceptions that the children had about hunting is that people hunt for the food. Other positive aspects of hunting were to be outdoors and making something out of the animal bones. Likewise, the perceptions that the children had about why people hunt included being outdoors and having fun, as well as keeping trophies such as antlers. Both the reasons the second graders felt that other people hunt, as well as their own reasons for hunting (or interest in hunting), reflected an egocentric attitude towards the environment and wildlife in that the children were focusing on aspects of hunting that would bring them satisfaction and pleasure (eating tasty meat). The reasons also reflected very tangible things to which the children could directly relate or to which they were very familiar.

*“To have some food.”*

*“Because I like deer meat.”*

*“I like the outdoors.”*

*“I would like to go hunting because it would be fun.”*

*“You can kill them and take their bones and make something out of them.”*

*“Because it's fun.”*

*“To taste the meat because I've never tasted it before.”*

*“(Do you like it because it tastes good or do you like it because you're hungry?)”*

*“It tastes good.”*

*“I think it tastes very good.”*

*“It's good.”*

*“It’s delicious.”*

*“It’s very, very tasty.”*

## **Barriers to Hunting Participation**

Even though there was a high level of both participation and interest in hunting among some of the second grade focus group participants, it is important to note that the children also brought up reasons that they would not or could not hunt. First, when asked to explain some of the reasons for not hunting, most of the children either said that nothing would stop them or a family member, specifically their mother or father, would not let them hunt. The reasons for this were related to issues of safety. The parents often felt the youth didn’t know how to handle a gun properly, or the parents were simply afraid that the youth might get hurt. However, one focus group participant said that his dad was too busy to take him hunting. A few children said that they wouldn’t hunt because they would be killing animals.

*“I think that my mom might be too concerned about me. (So would she let you go and be concerned or just not let you go?) She wouldn’t let me go. I think my mom would be very concerned.”*

*“Because you’re killing something. (So you wouldn’t want to go because it means killing something?) They’re just like humans except they can’t talk like us, but God made them, and they’re part of this world.”*

*“Nothing would stop me [from going hunting].”*

*“(Is there anything that might stop you from hunting?) My dad wouldn’t let me go. (How come?) Because I don’t know how to handle a gun.”*

*“I can’t go by myself, and my daddy always goes with me, but sometimes he gets really busy and I can’t go.”*

## **Negative Aspects of Hunting**

Although the second graders felt there were many positive aspects about hunting, several negative aspects were also mentioned. Several of the second grade non-hunters said that they would not want to go hunting because killing the animals would make them sad. However, the fact that they would get to eat the meat appeared to override several of the youths’ sadness of killing the animal.

Approximately half of the children said that they would be afraid of going out into the woods because they were afraid of the elements, wild animals, poison ivy and getting lost.

*"I would be kind of sad. (Would you be sad enough to not shoot it or sad enough to not eat it?) Sad enough to not shoot it."*

*"Sad, but not too sad to eat it."*

*"Not too sad to eat it."*

*"(If you killed a deer would you be sad?) No, because it tastes good."*

*"Wild animals. You might have to go out in the woods and there might be a bear that can come out and kill you."*

*"My mommy would be scared if I fell out of a tree."*

*"Because you're killing animals. (Is that a good thing or a bad thing?) A bad thing. (Can you all tell me about why it might be bad?) Because if someone really liked deer or animals and your dad or mom killed one, you might be sad. (But you get to eat it.) Yeah, but you'd still be sad."*

*"I would be scared of a snake."*

*"(Raise your hand if you would be scared to be in the woods. So four of you would be scared. Tell me why you would be scared of being in the woods.)"*

*"You could get lost."*

*"I'm concerned about being killed by a snake."*

*"Poison ivy."*

*"I'm scared of animals or plants that could hurt you, and you wouldn't have anyone there to help you, and you'd be supper for something."*

*"(When you went with your BB gun, did you shoot anything?) Yes. (And were you sad or not sad?) I was not sad."*

*"(How about you?) I would be really, really sad. (Would you be sad enough to not kill them or sad enough that you could eat them but you would still be a little sad?) Sad enough that I couldn't kill them."*

### **Family Issues Related to Hunting Participation**

As previously mentioned, one of the reasons for not hunting was directly related to the child's family, either because the family did not have time to hunt or the family worried about the child's safety. However, when asked directly, the children did not feel that they were too young to hunt, further illustrating the general overall interest that the second graders had in

hunting. One child said that his/her grandfather no longer hunts because he believes that there are no more deer to hunt.

*“I never thought about it.”*

*“My grandfather won’t let me go. (Why won’t he let you go?) Because he thinks that I’m too young. (Do you think that you’re too young?) No.”*

*“I don’t know; a lot of the people in my family don’t go hunting very much. (Do any of the people in your family go hunting?) My papa used to go hunting and my daddy used to go, but I don’t know if they’ll go anymore. (If they ever went, do you think they would take you?) If I wanted to go, they probably would.”*

*“My mom doesn’t like going hunting because she likes to see the deer alive and not dead. She doesn’t like animals dying. I like to shoot them, and they taste really good.”*

*“My grandfather used to hunt but he doesn’t hunt anymore. And they live close to the woods. Sometimes they still go but not very much anymore. (How come he doesn’t go any more, what do you think?) I think because there’s no more deer.”*

*“My mom won’t let me go because she thinks that I would get hurt and I’m too young, but my dad would. (So in a few years, do you think that you might want to go hunting?)”*

*“ Yes.”*

*“My papa likes to go hunting. A couple years ago my mom went with my dad. But my grandfather won’t let my mom go hunting anymore. (Ok, how come?) I don’t know.”*

*“(So do you think that in a few years you might go hunting when you’re a little older?)”*

*“Yes.”*

*“Yes.”*

*“I’ll still be hunting.”*

## **Future Recruitment into Hunting**

Second graders had mixed opinions on whether they would one day take their own children hunting. Some children said that they would take their own kids hunting because it would be fun. Others were more willing to take their sons instead of their daughters hunting because they thought the girls would not like it or would think that hunting is “gross.” Interestingly, the child with the mother who was afraid to let the child hunt was also hesitant to possibly take or allow his/her own children to go hunting one day.

*"If I had two boys I would take them hunting, and if I had a girl I would probably take them to the skating rink and drop them off and go hunting. (So you wouldn't take your little girl; how come?) She would probably think it was gross, and the boys would think that it was fun and they would start fighting."*

*"(When you grow up and have children, do you think you'll want to take them hunting?) Yes. (Would you take your girls and your boys hunting?) I would."*

*"Maybe I would take the girls somewhere while the boys went hunting. (Why?) I think the girls would think that it was gross and they would like the animals a lot."*

*"I would take them hunting because I think they would like to do it, and it would be fun. (How about you, when you grow up, do you think you'll take your children hunting?) I don't know."*

*"If I had two sons and one girl I would not take them, not even the two boys.... Well, I'd drop off the girl and I'd take the boys."*

*"(How about you, would you take your children hunting?) Yes."*

*"(You said that your mom is afraid for you, would you take your kids hunting?) I would let them go hunting with their dad."*

*"Yes, I would."*

### **Hunting Shows and Other Motivators**

To gauge whether the media can be used to influence hunting participation, the focus group participants were asked if they watch hunting shows on television. Only two children reported watching hunting shows, and the others did not, for various reasons. The two primary reasons for not watching the shows were a preference for a real-life experience (rather than watching someone hunt on TV) and the fact that they are "gross." Interestingly, several second graders felt that the content of the hunting shows on television was gross but did not feel this way about real-life hunting.

*"I don't watch hunting shows, I like real life!"*

*"I don't like them. (Because?) They're boring. I like it for real."*

*"They're nasty. (In what way?) The blood."*

*"They're really gross."*

When the focus group participants were asked whether other factors would encourage them to go hunting, such as magazines, a TV show, a book, a school presentation, a hunting trip

sponsored by school, church, or Boy/Girl Scouts, the children expressed strong support for these activities, thus indicating that such methods could possibly be used to increase interest and influence young children to hunt.

*“(Could he [representative from the government] make a magazine, a TV show or a book or come to your school and talk?)”*

*“I like this!”*

*“(What if you got a bunch of kids together and took them out to show them?)”*

*“Yes!”*

*“Yes!”*

*“Yes!”*

*“(If a bunch of people from your school or church or Boy Scouts went, would that be fun?)”*

*“Umm hmm.”*

*“Umm hmm.”*

*“(If you went with your girl scouts would you be interested in doing that?)”*

*“Umm hmm.”*

## **Factors Associated with Participation in Fishing**

### **Participation and Interest in Fishing**

Similar to the hunting focus group participants, many of these second graders participated in other outdoor recreation activities, such as riding their bike and playing tetherball. A majority of the children had fished before and continue to fish today. Overall, there were mixed opinions on how much they enjoyed these types of activities in comparison to fishing.

*“About the same.”*

*“The same.”*

*“I like them about the same. (So you like fishing as much as riding your scooter?) Yes.”*

*“(Do you like fishing as much as bike riding, or do you like them about the same?)”*

*"About the same."*

*"(What about you?) I like riding my bike. (Ok, so you like riding your bike more than going fishing?) Umm hmm."*

*"(What about you?) Fishing. (So you like fishing more than you like riding your bike?) I like riding my bike to go fishing at my granddaddy's."*

*"I like them about the same."*

*"I like fishing better."*

*"I like tetherball."*

*"I like both about the same."*

*"(So it sounds like some people like it more, some people like it less, and some people like it the same.)"*

Of the focus group participants who fish, most said that they go fishing in freshwater, including lakes, rivers and ponds. Fishing in lakes was the most common location for fishing among the second graders. However, several of the children expressed an interest in fishing in saltwater as well.

*"(So when most of you go fishing do you go freshwater fishing; would you ever go saltwater fishing?)"*

*"Yeah!"*

*"That's my main fishing."*

*"(Do you like to go fishing in lakes and rivers or do you like fishing in the oceans?)"*

*"I like lakes, rivers, and ponds, and oceans."*

*"Just the lake."*

*"Lakes."*

*"Lakes and oceans."*

*"Lakes."*

*"I like to fish in anything I can. I would fish anywhere I can fish."*

*“I like to throw a net in the ocean for shrimp. (Is that fun?) Yes. (Do you eat them?) I boil them.”*

*“I like saltwater. (Do you ever go to the ocean to fish?) Yes. (Tell me about that.) One time I caught a big fish. (Do you like going fishing in the ocean better or about the same as fishing in a lake?) I like the ocean.”*

*“I fish in my granddaddy’s pond.”*

*“I don’t go fishing.”*

### **Positive Aspects of Fishing**

The second graders were asked why they enjoy fishing. Similar to the hunting focus group participants, the fishing focus group participants mentioned positive aspects of fishing that reflected tangible aspects that the children could directly relate to or had prior experience with. For example, the focus group participants said that they enjoyed fishing mostly because they could eat the fish that they caught. Also, the act of catching the fish, especially big fish, was especially appealing to second graders. In addition, one child liked catching fish and being outdoors, while another child enjoyed being on a speedboat.

*“You get to eat them afterwards!”*

*“You get to catch a big one.”*

*“It’s quiet, and you might get to catch a big fish. (What else?) You can eat them.”*

*“(What about you?) I get to go swimming and sometimes I get to go get turtles and I get to take little rocks and throw them at turtles. I like to be around my brothers and I wrestle with one of them and play ball with the other. (Do any of your brothers fish?) Yes, Jack likes to go every time he gets a chance and he always says, ‘Let’s go now; let’s go right now!’”*

*“(How about you; what do you like best about fishing?) You get to eat them afterwards.”*

*“I like to get on the speedboat to catch a fish.”*

*“You get to catch fresh fish and you get to eat them.”*

*“I just like to catch them and throw them back.”*

Many of the focus group participants said that they like the taste of fish, which reinforces to younger children the importance of catching a fish. Catfish was an especially popular fish of choice for the second graders, both to catch and to eat. One child said that catfish is served in the school cafeteria, and since this type of fish is something that is familiar to the child, it reinforces

the enjoyment of catching one and being able to eat it. As with hunting, children strongly felt that eating the fish (or meat) was an important factor that influenced their enjoyment of the activity.

*"(Do you like to eat the fish because you're hungry or because they taste good?)"*

*"I like them because they taste good."*

*"I don't like the catfish they serve in our cafeteria; they taste like sand."*

*"(So it sounds like you all like to eat fish because they taste good and not just because you're hungry.)"*

*"I eat them because I'm hungry too."*

*"My cousin loves catfish."*

*"(What kinds of fish do you like to eat?)"*

*"Catfish." [Five children responded with catfish.]*

*"(Do you like to catch them more or eat them?) Eat them. (So you would eat them even if your mother or father or sister or brother caught them?) Yes."*

*"I want to catch them!"*

*"I like crappie, flounder, bass, and I like them fried. (What's better, if you catch them and bring them home, or your brother catching them and bringing them home?) As long as I get to eat them."*

*"I just like to catch them."*

*"I like to eat them when my dad catches them."*

### **Family Issues Related to Fishing**

This focus group went into a more detailed discussion about being initiated into fishing. All of the children said that it was their family that generated their interest in fishing, and that typically they go fishing with family members or friends. In general, the male family members (father, brother, grandfather, etc.) taught the second graders how to fish, while female family members were more likely to have accompanied the child fishing after he/she had already learned. Another second grader said that his/her neighbor showed him/her how to fish. Overall, the children were taught how to fish by their male family members or someone close to them (neighbor).

*“My brother taught me how to fish. (Tell me about that.) We went out on a boat. (Was your mom or dad there?) My stepdad was. (Did your stepdad show you how to fish?) Yes.”*

*“My grandfather [taught me] when I was four years old. We went on his speedboat. (Tell me about that day.) It was fast. (Did he show you how to put bait on or did he show you how to cast your rod?) He did the bait because I put the hook into my finger once.”*

*“My granddad [taught me how to fish]. He took me out to his lake.”*

*“The first time that I went fishing my brothers weren’t there. My next-door neighbor taught me how to put the bait on.”*

*“My dad [taught me how to fish]. (Do you remember how long ago it was? How old were you?) Three and a half. (Do you remember it?) I remember going in the lake and we caught two or three fish and my dad caught a fish.”*

*“We got three lessons. (Was that around here?) It was down in Panama City. (So it was near the ocean, did you have fun?) Yes. (Who were you with?) I was with my family. (Did your mom go too?) My mom, my dad, my brother, and my grandpa.”*

*“My dad [taught me how to fish].”*

*“My dad [taught me how to fish]. (Do you remember how old you were?) When I was five years old. (Do you remember that day?) We went to a pond, and he just said, “Here’s a pole, throw it out and you’ll catch some fish,” and I did. (Did he show you how to throw it out?) No.”*

*“(You said that you’ve only been fishing once, tell me about that day.) My dad took me to a center. (Was it a day where a lot of kids were fishing?) Just me. (Just you, ok. Was it a lake or a pond?) A lake.”*

*“(Do you still fish with the people that taught you how to fish or do you go with other people?)”*

*“I go with friends.”*

*“(And who do you go fishing with?) My grandpa and my grandma.”*

*“(And who do you fish with?) My cousins, my uncles, everybody.”*

*“(Who do you fish with?) My granddad and my grandma. (Did you fish with your mom and dad?) Once.”*

*“I go fishing with my granddaddy and my aunts, my mom, my dad, and my brothers.”*

*"I fish with my dad, my sisters, my uncle, and my grandpa."*

## **Barriers to Fishing Participation**

Focus group participants gave only a few reasons as to what might prevent them from going fishing, and they were similar to reasons for not hunting. Most second graders said that nothing would prevent them from going fishing. The other children in the focus group said that the weather, especially rain, would keep them away. One second grader said that his parents would prevent him from fishing so that he could do household chores. In addition, being involved in other sports was a reason for not fishing.

*"No, nothing stops me from going fishing."*

*"Me either."*

*"Nothing."*

*"(So if you wanted to go fishing today you would go?)"*

*"Yes [four children answered yes.]"*

*"Rain stops me from going fishing because the water gets really rough and the fish won't come."*

*"Rain."*

*"My parents stop me from fishing. (Tell me about that.) Sometimes they won't let me go. (Why?) I don't know. They say I have to clean my room and eat my dinner and brush my teeth and go to bed."*

*"Nothing stops me because my parents will let me go anytime I want."*

*"Other sports. (Like what?) Football, baseball, basketball, soccer; every type of ball game."*

## **Negative Aspects of Fishing**

Second graders gave several reasons why they don't like fishing. However, it is also important to note that several participants said that they liked *everything* about fishing. For those children who did not like fishing, baiting the fish, the smell of the fish, catching small fish and getting "whacked" by the fish's tail were the reasons that were given to explain their attitude. Similar to the second grade hunting focus group, the fishing focus group participants said that the reasons they don't like to fish are related to direct, tangible sensory perceptions, including smell and touch.

*"I don't like taking them home because they stink on the way home."*

*"I don't like it when we have to put the worms on the hooks."*

*"I don't like it when I get little fish."*

*"I like everything."*

*"I don't like getting whacked by the fish's tail."*

*"I like everything."*

*"I like everything."*

### **Family Issues Related to Not Fishing**

As with factors related to hunting participation, factors related to the family seemed to heavily influence whether or not a child participated in fishing. If the child's family fishes, then the child is probably going to have a higher level of interest and participation in fishing. Furthermore, the family did not seem to prevent the children from fishing as much as it prevented them from hunting. Interestingly, the second graders said that their family did not have concerns about safety while fishing, in contrast to the concern about safety while hunting, even though there is always a danger of drowning while fishing. The parents did not seem to feel drowning was a threat, compared to the chance of being hurt while hunting. As previously mentioned, the focus group participants generally fished with male family members, and many said that their mothers do not fish. However, even though their mothers did not fish, the children did not seem to be deterred from fishing.

*"(That's a lot of boys you told me about, none of you go fishing with girls?)"*

*"My mom sometimes goes fishing."*

*"My mom never goes fishing."*

*"My mom never goes fishing because my parents are divorced."*

*"My mom doesn't like fish."*

*"(Does your mom like to fish?) She doesn't like to chop off their heads."*

*"My mom doesn't like to go fishing because she doesn't like to pick up the fish."*

## **Future Recruitment into Fishing**

When asked whether or not they would one day take their own kids fishing, almost all of the focus group participants said that they would. However, when the boys were asked if they would likely take their wives fishing, most of them said they would not. Interestingly, as seen in the previous section, many of the second graders said that their mothers did not fish, which might influence their attitude of not wanting to take their own wives fishing.

*“(So when you grow up, are you going to take your children fishing?) Probably not. (Why not?) Because I’ll have work to do.”*

*“I would do it to get out and do things.”*

*“(So now the boys, when you grow up and have children, are you going to bring your wives?)”*

*“Yes.” [two children answered “yes.”]*

*“No.” [four children answered “no.”]*

*“I would take my wife fishing to show her how good me and my son are.”*

*“(Ok, what about you?) I know my girlfriend likes fishing. (So you’re going to take her fishing?) Yes.”*

*“I don’t know.”*

*“No, I’m not going to take my wife fishing.”*

*“(Are you’re going to take your kids fishing?)”*

*“Yes.”*

*“Yes.”*

*“Yes.”*

*”Yes.”*

*“(How come?)”*

*“Because I think they would have more fun than just sitting in the house.”*

*“(So raise your hand if you would take your kids fishing. So almost all of you.)”*

The second graders had mixed opinions about whom they would rather take on a fishing trip (friends or parents). The focus group participants were evenly split between their preference for fishing with parents or with friends. In fact, several second graders said that they would go fishing with both. Overall, the preferred person to go fishing with was a male family member, especially the child's father or grandfather. This same preference may be related to whom the child first learned to fish with, as the most common family members with whom they learned to fish were also father and grandfather. The second graders felt most comfortable fishing with people whom they know very well.

*"(So is it better to take your parents fishing or go with your friends?)"*

*"Parents."*

*"Parents."*

*"Parents."*

*"Both."*

*"Both."*

*"Friends."*

*"Both."*

*"(Does anyone not want to go fishing with your parents? Ok, so you wouldn't want to go fishing with your mom or your dad?) I would go with my dad, but I wouldn't go with my mom."*

*"(Whom would you rather go fishing with?)"*

*"My favorite person is my dad."*

*"(Who is your favorite person to go fishing with?) My cousin."*

*"My dad and my uncle."*

*"My dad and my grandpa."*

*"My dad and my uncle."*

*"If I had to pick a person to go fishing with, I would pick my dad and my grandpa."*

*"My granddaddy because he's a very good fisher."*

*"My cousins and my dad."*

*"My stepdad."*

### **Motivators for Fishing**

The focus group participants gave various responses when asked to comment on activities that would motivate them to fish more often. About half of the focus group participants said that they would be interested in attending a fishing event for kids, either with their parents, friends or both. One second grader expressed interest in events that have a competition and prizes.

*"(Would you go to an event that has a bunch of kids going fishing on a Saturday, or would you like to go with your friends by yourself or with your parents?)"*

*"I would like to go with my friends and my dad."*

*"I would like a competition and some trophies."*

*"(So raise your hand if you would like to go where a bunch of kids are at a fishing event. So we've got a few of you, about half. So of the people who raised their hands, would you like to go with a bunch of kids fishing at an event, or would you rather go with your friends and with your mom or your dad?)"*

*"I would like both."*

*"Both."*

*"About the same."*

Several second graders said that they would go fishing more if they had access to the equipment, such as nets and fishing poles. When prompted, one focus group participant said that he/she has a friend who would go fishing, if the friend had a pole. Another important motivator expressed by the focus group participants to encourage fishing participation was the involvement of the parents. One second grader said that he/she would like a place to go fishing that is closer to home. Even though a variety of reasons were raised, all of them related in some way to ease of participation – things that would make it easier to fish (equipment, places to go, people to go with).

*"(What are some things that those people can do to make it better?)"*

*"They can take them when they want to go. (Would you want to go with someone else who knows how to fish or with your parents who know how to fish?) Parents. (Ok, so they should do more to help encourage parents to go fishing?) He could teach my older sister to learn how to fish. (How could he teach your older sister to learn how to fish?) She would probably stay home. (So no matter what someone would do, she probably wouldn't go?) Yes. (What else?) They could get my dad out of the Navy. (Is your dad gone a lot?) Yes. (So if your dad were around a lot, you would go?) Yes."*

*“(What could people do for you or some of your friends to make fishing better?) They can make a lake closer to me. My granddaddy lives far away, so it is not that easy to get there. (So you can’t go because it’s too far away?) Yes.”*

*“(What about you?) They could give us a free net. (So you don’t have one?) I don’t have one, but my dad does.”*

*“(What about you, what could he do to make your friends go fishing more?) Give me a net because I don’t have one, and that’s it.”*

*“(What about you? Is there anything they could do to make fishing easier or make people want to go fishing more?) They could give people fishing poles because some people don’t have fishing poles.”*

*“(Raise your hand if your friends have fishing poles, those that go fishing? Ok, so most of you raised your hand. Do you have any friends that want to go fishing but don’t because they don’t have a fishing pole?) I do. My friend Pat who moved to Atlanta.”*

## Chapter 2: Fifth Graders' Attitudes toward and Participation in Hunting and Fishing

### Factors Associated with Participation in Hunting

#### Participation and Interest in Hunting

None of the focus group participants had been hunting before, and a majority of the participants did not express a strong interest in going hunting. One focus group participant said that he usually accompanies his dad when he hunts, but does not hunt himself. This focus group was markedly different from the second grader focus group, as the younger children expressed much more enthusiasm for going hunting. Only one of the fifth graders said that he might like to try hunting because it would be a new experience. This same fifth grader also expressed an interest in taking a hunter safety course. However, despite the low level of activity and interest in hunting, all of the children enjoyed other outdoor activities, including camping, fishing, and hiking.

*"I would probably like to do it because I have never had anyone in my family who hunts and I have never been hunting. It would be a new thing. (Do you have any friends who go hunting?) Yeah, I know a couple of guys that do it. (Is that something that a kid your age would do with their dad, and if their dad doesn't hunt, they don't do it?) Yeah. (So you would be interested in doing it, if you could go to a hunter safety course?) Yeah."*

*"I like to go camping, and usually I go fishing on camping trips. I have never been hunting, and I have gone bird watching with my Scout group, it was pretty fun. I like camping more. (Of all the activities that you said you did, you said you bird watched, camped, fished - which one did you like the best?) I probably like the camping the best."*

*"(Do you like to hunt?) Never done it. (Do you like to bird watch?) Never done it. (How about hiking?) Yes. (What do you like to do when you go outside?) I like to go camping. We have a trailer, so sometimes I pitch a tent and sleep in there. Sometimes we'll go on a hike. (So you like camping and kayaking, but you have never been hunting?) Yeah, [I've] never been hunting."*

*"I like to go camping, fishing, and I don't bird watch. Scouts don't bird watch. (What do you like to do in the outdoors?) I don't know really. Oh yeah, I just went through hunting safety. First they taught us some stuff that we needed to know that was going to be on the test. I don't remember all of the stuff on the test. There were two people, and one of them had an accent, so he was hard to hear. I went in the group with the lady, and she went really slowly, and I passed the test. A week later we went to the range and we used the field day guide, and we went through a course, and we got to shoot clay pigeons. (Why did you decide to take the hunter education safety course?) So I could go hunting with my dad. I wanted to do it and my dad had to sign it. (Who originally had the idea?) My dad. (And then you took it. Was there any lag time between? Like was it a year or did he say, 'Let's do it now?') It wasn't very long. (So you can go hunting in the fall?) I don't think I am going to go hunting. (So you are just going to accompany him?) That's*

*what I usually do. (Is that required in Washington, that before you go hunting, you have to take a hunter safety course?) Yes, if you are going to shoot.”*

Two of the focus group participants had taken a hunter safety course. Both fifth graders enjoyed the experience. One participant described how the course simulated real life hunting experiences, which was part of the reason for his enjoyment.

*“I liked it, they give you stuff like books, and you have to identify animals on the field course. You walk through the woods and they set up dummy animals, like birds, bear, elk and wolf, then you go through and get your hunter’s tag and you have to tag the animal after you get it. Then you go up there and say, “bang,” and then the animal would die and you have to tell what you do after you kill it. After that, we did shotgun. There was a shotgun, musket and rifle. We did shotgun and we got to shoot clay pigeons, but we didn’t have to. They just wanted to see how good our accuracy was and what we would do while we were handling a gun. And then the talking part we did at Cascade Range, near where we live. We would go to a building every day, and then we did the talking and they handed out books and we talked about safety and what colors you see in the wilderness and what colors are mostly good. Like hunters use orange. (Did you like it?) Yeah. (Was it pretty fun?) Yeah. (Was there anything that you didn’t like about it?) Not really. (How many days was it?) Almost for an entire week. (Did you have to go every night?) Yeah that was part of the reason I went, and it was pretty long, and it ended at 11 p.m. and started at 6 p.m. (Every night?) Yeah.”*

## **Perceptions of Hunting**

When the fifth graders were asked their opinion on whether other fifth graders in their school class hunt, the overall opinion was that there is a diversity of participation and interest. The children seemed to have a neutral attitude toward how “cool” hunting is; it is not an activity that is viewed as very “cool” or very “uncool.” Hunting appears to be an activity in which some kids participate, regardless of whether a majority of other kids participate or whether the activity is viewed as a “popular” activity.

*“(So do you think if we did a survey in your classroom, we would kind of find the same thing where some kids go hunting and other kids want to go and other kids do not?)”*

*“Probably.”*

*“Yeah.”*

*“I have never really thought about hunting, so it would probably be a good experience. If you put a survey out in the class, you would probably get the same thing because I have heard that a lot of kids go hunting but they don’t go hunting for bears or anything like that. They just hunt for foxes. I know some kids who are against it because they think it is just plain gross or mean. I do know some kids who think it is cool because they just*

*like it and their dads do it with them all of the time and they don't really care. And some kids just do it for fun."*

Parents of the focus group participants had a similar, neutral attitude towards hunting. Only one parent expressed negative feelings toward guns. However, despite this attitude, this parent said that he would not prevent his child from hunting or taking a hunter education course if the child showed an interest.

*"It's the same thing. You shoot something and then you have to bring it back immediately. That was enough for me. As the boys were saying, it's just the actual cleaning process. We hadn't had a big talk about it one way or the other because I didn't think that they had been exposed. As my wife said, they would have been exposed in Wisconsin where their grandpa was. They certainly would be there because he is an avid hunter. If they had shown an interest, we would have shown them the process. I would have deferred it to him if we were out in that area. So that's pretty much where I stay. We weren't against it."*

*"Well, I will start with a little bit of background: I am not a gun person. We never let our son play with water pistols. I am along with your son, I think there is a difference if you are raised to the effect that you are using a gun to provide meat on the table and then the gun is locked away. There are a lot of guns out there used for violence, and there is a difference. There is a mentality difference. Maybe if they did a survey about people who use guns and who don't. (So from the parent's perspective, you understand that some people try to make a connection but there is not a relationship. Now, Dad, would you have a problem if your son wanted to take a hunter safety course?) No. I took one as a kid."*

### **Positive Aspects of Hunting**

Although this focus group did not engage in a detailed discussion about specific, positive aspects of hunting, several positive factors were mentioned in related discussions. Both parents and children felt that hunting has a positive impact on the environment by helping to manage animal populations. However, it is important to note that while hunting was generally viewed as having positive impacts on the environment, the focus group participants stated that hunting could also have a negative impact if it is done too much. One parent thought of hunting as more of a social or recreational activity rather than an environmental practice.

*"(Mom's and Dad's and you guys at the table, when you hear about the environment, do you think about hunting as being a part of that, and, if not, how come?)"*

*"I think that in our family back in Wisconsin, hunting is viewed as more of a recreational activity, and there are things that go alongside of that recreation. So, if you're going to do it, it probably has something to do with your family and friends. I don't necessarily think of it as environmental; I usually think about it more as a social outing. I think that even if they didn't get anything accomplished but just spent a week or two out there with*

*family and friends, in that aspect, I don't think of it as environmental but more recreational."*

*"(Does hunting help the environment or hurt the environment?)"*

*"It helps it."*

*"I think that it actually kind of helps."*

*"(Ok, talk to me about hunting being environmental and helping the environment.)"*

*"It keeps down the animal population so there won't be bears and everything walking around in your neighborhood."*

*"It helps keep the animal population even, since they only have it at certain times of the year."*

*"(Is hunting good for the environment or not good for the environment?) I'd have to say both because it depends on killing a female because it might lower the population because she might have babies or something, or if you kill a male you're only killing one so it's not like you're killing a whole bunch."*

*"(Is hunting good for the environment or not good for the environment?) It can be both because if you hunt too much it can be like the beaver where it got near extinction, but if you hunt like a limit and not a ton of people are going out there, it can be controlled so it will be ok."*

*"(Is hunting good for the environment?) It can be both. If you see a bear near a den you can kill it and leave it there because maybe the bears will eat the meat but you can only do it once. But the bad part is if they hunt too much, then it will keep just lowering the population."*

## **Barriers to Hunting Participation**

### **Negative Aspects of Hunting**

A majority of focus group participants did not want to hunt because they did not want to kill animals. Another major reason participants did not want to hunt was their dislike of having to clean the animals. In addition, the fifth graders seemed to have the impression that people hunt only for sport and because of this, they viewed hunting as killing animals simply for fun, and, therefore, they did not understand why any person would want to do that. One participant questioned why a hunter would take more than one animal. Another participant expressed a general dislike for killing animals but felt less negative towards hunting if hunters actually eat the meat.

*"I am not really interested. (How come?) I just don't see why people want to go out and shoot things."*

*"For some people it's just a sport, and other people don't like it because they don't like cleaning the animal. When you're cleaning, it's sort of like cleaning a big hairy fish."*

*"I don't like hunting just because I don't like killing animals. The other thing is even when I fish, I never clean it out. I even hate seeing it cleaned out. An animal like an elk or deer, I would really hate to see it. I just don't like seeing it, and I would never do it."*

*"I don't really like killing animals unless you are going to eat them, because then you have a purpose. But if you don't, then there is no reason to."*

*"When I think about hunting, even if you are a hunter, shouldn't you only kill one and one other small animal because one male elk will probably support a family of four for one meal? If you killed two male elks and another animal, what are you going to do with the other one?"*

### **Family Issues Related to Hunting Participation**

Only two of the focus group participants had parents who hunt. Both of these fifth graders also said that they grew up with guns in the house.

*"(Did you grow up with guns in your house?)"*

*"No."*

*"We never had guns in our house."*

*"No."*

*"(But you all did?" [referring to the youth with hunting parents])*

*"BB guns."*

*"We had our own BB guns, and my dad had guns. (Does your granddad hunt?) Uh, sort of. (Where did your dad learn how to hunt?) His friend and his grandpa. Our grandpa doesn't hunt very much; he just goes target shooting. (Your dad learned from his grandpa?) Yes."*

Although parents expressed a neutral attitude towards hunting in that they would not prevent their child from hunting, a majority of the parents acknowledged that their children (the focus group participants) had not grown up around hunting, which is likely a factor in their low interest in going hunting. One parent stated that guns are not allowed in his house, and this attitude has been instilled in the children. Fear of injury is a real concern, especially for parents

of young children. One parent described her involvement with hunting accident victims and felt that safety and maturity are important factors in the decision to allow children to hunt.

*“I never grew up around hunting at all. My father never went fishing. He enjoyed the symphony and museums. (Are you from this area originally?) No, I am from Michigan originally, outside of the Detroit area. I was never really exposed to that. I went to Girl Scouts and enjoyed the camping and hiking, so I do enjoy that. The boys have been active in Scouts. We enjoy nature and outdoor camping and fishing. My husband likes fishing. That’s what we have done. As far as guns in the home, I will not allow guns in the home. So we have instilled that in the boys. I am not adverse to it; my father-in-law does it.”*

*“(Would you allow them to take a hunter safety course like the other ones we were describing?) I would wait until they were older, that is just my personal opinion. Like 15 or 16, when they were a little more responsible, and I wouldn’t want them to hold a gun until they were either with an adult or 15 or 16. I would wait until they were older. I think the education classes are important; I also think that they need to be older. I am not sure if there is a law about that, about when you can legally go out and have a gun and go hunting. (You have to be accompanied by an adult.) I have done a lot of work with handicapped people, and I have seen some mistakes [and] accidental shootings, and I have worked with those people in rehabilitation, so I have seen the other end of it. That is kind of frightening with these young teenagers that are trying to get back on their feet and get on with their lives after accidental hunting incidents. So that kind of scared me somewhat. I think maturity is important, education is important. I think that needs to be taken into account. You also have to have a passion for it as well. I don’t think our children have that passion for it.”*

## **Future Recruitment into Hunting**

Parents of the focus group participants were invited to discuss different ways in which children could learn about hunting outside of the family. Overall, parents felt that schools probably would not be very receptive to teaching children about hunting because of the general fear of having guns in schools. One parent felt that hunting should be taught through clubs like Boy or Girl Scouts rather than at school.

*“I am a teacher. I think— schools are so anti-guns nowadays that even if it was sponsored by the state, it has to be some sort of issue brought in through Boy Scouts and things like that. You know the press now, all across the country, with school violence that has been going on.”*

*“(Do people see those as related though? Do you guys know what we are talking about here? We are talking about guns and hunting and we are talking about something your granddad did and something that your dad and his granddad did and now there is this school violence thing and it has to do with guns, but are those things related or are they*

*not related? It sounds like a long time ago your dad might not have thought about it but now we have to think about those kinds of things.)”*

*“I think it’s a sign of the times. I know there are two different issues in the way they are connected. It’s just that everybody is so fearful right now, especially with guns in schools. It has been shown that the violence have been by irresponsible youths. And in hunting it seems to be that educational courses aren’t involved in parent supervision. I think in the public’s mind, when you think of guns, a lot of red flags go up. (Do people see those as related?) I don’t. I think the issues of guns and violence and hunting are two different entities in itself. I am totally against violence and that sort of thing, but I am not against the kids going out with the knowledge that they can handle it with supervision. Going out and handling a gun and shooting an animal and going through the whole process.”*

*“I have participated with Boy Scouts, and that is how I found out about hunter education. The actual guy that ran the course was with the Boy Scouts. That is how we knew about it. I would like to see more courses offered out there [on] the salmon or going into the woods and all the variety of things out there, there should be education courses for the kids. However, the best way to do it, I don’t know. Probably the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts would probably be a good idea.”*

*“I think Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts are a good way to bring in this sort of issue, and let’s not leave out the girls. I’m sure when she gets old enough to handle a rifle, her dad can teach her. I would never have gone for the cleaning part myself.”*

Both parents and children could not remember seeing advertisements for hunter safety classes and seemed to have limited knowledge on how to enroll in a class. The fifth graders said that they had never seen flyers at their school advertising hunter safety classes. When asked about the role of the state fish and wildlife agency, one parent said that he had heard about some of the environmental training programs, but had never seen hunting being encouraged as an activity in which school children could participate.

*“(Before you came here and heard them talk about taking a hunter safety course, were you aware that there was a hunter safety course?) I assumed that there still were; there were when I was a kid.”*

*“(Are they well advertised?)”*

*“I never heard about them before.”*

*“You have to go there.”*

*“I don’t think they are. When I was a kid, I did it through Future Farmers of America summer camp.”*

*“I think it is first come, first served.”*

*“It’s knowing someone who knows someone who is actually putting it on.”*

*“They do it for free, and it is first come, first served. (Do they turn people away?) Yeah.”*

*“(How about the state fish and wildlife agencies or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, do they have a role? Should they have a role?)”*

*“I’ve never heard about them. You do hear a lot about different types of environmental studies. (Like Project Wild.) Right, like Project Wild, I’ve heard about that and Project Learning Tree. They do a lot of teacher training during the week, and they do the lessons for our students. But hunting, I’ve never seen hunting advertised as kind of an after school activity or anything like that.”*

Both parents and children had a few ideas about hunting promotion. One fifth grader said that a video would be the best way for youth to receive more information about hunting. Parents were more supportive of free courses or courses with minimal fees, because they felt that more people would be drawn in if they did not have to pay. Another suggestion was to have hunting promoted through community programs, so that schools would not have to be directly involved.

*“(You said that you hadn’t really thought about hunting before tonight. What would be the best way to get you information about hunting? Would it be a video or a pamphlet or a friend talking to you? What do you think would be something they could do?)”*

*“A video probably.”*

*“At home we have TLC, The Learning Community; they have an extended school. The community sponsors it, but the flyers go to the schools. That would be another way to be more open without going directly through schools. If there are courses offered and it’s sponsored by someone from wildlife, then you would probably get people you trust to get on that educational avenue there and it would be sponsored directly by the schools. Of course you have that gun issue there which we’re in the midst of now. Yet you would still be reaching children who are interested in having that opportunity.”*

*“I don’t know about fees either. The program that my boys took was free, so I think that’s why they pulled in so many people; it is a free course offered by them so you can educate your child or educate yourself. I think that even if the fees were minimal, then you could have more courses available; then you would have more kids go if you knew how to get involved and what exactly was available.”*

*“(Do you think you would take your son if it was available and it was kind of just out there if they contacted you, or if the Department of Fish and Wildlife were offering hunter education courses, do you think you might attend one?) Oh yes, I would have him attend one, and I would attend one too.”*

Overall, parents felt most comfortable allowing their children to hunt only with someone that they know and trust. Even if the person were a conservation officer, such as from the state fish and wildlife agency, the parents in this focus group said that they would still want to be present.

*“(Who would you trust the most for him [your son] to go with?) My brother. (How about if it were a conservation officer from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife?) I would let him go, but I would like to be there. (Some of the state agencies are setting up programs called mentoring programs, and they are pairing up youth with people who do hunt. Talk to me about your attitudes on that.) First of all, I would want some background on the mentor. I don’t let my kid do anything with people unless I know them and trust them. (So really trust would come down to a relative or somebody from the state?) Yeah, relatives are no question. I haven’t hunted in twenty-something years and they do, so I would trust them. Somebody from the conservation agency I would want to meet and I would probably want to be in the background to see what they were teaching them.”*

*“I’m an upstate New Yorker, and that is where all of my family is, north of Syracuse. I would take him to my brother. (And you would tell him that your son had expressed an interest?) I would probably, if available, take him to a hunter safety course out here and then take him to New York. My brother hunts out of his back door; he lives in the country, and there are deer in the meadows.”*

*“Even mentor programs are a good idea. But still, I think in today’s world I think that most parents, unless it is someone they know, are probably not going to let their kids go.”*

## **Factors Associated with Participation in Fishing**

### **Participation Levels and Interest in Fishing**

Almost all of the fifth graders in this focus group had gone fishing before and said that they enjoy fishing. Only two participants said that they don’t fish. When asked why they don’t fish, one child said that her mother is a vegetarian, and the other child was concerned about depleting the fish population. The children said that fishing is generally an activity that they do in conjunction with other activities, such as camping or vacationing with family.

*“The last time I went fishing was with my aunt and my uncle, and they invited me and I stayed over at their house and I caught two 14-inch fish.”*

*“I don’t like fishing. (How come?) Because I like to keep the animals and I think that fishing depletes the fish population.”*

*“I do like to go fishing, but I don’t like to keep them, so I release them. I do go camping a lot, and I like the outdoors, so I go and I camp out and stuff.”*

*“I love to go fishing. The last time I went fishing was with my aunt and one of her friends at Green River, and I catch the fish, but I don’t like the way they taste so I just throw them back.”*

*“I don’t go fishing (Any reason?) Because my mom’s a vegetarian.”*

*“I go fishing. (A lot or a little?) A lot, I live pretty close to the lake.”*

*“I like going fishing. The only thing that I really don’t like about going fishing is that usually if I catch a big fish, we keep it, and then I have to eat it, and I don’t like eating fish because I think it smells. The small fish I usually put back.”*

*“(When you go fishing, do you go fishing or do you go camping and then fishing? Is fishing part of your other activities? Or is it an activity by itself?)”*

*“I do it along with camping.”*

*“(So when you go fishing, do you go fishing to fish, or are you doing something else and you kind of fish while you’re doing something else?) Well, the last time I went was with my aunt and uncle, and they invited me to come up there and go fishing for the weekend. (So it was part of the trip?) Yes.”*

*“(How about you all? Do you go fishing to fish or are you out camping and doing other stuff?)”*

*“I usually go [fishing] on vacation. The summer time is probably the best time to go fishing, like at five in the morning, because that’s when all the fish are out for breakfast. Sometimes if I’m bored I’ll ask if I can go out and go fishing.”*

*“We have trips that we take specifically to go fishing, and then we have vacations that we take where we also include fishing as part of the trip.”*

All of the focus group participants who fish had fished in freshwater, but not all had fished in saltwater. Two of the youth were very interested in going saltwater fishing because they had heard that bigger fish could be caught.

*“Both. (You like both. Do you like any one better than the other?) Salt, I like salt because you can catch bigger fish in the saltwater than in the lakes and rivers.”*

*“I don’t really go to a lot of saltwater areas, so I like the lakes.”*

*“I don’t really know what I like better because I’ve never been saltwater fishing. (So all of you have been in lakes and rivers and streams and stuff like that. Do you think that you would like to go saltwater fishing? When you hear about it, is that something that*

*sounds like a good idea?) Yeah, I like to because I've heard you can catch bigger fish and different fish, so that's what I want."*

*"I like both except I like freshwater better because I have a boat and when I go to saltwater I go in a canoe, and I don't like it because the hooks always get caught."*

*"Lakes, I've never been fishing on the Pacific Ocean or in rivers or anything."*

*"(How about you guys on that end?) I like going fishing in lakes better than I do rivers or streams. (How come?) Because there are usually more fish. In the lake a lot of times it's just easier to fish because you don't get your line snagged as much."*

*"(And you like going in the ocean because you can catch more and bigger fish?) Yes, you can catch bigger fish."*

*"I like to fish in lakes because when you fish in rivers your line usually goes down, and I've lost a whole bunch of hooks there."*

When asked to rate fishing on a scale of one to ten, particularly compared to the other activities in which they participate, the fifth graders' responses ranged between three and ten. The fifth graders participated in a variety of other activities, including team sports such as basketball, individual sports like biking, and playing video games.

*"(How about other things? What do kids your age do all the time?)"*

*"Play video games."*

*"Yeah."*

*"Play basketball."*

*"Be on the trampoline."*

*"Swimming."*

*"I like biking."*

*"Camping."*

*"(Where does fishing fall in relation to those activities? If you had to rate it on a scale of one to ten compared with all those other activities, and ten was the best thing that you do and one was not the best thing, where does fishing fall for you?)"*

*"Three."*

*"A ten because I never really do anything."*

*“Seven because there’s other stuff that I like better, but I like to go fishing too.”*

*“(How about for you?) I would say about a six and a half.”*

*“(Where does fishing fall for you?)”*

*“Ten, yeah, I would give it a ten, it’s cool.”*

*“(What would you give it?)”*

*“Five.”*

### **Positive Aspects of Fishing**

The fifth graders provided a variety of answers when asked to name the best things about fishing; however, many of the responses were action-oriented. The positive aspects included the act of casting, reeling the fish in, eating the fish and feeling a tug on the line.

*“Casting the line out.”*

*“Feeling the excitement of having a tug.”*

*“Eating.”*

*“I just like eating.”*

*“I like seeing how big the fish is.”*

*“I like it when I’m reeling it in.”*

### **Family Issues Related to Fishing**

Most of the focus group participants said that they usually go fishing with a male family member or other family relatives. The fifth graders most commonly fished with their dads, brothers or grandfathers, although one fifth grader said that his aunt fished a lot. One youth remembered fishing for the first time during preschool, but could not recall specific details about the trip.

*“I probably first went fishing with my uncle and aunt because they are real big fishers and they have their own fishing rod. At a lake where we go fishing and camping and stuff, there’s a big dock, and all the kids go there.”*

*“(How was it that you got started?) Dad, or my granddad. (Tell me about what you remember about the first time that you went fishing.) I can’t remember. (How about the*

*second time?) I've gone fishing a lot. (So you think your dad or your granddad got you started fishing.) Ask my dad. (What are your earliest memories about going fishing?) Last year, last spring break."*

*"(Dad, how did he start fishing?) I think it was a scout group. They went to a pond where they could catch fish easy. But then, he lost interest because other places you can't catch them as fast. (How old was he when he first went?) He was about seven."*

*"I fish with my brother."*

*"I just remembered my first fishing trip. It was in pre-school, and we were on a little field trip. (At school?) Yes, and there was this little pool filled with fish so we kind of tugged and you would get a bite as soon as you put it in because there was a million fish in there. That was the same first time that I felt a fish's heart. (Do you still fish with your uncle and aunt?) Yes, on the last fishing trip I just went on about a few weeks ago, I went with my aunt and uncle."*

*"(Do you fish mostly with your family or with Scouts now?) I fish with my brother mostly."*

## **Barriers to Fishing Participation**

### **Negative Aspects of Fishing**

The fifth graders provided a variety of opinions when asked to name the worst thing about fishing. For example, trying to reel in a difficult fish was not an enjoyable aspect of fishing. Several children's responses were related to what must be done with the fish once it is caught, including killing it and having to touch it. The fifth graders seemed to enjoy the act of fishing more so than dealing with the fish after it has been caught. As with the second graders, the fifth graders thought that catching a fish contributed significantly to the enjoyment of fishing. Otherwise, the children felt that fishing was a boring activity.

*"If you're going to eat that fish, they take the skin off, [and] watching all the blood is bad."*

*"(What is the worst thing about fishing?)"*

*"Getting pulled into the lake."*

*"When a fish is hard to reel in and having to let my dad or granddad take over. Breaking your pole. Yesterday I got a brand new pole and I caught a fish and it broke my pole."*

*"(What is the worst thing about fishing for you?) When I hit them on the head. (So you hit them on the head?) No, but I've seen people do it."*

*“(What is the worst thing about fishing to you?) I don’t like having to pick up the fish. I don’t like feeling it.”*

*“(What is the worst thing about fishing to you?)”*

*“Killing it to take out its insides.”*

*“I kind of think that fishing is boring until you get the tug and the excitement of them and stuff like that. You think that you’ve got a big fish, and then it turns out to be this little puny fish.”*

*“(But it’s fun when you catch the fish right?)”*

*“Umm hmm, and then you throw it back in the lake.”*

*“(But it’s kind of boring at first huh?)”*

*“Yeah, because you just sit there and eat chips.”*

## **Future Recruitment into Fishing**

When asked if they would one day take their own kids fishing, the focus group participants were reasonably receptive towards this idea. One of the girls in the group said that she considers fishing a “boy” activity and seemed to be hesitant about taking her children fishing, even though she fishes. The boys said that they would probably take their own children fishing even if they didn’t want to go. This was an interesting comment, suggesting that fishing was a mandatory family activity at some point in their life even if they did not want to go fishing.

*“I kind of consider it as a boy activity. (But you go fishing.) If there is an extra pole in the boat and everybody is done water skiing, then I go fishing.”*

*“If there was a lake somewhere near us, I guess I would. (That sounds like it would go against some other things that you were against tonight.)”*

*“(When you’re a dad, are you going to take your kids fishing?) Yes. (Tell me a little bit about that. What would you do if they didn’t want to go?) I would make them even if they didn’t want to. (Would you take them saltwater or freshwater fishing?) If we lived near the ocean, I probably would go there. If we lived near here, I would take them to the lake.”*

*“(Will you take your children fishing when you’re a dad?) Yes, I’ve always wanted to live by the lake because I really like to go swimming a lot, and I would teach them how to fish. (So you would like to teach them how to fish?) Yes.”*

*“(When you grow up and you’re a dad, are you going to take your kids fishing?) If they wanted to go, I would.”*

*“(Are you going to take your kids fishing if you have children?) I would take them fishing, even if they didn’t want to.”*

## **Motivators for Fishing**

The focus group participants were informed about the state fish and wildlife agency and were asked about programs that could be initiated to encourage kids to go fishing. The fifth graders were hesitant about programs that would actually bring kids out fishing because they were afraid the fishing areas would get too crowded. However, the fifth graders were interested in programs where they could learn how to become better at fishing and perfect their technique.

*“(One of the agencies that helps manage fish and wildlife in your state is called the Washington Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Sometimes agencies like that are interested in providing more programs for kids to go fishing. Do you think that’s a good idea?)”*

*“It’s a bad idea. (Ok, and why is that?) Because it will get too crowded.”*

*“If everybody crowded on the dock wanting to go fishing and everybody casts their poles, you’d have everybody’s line caught up with each other and you’d have to go untangle them.”*

*“(Other comments on that?)”*

*“I think it’s a bad idea because more people will come fish and then there won’t be as many fish because people will catch too many.”*

*“(What about programs that would help teach you how to fish and be a better angler?)”*

*“That would be a good idea. It would be good if it were just teaching you how to fish and be a good and accurate fisher.”*

Parents supported the idea of programs to teach children how to fish. However, in addition to simply teaching fishing skills, parents felt that children should also learn about the environment around them while fishing to gain an appreciation of the natural environment.

*“(Mom?) I don’t fish but I think that a program that takes the boys fishing and teaches them how to fish would be something that I am interested in so that I could take them fishing and they could have the opportunity to fish and learn about fishing. I’m not opposed to that.”*

*“(What would be some things that would be valuable to you?) To have a place where they can go and have demonstrations and discussion.”*

*“I think the other things that are out there when you are fishing, like the scenery and what you see and the quiet and other wildlife other than fish, is important. In that way you have a total appreciation of everything and not just fishing.”*

*“(Are there any other programs like that that you’ve heard of around here?)”*

*”There are a lot of programs around here that build up the streams.”*

*“(So you like the opportunity to at least have that program available?) Umm hmm. (And who would be the most trusted source for that? Would it be the Washington Department of Wildlife and Fisheries?) I think so. I think any type of state or government agency would make me feel comfortable with the technical aspects of it.”*

The fifth graders felt that simple, direct messages should be used to promote fishing. Promoting fishing as a fun and relaxing activity was highly supported by the focus group participants.

*“(If you had to design a program to get other kids interested in fishing, what would you say to them?)”*

*“Go fishing.”*

*[Laughter]*

*“(Ok, what else?)”*

*“I would say that fishing is fun and the tug is really exciting and the worms are really exciting and you can just have fun, and if you throw it back in you will get a lot of laughs.”*

*“(What would you tell other kids?) You can relax.”*

## Chapter 3: Eighth Graders' Attitudes toward and Participation in Hunting and Fishing

### Factors Associated with Participation in Hunting

#### Participation and Interest in Hunting

*Similar to participants in the other focus groups, the eighth graders participated in many types of outdoor activities, including camping, hiking and fishing. However, hunting participation varied considerably among the eighth graders in this focus group. Some eighth graders had never hunted, while others were active hunters. All of the eighth graders who hunted had other family members who also hunt. However, there were a few focus group participants who did not hunt, yet came from hunting families. Only one female focus group participant knew of other women who hunt, including her own cousin and aunt. The male focus group participants could only name one girl at school who hunts.*

*"I like animals. I haven't fished or hunted or any of that other kind of stuff. My dad fishes a little but not that much. (Do you like fishing?) I guess, I don't really like fish. I like shrimp. (Would you be interested in going fishing more or being in the outdoors more?) Yeah. (Why don't you go more?) I guess I haven't had the opportunity. I don't think I would go hunting. I don't think I could face killing an animal. I don't think it's wrong, I just don't think I could do it."*

*"As for hunting, I figure they are there for food, so if you want to kill them and eat them, that's ok. I have never hunted, and the only gun I have ever had was my rifle for color guard at school. That's probably as far as I will go because I am not really that kind of person. I don't have that kind of aim or anything, although one time at camp I did. I don't remember what kind of gun it was, but we had to shoot a bull's eye. Bows and arrows too. (Did you shoot the bull's eye?) I got close. I did with a bow and arrow. I like to fish, I am not really a hunting kind of person. (How come. Does your dad hunt?) He hunted once awhile ago but he doesn't anymore."*

*"I have been fishing before. I have never hunted, but half of my family does. My grandfather, stepdad, dad, uncles and a lot of people in my family. Every summer we go to a certain lake and we go fishing sometimes."*

*"I have three brothers, so basically we go hunting a lot and fishing whenever we can. We're more into hunting than fishing, but we go fishing twice a year, sometimes on a trip or something. With hunting, we go to deer camp at a cabin we have in the Poconos and go hunting for a week. Then we go back here and go to Ramblerod and go hunting, which is another club. (Who hunts?) Everybody but my aunt - my three brothers and dad. (What about your granddad?) Yeah, he used to hunt but he's getting too old. He hunts whenever he can. I like hunting and hiking a lot. Basically when I am hunting, I say if you kill an animal, you should be able to gut it and if you can't gut it, you shouldn't kill it."*

*“(Do you like wildlife?) Yes. (Outdoors?) Yes. Me and my sister and my stepdad and my mom go fishing in the summer. Every morning we’ll get up and go fishing. (Do you live near a place?) Yeah, about 20 minutes. My dad and me will go hunting a lot; small game and deer. I go up to my friend’s cabin and go hunting up there. We don’t camp that much. I don’t know if you count snowboarding and skiing as outdoorsy, but we do that a lot. I ride my dirt bike a lot.”*

*“I mostly hunt and fish. I was just fishing the other week, for bass. I go deep-sea fishing at Ocean City. I don’t hike or camp, just hunt and fish. (What do you hunt?) Small game. Also deer and turkey. (Who hunts? Dad, brother, granddad?) My dad and two brothers and my granddad and uncles.”*

*“I don’t hunt, fish or camp. I like the outdoors; my family is big on hiking. We hike a lot. (Does your dad hunt?) No. My dad grew up on a farm. My cousins are big hunters, and every time I go out there they bring out their BB guns and they shoot at targets. I just stand back and watch.”*

*“(Do any of the young ladies here know any women your age who hunt?)”*

*“I do. My cousin is 15, and she got her permit so that she is allowed to go with her dad. I know she did it last year. I don’t know if she is planning on doing it this year. My aunt is 23, and she does it too. I am close to both of them. (Do they ever share the experience with you?) My aunt told me that she got a deer but was too scared to touch it. She freaked out. I haven’t talked to my cousin about it. (You said their father hunted?) Yeah, it’s my uncle. My aunt did it because her dad did it and because of her brother. (Do they like it?) Yeah.”*

*“(Any guys know women who hunt?)”*

*“Some girl at school with us. (Tell me about her and how she got involved?) I guess her dad tried to hunt from the stories that she tells us. (But she goes hunting with him?) Yeah. (Does she like it?) I guess she likes to go.”*

The eighth grade non-hunters expressed a lukewarm interest in hunting. Even though most of the non-hunters said that they would be interested in the experience, the enthusiasm was much lower than that expressed by the second graders. Several eighth graders felt that their exposure to hunting had been limited, and they felt that they would have a higher interest level if they had more opportunities to go hunting.

*“If I learned how and I actually had an opportunity and I could do it, I would. I don’t know much about it. I don’t mind getting out there or getting dirty, I don’t mind wearing ugly boots; I just don’t think I got the opportunity to learn about it much. (If you were exposed to it, do you think you would try it?) Yes, I would.”*

*“As it is now, I really don’t see myself hunting, but maybe if I am exposed to a different environment where I would have the opportunity and they taught me, maybe I would, but*

*right now I don't see myself hunting or that there would be an opportunity for me to hunt that I would want to hunt. If I had the opportunity, I would if I thought I would get through it. (What do you mean?) Like getting the courage to kill an animal. (If you don't want to kill one, why should you?) To eat. (Are they good to eat? Is that something that you would like to do?) I guess if I was exposed to it, maybe I would like it, but right now I wouldn't mind trying it. I don't know."*

*"I would go. My dad wouldn't take me though because my dad is against it. I would go with my cousins in New York. (If your cousins in New York asked you to go, would your dad stop you from going?) No, I don't think so."*

*"(Any other comments?)"*

*"I would go. I am thinking of going next season, whenever that is. My aunt was talking to me about it, and she was telling me how much fun she had."*

As with hunting participation, participation and knowledge of hunter safety education in Pennsylvania varied considerably among the focus group participants. Many of the eighth graders had taken a course in hunter safety, but others had never heard of hunter education classes. Overall, the eighth graders who had participated in the classes felt that the experience was a good one. Although several focus group participants felt that parts of the class were boring, the students felt that the information was important to learn.

*"(Has anybody ever had or been exposed to hunter education in your schools?)"*

*"Yeah, I wanted to take one but I couldn't go."*

*"No."*

*"I took a course."*

*"I took a course too."*

*"My cousin and aunt took the course."*

*"I haven't heard of it."*

*"I have heard of it but I don't know anyone who has taken it."*

*"I haven't heard of it."*

*"I was sure that there was one, but I never knew anything about it."*

*"(Tell me about your experience with wanting to take one but not being able to.)"*

*"My dad had hunted and so had my granddad and my uncles, and I had wanted to learn how because I thought it would be fun and I love the outdoors and we went on vacation*

*when I was planning on taking the course and I never went back to it. I don't remember when it was. (Were they hard to get into?) I don't think it would be."*

*"(Tell us about your actual hunter education experience.)"*

*"They just talked about trapping and you went three times and then they gave you a test and you had to pass it to get a permit to hunt. They talk about what you hunt for and when you hunt, traps and everything. (Was it a good course; did you like it, not like it?) It was ok sometimes but then it got boring sometimes. (What were the good parts?) When they talked about trapping and hunting. When they talked about other stuff that wasn't... (Like what?) Safety and everything, you can't wait till you go so you don't want to talk about safety."*

*"I thought it was exciting at some parts. I don't know about anyone else, but at my course we got to go outside and shoot clay pigeons with shotguns. I thought the boring part was when we talked about how many grains went into a shotgun shell of different calibers. And which way you point your gun and to look for camouflage. It was important but boring. (So you recognize that it was important, it was just boring. If you had to design the course, would you cut that out?) No, I would keep it in. We went two nights and then all day Saturday. We went to this club, and I think they should have set out buoys or actual guys and then you would have to pick them out and see where they were."*

*"In Southwestern, they have a pond and hunting education. I think they should have it in every school. My brother's friend teaches up there, and they have their own fishing pond and they go fishing during school. I think that would be good in every school."*

### **Family Issues Related to Hunting Participation**

When the hunters in the focus group were asked how they were initiated into hunting, all of the eighth graders said that they began hunting with a male family member. The most common family members with whom the focus group participants went hunting were the father, brother and grandfather. However, some focus group participants first went hunting and continue to hunt with their friends and entire family. All of the hunting eighth graders said that they remembered having an enjoyable first hunting experience and learned a great deal from their family about hunting. Interestingly, one focus group participant indicated that he "hunted" on a computer, presumably with a hunting game.

*"I got basically started by my brother. Him and all of his friends, like 20 of us, all go up to a cabin. I kind of tagged along to see what it was like. (How old were you?) Eleven. (Did you have a gun?) Yeah, when I was 12, I got a gun, and when I was 13, I went out by myself. We were out there together, about 50 yards apart. We had walkie-talkies, it was the first time I had carried a gun and shot at a deer. (Did you get one?) No. (How about since then?) My two other brothers got deer and I was kind of jealous. My oldest brother didn't get one and he has never gotten one. I got one this year for the first time."*

*(What do you like best about hunting?) I like shooting deer, not getting recognition for it or anything. Hanging out in the cabin and stuff and just talking and telling stories. (Tell me the best experience you had.) When we went to the cabin my first year, I saw a lot of what happened and what was going on. I had found out what hunting is about and I just liked it a lot. Everybody told me something about hunting to help me along. So, that was really cool. (Have you learned a lot since you just started?) Yeah, I learned a lot and experienced a lot. (What would you say are the couple of things that you really learned about?) One would be that it's really quiet when you are sitting in the woods. I was sitting in the woods, and I jumped and a deer ran away from me. Just being careful when you're out there. It can be really serious, so you shouldn't go out there and screw around. Have fun and be careful."*

*"My dad and brothers deer hunted. My friend hunted duck and he told me about it and so I told him I would go. (Tell me about your first hunting experience.) It was this past season when I was 14. It was fun but it was kind of boring. Duck hunting is doing something but deer hunting is just sitting there. (So deer hunting, you went with whom?) My dad, but my brother got me into it. (With duck hunting it was a friend?) Yes. (Did your parents think that was ok?) Yeah, my dad went too. (Sounds like you like duck hunting better than deer hunting.) Yeah. (Talk to me about your favorite things about hunting.) Probably when I was out on the Susquehanna River duck hunting. It's a lot more open than if you go to a creek. If you go there [to a creek], it's more closed in and you don't have as much room. If you go there [to the Susquehanna River] it's a lot wider and you can see a lot more."*

*"I started hunting with my dad. He lives on a farm and my grandpa's farm is right next to it. So we have a lot of land. My dad hunted ever since he was a little boy. He got me into it. I used to take a .22 out and shoot birds and groundhogs when I was 11. I got my hunter safety course when I was 11 and I have been hunting ever since."*

*"I got my permit when I was 11 and I went when I was 12. Deer hunting is boring, but I like small game like rabbit and pheasant. My whole family got me into hunting because they always hunt. Deer hunting, you can't really move around. You have to sit still or the deer will hear you. (Do you like being with your dad and hunting? Is it the actual relationship between you and your dad or is it the hunting and Dad is just there?) I hunt and my dad is there. (Is he a pain to be there?) He's funny."*

*"I think it's cool how he teaches stuff and takes us up there, but I like going with my friends a lot better. I don't know why, it's just more fun. I think it's really cool that he brings us up there and teaches us stuff."*

*"I hunt on a computer."*

## Perceptions on Hunting

The focus group participants discussed how hunting is typically viewed among their peers. One topic of discussion was whether hunting is predominantly a father-son activity. The overall perception was that most fathers probably lean towards taking their sons hunting rather than their daughters because they feel that the girls are less interested and may be more squeamish. However, the girls in this focus group responded by saying that they in fact were interested, but often feel as though they had not been as exposed to hunting as much as had their male counterparts.

*“I think it’s a lot of tradition because I think that people’s fathers are a lot more likely to take their son hunting than grab their daughter and go out and shoot deer. I think it’s tradition and a father-son thing.”*

*“I think dads think the guys want to because they see more of a manly thing there. Unless it is a really tomboy daughter. Dads get a little freaked out about make-up and dresses and girly things. I don’t think that fits with hunting. I have a brother. My dad didn’t ask me until I showed an interest in it. I grew up with him trying to point stuff out to me. I am more interested in fishing but before I would rather go to the movies. And they see that more because they are used to that from their dads.”*

*“I think the father wants to ask the son. I know from personal experience. My dad never asked me to go hunting, but he asked my little brother. I think they only ask their sons. I know females who fish. All of my girl cousins go fishing with me. We have fun.”*

*“I think that fathers think that since we are girls that we can’t handle killing something and then seeing all of the blood. Maybe they think that we can’t handle it.”*

*“(Is that true? If your dad asked you to go...)”*

*“I think that’s part of it, but another part is that we haven’t been exposed to it and it’s not a matter of sensitivity. I think that we haven’t really been out there. A lot of people start at a young age. My dad and brother have been doing stuff like going out and fishing and stuff since my brother was really young. But he has never asked me to do that. I am sure he would if I showed interest in it. It’s my fault because I never showed interest.”*

The focus group participants said that a diversity of opinion existed on hunting at their school. However, even though the eighth graders said that some students opposed it and others supported it, hunting overall is not viewed as a highly controversial subject at school. Nonetheless, the eighth graders were not aware of a large number of fellow students who hunt.

*“(Do young adults your age mostly support hunting, oppose hunting, or not even think about it? When we invited you here tonight, what was your reaction? What do people your age think of hunting?)”*

*“They don’t mention it. The only time you’ll hear about it is if someone is absent and they are all hunting. When I found out we were coming here, I was like, ‘Ok, we’re going to talk about wildlife.’”*

*“I have some friends that are really against it and they are vegetarians and they don’t agree with eating meat and killing animals. Some people I know like hunting and a lot of people I know do not like hunting. A lot of people don’t think about it. When I found out I was coming here to talk about hunting, it didn’t really make a difference to me about what I was talking about. I don’t really care, I just like discussing things.”*

*“(For the guys, do you think that most people in your school support hunting? Are they against it?)”*

*“Not that many people in our school that I know of hunt. There are two on our bus and that’s the only two that I know. They got out of school for a week and go up hunting and then they talk about their uncle shooting down a deer but they don’t get anything.”*

*“(What percentage of students would support hunting and how many would oppose?)”*

*“A small portion that would support and a large portion that doesn’t even think about it. It’s not something that is talked about at school.”*

*“It’s not something people think about very much, but I think that small portions do hunt. I think if a lot of people thought about it, they would decide that they didn’t like it. If they haven’t been asked a question like that, it’s hard to say.”*

*“I’m guessing that a large portion of our school has not thought about it, but once they do, they would find that it’s wrong because you are killing an animal for your needs. But then again, you need to kill the animals for food. I think right now they really don’t think about it. Small portions do think about it and they think it’s right.”*

*“I feel the same way as the other two girls. If you were to ask them, and then explain hunting, they would say it is an Ok thing, but if you’re going to kill the animal, you have to eat it and make sure none is left over. If you’re going out there to put it on your wall, I don’t think many people would agree with that.”*

*“I feel the same. I don’t think that anyone is strongly against it but they are not totally for it. They might be too lazy to go out or not have an interest. If they ever got into it, I don’t think they would have too much of a problem with it. (So 50/50?) I would say more supporting than opposing. Most would be probably in the middle.”*

All but one focus group participant said that they had been exposed to guns in their home or elsewhere. The eighth graders had very pragmatic attitudes towards guns and said that guns should not be feared as long as the handler ‘knows what they are doing.’ A few eighth graders said that they were slightly afraid of guns, but overall, they did not appear to be afraid of guns to the point that they would never use one for hunting.

*“I think some people are afraid of guns. You see too many movies.”*

*“My dad tried to teach me to handle a gun but I was scared. The idea that something might happen scares me. I have nothing against guns. I get scared of what might happen. (So you have handled a gun before?) Yes.”*

*“(Have you handled a gun before?) No. (Would that be a scary thing?) I am not scared of guns at all. I am probably more scared of a bow and arrow than a gun. If you were to shoot an animal I would rather for it to just be dead rather than keep shooting it with a bow and arrow and let it go through pain. Same with people, I would rather get shot with a gun than a bow and arrow.”*

*“Most people think a 12-gauge will make them fall down or hurt their shoulder. It doesn’t even kick; they just have it in their head.”*

*“It’s freaky knowing that you could point it in any direction and the force is so strong it could kill you. It’s ok if you know what you are doing with hunting and stuff. I think guns should be kept away from kids. You don’t know what they are doing because if they play with it, it’s so easy to get hurt. I think if you want to kill an animal, they shouldn’t go through torture. That’s just mean.”*

*“I think with guns you should be careful with how strong you go when you are younger. My cousin tried a 30-06 and he was really small. He couldn’t handle it and shot at a deer and screwed up his shoulder real bad. I think you should be careful and know what you are talking about.”*

*“Like he said, if you don’t know what you are doing.... We were hunting and the scope came by and hit him in the eye and it was gushing. If they don’t know what they are doing, they shouldn’t use a gun because it could come back to hit you.”*

## **Barriers to Hunting Participation**

### **Negative Aspects of Hunting**

Overall, the eighth graders supported hunting as long as the animal was utilized. The largest problem that the students had with hunting is when an animal is killed and is not utilized. The eighth graders supported hunting even if done only for the trophy, because they felt that this meant the animal was “utilized.” One focus group participant felt squeamish when eating meat and appeared to feel guilty about eating animals for food. Interestingly, this focus group did not have strong negative opinions about hunting because the sport involves killing animals. This may be due in part to the fact that many of these eighth graders came from hunting families, where such an attitude against killing animals would not have been instilled in them. The focus group participants felt that many girls probably dislike hunting because of being outdoors and getting dirty. The girls in the focus group agreed with this statement about not wanting to get

dirty and felt that hunting would be more enjoyable if they could still look “stylish” and not get dirty while outside.

*“I think girls don’t like it. They don’t want to go to the outdoors and get dirty because they are worried about how they look and stuff. The guys don’t really care.”*

*“(Ladies, is that true?)”*

*“I think it’s partly true. I am sure there are a lot of girls who really wouldn’t want to do it. I think a lot of people just haven’t had the chance to try it and see what it’s like so they wouldn’t even know. I think it’s probably the main reason that they don’t go.”*

*“He has a point though. When I go out, I have to have a clean seat to sit on. I don’t care about getting dirty. If you run under a tree and a branch messes up your hair, then you have to care about that. You can get dirty but if you are going to wear fishing boots, they have to be stylish and work, too. I am not afraid to get dirty, I am tough and I like challenges, but girls care about their looks and guys a little bit. I think having fun is the most important thing. If it’s just my dad and I, then I don’t care what I look like. If it’s in public then I do. I can get dirty; I think you should have fun. If your way of fun is not getting messed up, then that’s ok.”*

*“I think most people don’t want to go outside because a lot of times I’ll get on the Internet right after school and you will see 100 girls and 3 guys on. At the park there are always guys out playing basketball but you never see girls. If you go to the school you can see them cheerleading.”*

*“I really don’t mind getting dirty and cleaning yourself off later. I don’t think the reason that people don’t like hunting isn’t because of killing an animal. And then there’s a small group of people think that it’s wrong when people kill it for the head on the wall. (So, it’s utilizing the meat that is important. Is it true all the way around?)”*

*“Yeah. It depends what you are going to do with it.”*

*“If you watch the animal dead with the face on it, then you can’t eat it. If you see a dead animal, you can’t just eat it. If they handed you a cheeseburger you would eat it because it’s a cheeseburger. When I eat chicken, if I start thinking about the chicken, I can’t eat the chicken anymore. If I think about the face and the feet and the feathers, I can’t eat.”*

*“My family has deer mounted, and I think it is ok. If you skin it and then cut off the head, I think it’s ok to get it mounted.”*

*“(Is it ok if he eats the food and then mounts the head?)”*

*“Yeah.”*

*“(What’s wrong with someone going out and getting a big trophy and they don’t want to eat the meat and they just want to put it on their wall? Was it wrong?)”*

*“Because it’s just killing it for the sake of killing it. Like I said before, you don’t just go around killing other people for the sake of killing. It’s not right to kill it and not do anything with it. I don’t see the point in it.”*

*“If it is an endangered species, you can’t just kill it for fun, but there’s a lot of deer so it doesn’t matter that much. If you are going to kill one and keep the head forever that’s better if over 4 years you only have one head.”*

The two biggest concerns that the avid hunters in the focus group had about hunting was a fear of getting wounded while hunting and negative encounters with game wardens. One focus group participant said that his family had been wrongly accused of placing salt blocks on their land to encourage deer to come onto their land. There seemed to be a very real concern among the eighth graders of getting hurt while hunting. One focus group participant described a frightening experience where a group of people shot at him and his dad. Another focus group participant described a negative experience in which her dad had to shoot a deer that another person had left to die. Although these negative experiences occurred, they were one-time occurrences and did not appear to cause the eighth graders to be less supportive of hunting overall.

*“Game wardens. You can be hunting and take a break and they walk up to you and you have to show them your license and everything. They shouldn’t do that and wait.... They could sit by your truck. (And not go near you while you are hunting?) Yes. (Why?) They get in your way and make noise and deer hear the noise and scare them away. (So game wardens could force you out of hunting by being too forceful?) Yes.”*

*“They do more than their job. They try and give fines and they do stuff that they are not supposed to and they don’t get in trouble for it. (Have you had personal negative experience?) Yes. They took a couple of deer away from us and they shouldn’t have. (You had legal deer and they took them from you?) Yes. They thought we put a salt block on our land to get the deer to come in.”*

*“(You’re not allowed to do that?)”*

*“No.”*

*“You can put salt blocks as long as you don’t shoot them or when it is during hunting season. (So you were falsely accused?) Yes.”*

*“If I was hunting and a hunter shot my dad or a cousin. (So if you had a fatality or an injury?) Yes. (Have you ever had a near experience?) No.”*

*“It would be what he just said. My brother and my stepdad got shot at by a whole group of people. They shot a deer and then they shot them and they thought that they took their*

*deer so they started shooting at them because they were so mad. They fired four or five rounds at them before they left.”*

*“If one thing was to get me out of hunting... it happened to me before, a guy shot a doe and it was wounded and he left it there and it was squealing. My dad had to kill it. It's really sick.”*

## **Future Recruitment into Hunting**

The eighth graders were asked how a program could be designed to increase the interest of young adults in hunting. Overall, the focus group participants said that programs focusing on demonstrations, such as how to use a gun, would make them interested in learning about hunting. One eighth grader suggested introducing a hunting demonstration program at school, in order to bring hunting to the kids. The problem with introducing a hunting program at school is that focus group participants were not certain that the School Board would approve. As with the other focus groups, there appears to be a general fear of encouraging hunting through the school system due to concern about kids bringing guns to school.

*“A lot of demos showing people what to do and what not to do. (Would you go to something like that, if it had a demonstration area where you could shoot a gun?) Yes.”*

*“I would just tell them how much fun it is and set up a demonstration. I went to one in Maine on a screen and a deer would go by and you would shoot it. I thought that was pretty cool. I think if they did demonstrations like that it would be pretty cool. If they did that, more people would get into it. (More hands-on?) Yes.”*

*“I think we should have something like that at our school because a lot of kids don't want to go out to it. If you bring it to the kids, you are going to get more kids.”*

*“(Would your school allow that? Are teachers against hunting?)”*

*“I don't know of any teachers who are against hunting but there has to be a way to get it past the school board.”*

*“It has to be well advertised. I am sure that there are a lot of gun shows and sportsmen's shows but it is not advertised so most of the public does not know about it.”*

*“I agree with her. If they could find a way, and I know it would be hard, to get it past our school board, then I think more people would be interested because a lot of people don't know about it. I think if they had the time to learn, they would be more interested.”*

*“About the school board, I don't know if they would agree to it. They might think it would be dangerous. Most kids who get into hunting would be so excited they would bring their guns to school and show people and they would be dangerous. We have some*

*wackos. I think games would be awesome to advertise. They don't care about hunting on the Oregon Trail. In Mario Brothers, they used to have duck hunting."*

*"If every school had a fishing pond and then hunting, it would get them more interested. Starting in fifth grade, they would have to be 12 to hunt."*

*"In gym class, they could have an outdoors thing."*

The eighth graders discussed the types of messages that could be used to increase youths' interest in hunting. The focus group participants felt that hunting should be reiterated as a fun activity, a way to experience the environment, and an important activity to help manage animal populations if done in moderation. Messages focusing on hunting as a hands-on activity were supported by the eighth graders, such as the accomplishment of shooting a deer and then getting to eat the meat.

*"(So if you were asked to develop one or two statements that are supposed to get kids your age interested in hunting, what would you say?)"*

*"That it's important to our society that we do kill animals although not in large numbers but it is important so we have food. Then we would have to grow a lot more plants."*

*"I would say it could be really fun but you have to be sure to have the right safety precautions but I would encourage people because it sounds fun."*

*"Mention something about the advantages of both sexes. Safety precautions, advantages to being able to interact with the wild."*

*"Hands-on things because then they could try it and if they like it they would know."*

*"I would tell them to go out and try it once. Go out with a bunch of friends, get a whole group and go out and try it once and if you like it you will really get into it."*

*"I would probably say something about how the deer tastes. I would make people say they ate what they shot. (Would you feature deer or waterfowl?) Waterfowl. Pintail."*

*"Get out of school. I don't know."*

*"Hunting club, someone hunting and shooting a deer. That's what you can do if you can go hunting. Get a deer and be happy."*

*"Show a deer and say something about how you could be proud of something that you did and eaten it."*

*"Hands-on. You need to throw some safety in there too. If no one knew safety there would be more dead people than there already are. (Give me an example of hands-on.) Clay pigeons sounded cool."*

Overall, the eighth graders felt most comfortable learning to hunt with people that they know and trust, such as parents, although one eighth grader said that it did not matter. After being prompted about going hunting with someone from the Commission, one focus group participant changed his mind about only wanting to hunt with someone that he knew. This focus group participant felt that it might be safer to go with a person who was experienced.

*"I always get embarrassed if I do something wrong around people I don't know. I would probably rather do it around someone that I felt more comfortable with because I always feel really stupid. (So, it's a comfort level?) Yes, knowing me I would probably mess it up. I think that they could show me better and it would be more fun."*

*"I wouldn't mind either way but I think it would be a lot more fun if it was with somebody that I knew."*

*"I would go with my dad or cousin or somebody I know. (How come?) No comment."*

*"I would rather go with somebody I knew...when hunting season comes, it's just the way that they act, and they think they know everything."*

*"I would probably go with anyone who offers to take you. It doesn't matter."*

*"I think it would be stupid to go with a warden because they are all about safety and telling you how to hold your gun and all that other stuff. If you were with your dad or your cousin you could just chill out."*

*"I think it would be ok to learn from your dad because that's who taught you how to walk and talk and they taught you most things in your life and you're familiar with them and you are used to the way that they teach and how you learn from them. I think it would be easier to learn from them because you are used to what they have to tell you and you understand it better and you would be comfortable."*

*"(What if you had somebody from the Commission who knew what they were doing?)"*

*"Now that I have thought about it, it might be better because maybe your parents don't know what they are talking about and tell you something wrong, I could probably learn a lot more from somebody who has had a lot of experience and a lot of classes and opportunity to learn. I think it would be safer."*

The female focus group participants were not much more inclined to want to go hunting with members of their own sex rather than a mixed group. In fact, several of the female eighth graders preferred the opposite sex. Overall, the females were indifferent about who they would want to go hunting with, as long as the person had experience with hunting.

*"(Let me ask the ladies a question. A lot of the people who teach others how to hunt are male, does it make you feel uncomfortable? Would you rather learn from another woman?)"*

*“I really wouldn’t mind. It doesn’t make a difference to me, a guy or a girl. It’s obvious that you would be taught by a guy because more guys hunt than girls, but I don’t mind. (So if you had a man and a woman in front of you, would you gravitate more towards...) I really wouldn’t care.”*

*“I would ask my mom or dad, it really wouldn’t matter. If it was somebody else, I would probably be more comfortable with a female, because so am I. It wouldn’t matter that much or make too much of a difference. (Would it make a difference if you were around other females as well? Let’s say an all-girls school, or would you like a mixed group?) It wouldn’t matter that much. I know guys have a tendency to make fun of you, so I would probably want to be with all girls.”*

*“I think I would feel more comfortable with all girls because the guys would probably think they are smarter than the girls are and then they think we are less than them and then they make fun of you. I don’t think I feel comfortable with it.”*

*“It doesn’t matter as long as they are experienced. Sometimes it’s easier to work with the opposite sex. When I played soccer, I played on the guys’ team because some of the girls were too easy and not tough enough. When it comes to sports, I like being hard-core. I still have that thing where you have to look good but I think if you have guys it might be easier to learn from their point of view because you grow up listening to the same sex, I know what all of the girls think.”*

*“I think still I would rather go with my family. I would probably take my uncle and have my aunt and cousin come also because maybe my uncle could point out something and teach me one thing but my aunt could point out stuff she did wrong. It would be nice to have both.”*

The male members of the focus group also did not have strong preferences for hunting with one gender over the other. The males were generally very open about taking girls hunting and felt that it was important for both girls and boys to learn.

*“(Guys?)”*

*“I would take the mix because the technique would obviously be different and you could pick the better technique.”*

*“It wouldn’t matter, it’s just who’s better. (What if they were equal, whom would you walk towards?) Probably the guy. It seems like more guys hunt.”*

*“It wouldn’t matter. Mixed.”*

*“Mixed.”*

*“Girls. (How come?) I don’t know, I like girls. It wouldn’t matter.”*

*“(Talk to me about some of the young ladies’ concerns that men might have a tendency to think they know how to do it better? Would you treat a boy differently from a girl if you were teaching them to hunt?)”*

*“I don’t think so, they are both there to learn. So it wouldn’t matter.”*

*“I would treat them the same because they are both there to learn how to hunt the same thing so they all need to know the same stuff.”*

## **Factors Associated with Participation in Fishing**

### **Participation Levels and Interest in Fishing**

Almost all of the eighth graders in this focus group had gone fishing before; only two eighth graders had never been fishing. Participation levels varied considerably. Several focus group participants only fished sporadically while others considered themselves “rugged outdoorsmen.” The enjoyment levels also varied, with some participants rating it very highly, and others stating that they did not enjoy fishing at all. However, the non-anglers in the group expressed interest in going fishing, especially if they could go with their friends. Although this group did not discuss at length their other outdoor recreational activities, the eighth graders said that they do enjoy these types of activities.

*“I have gone. (Do you like it?) A little bit. (Have you gone a lot?) No. (How many times have you gone?) Two or three. (What do you like to do?) Play basketball and run track.”*

*“I am a rugged outdoorsman. I fish all of the time. A couple of times a year with my dad. (What do you like to fish for the most?) Whatever I can catch, it doesn’t really matter. We just go out and throw the worm into the water. (Are you pretty good?) No, I am not that good. I go with my dad because he likes to fish and hunt and camp. (Good. It sounds like you are following in his footsteps.) Yeah, I try to make him proud.”*

*“I’ve only been freshwater fishing once. My grandparents live in Massachusetts and they have a boat, and we go saltwater fishing for sea bass. I do that a lot. I have only been [saltwater] fishing once, and it was to pass some time while we waited for a pizza. I like fishing and I like camping and all that other outdoors stuff. My dad does it and my grandpa does it, so I do it. (On a scale of one to ten, where is fishing?) It’s about a seven.”*

*“I like the outdoors and stuff. I like fishing too, but not to catch anything. I like to let it go after you catch it or you just don’t catch it. (Do you fish a lot or a little?) A little. I have been deep-sea fishing but didn’t catch anything. That was still fun. (On a scale of one to ten, how do you rate fishing?) Five.”*

*“(Have you ever been?) Yeah. (Do you like it?) No. I don’t like worms. It’s gross. (How about other parts of fishing?) No, I can’t sit still and wait for the thing to bob.”*

*“I think I have been fishing before; I’m not sure. It was a long time ago because I used to go to camp. I love the outdoors; I think if I did it again, I would probably like it. (But you haven’t been in awhile?) Yeah, I remember fishing. (What things keep you busy and why do you think you haven’t gone fishing?) I play a lot of sports, so I don’t really have time. I have a lot of extracurricular activities. (Has the opportunity ever arisen for you to go fishing?) Not really. There’s a creek by my house but it is not very clean, I don’t think I’d want to go fishing there.”*

*“I have only been a couple of times. It was ok. It was disappointing because I didn’t catch anything. I was with my grandpa and my cousin and they are expert fishers and they caught a dozen fish in the time it took me to catch one. I didn’t like it very much since I couldn’t catch fish. (Do you think if you worked at it you could?) I don’t know. It’s not something that I would want to take up as a major hobby. I kind of liked it.”*

*“I went fishing before. I liked it. I go every three years or so. I don’t go every year. When I went the first time I didn’t know how to do it. (Who were you with?) My dad. He showed me and I sat back and watched him and I got a little used to it. I only went three times. It was alright. I liked it the second time better because I knew what I was doing. (Did you catch any fish?) No. (Have you gone since then?) No.”*

*“We go on the first day of trout season. Last year we went to Seven Valley. I don’t know if we are going this year or not. (On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate fishing?) A four or five.”*

*“I never went, so I don’t have anything to say about it. (Are you interested in going?) I don’t really have time. (So if friends invited you, would you go?) Yeah, it would probably be fun.”*

*“I have never been fishing either. The main reason is because my parents don’t assimilate to some of the country’s recreational ideas. My parents came from another country, and they are still trying to assimilate some of the ideas, they are finally going to the movies. High school is going to be a very bad step for them. (What do you think about fishing?) I wouldn’t mind going fishing. I think it would be quiet, and I live with siblings and it is always noisy around my house. So quiet time is really nice. When you go fishing you are by yourself or with a friend. I don’t think my friend would like the idea of me going with them because I am prone to accidents.”*

*“I like to fish. I used to go on retreats with my church, and this man who was good at fishing taught me how to fish. Then I went to fishing camp. It was part of central York school district. It was a thing for summer activities, and each day we went to a different place and learned how to fish. So I started going with my uncle in the mountains and I haven’t been in awhile. I think it’s because my uncle doesn’t want to take me. I like to fish at trout farms and you pay for the fish you catch. I kind of caught this really big fish*

*and he had to pay \$40 and he doesn't want to take me fishing anymore. But I like to fish. I haven't found time recently, but I like to fish."*

## **Perceptions on Fishing**

Overall, the focus group participants felt that other kids their age have a generally neutral attitude towards fishing. The eighth graders said that other students do not talk about fishing very often, unless it is an activity in which they actively participate. The youth in this focus group said that fishing is often talked about in the context of summer vacation, but is not usually done during the school year.

*"We don't think about it very much."*

*"In the summertime you hear more people talking about it because there is more time. More people talk about it."*

*"It's not something that you go to school and somebody strikes up a conversation about a fishing trip they went on this weekend. It doesn't happen very often. I guess people don't go fishing very often during the school year. It's more over the summer and when you go on vacation. People don't forget about it, they just don't think about it because they are not doing it and haven't done it in awhile. They don't think to talk about it."*

*"Bottom. (On a scale of one to ten, you would say, two?) Yeah. Except if I meet someone there and then I can talk about the fishing and then when it comes up. But that's once a year. (So, it's there and then gone?) Yeah."*

*"(Do any of you have friends who talk about fishing?)"*

*"Actually I do. I have a lot of friends who are obsessed with fishing. They are like, 'Oh yeah, I am going to the mountains and fish non-stop.' I know people who take off school and go fishing in the fall. (So in your circle, how would you rate it? Is it mostly guys?) Yeah it's mostly guys. Fishing is a hot commodity. I would say a seven or eight."*

*"During the summer every time we go to the mountains, and it's a major part of my summer. It's the time I spend with my whole family and not just my immediate family. My whole mom's side of the family. Every time we go there, we go fishing. We go fishing every day for some quantity of time, so if I think of summer, I think of the mountains and fishing because that's what we spend most of our time doing. It's kind of relevant in my circle. (Is it relevant with friends in context with other friends or relevant in context with family?) Mostly with family because usually my whole family fishes. I don't know any of my friends that fish. If they do, they don't make it known. Maybe it's not that important to them."*

*“Fishing is one of those things where you are either proud of it or you cover it up to save your life. I know a bunch of people that actually like to go fishing, but it’s not cool in their other group of friends so they won’t admit it.”*

*“I think a lot of people don’t have any opinion of it at all; it’s just there. Most of our friends don’t have an opinion on it. They have gone before and they liked it or didn’t like it, but then they didn’t think of it unless they loved it.”*

A small number of focus group participants mentioned that fishing is sometimes thought of as a “wussy” activity or an activity for older people.

*“Some people think it is wussy. Don’t make fun of them. Nobody likes to be made fun of.”*

*“(Is fishing wussy?)”*

*“I don’t think it is.”*

*“A lot of people that I know are not really outdoorsy types, and they think that fishing is for old people who have a lot of time. There are a lot of different opinions. (What’s yours?) It’s neutral. It just depends if you like it or not. (Do you like it or not?) Yeah, I like it. I give it a four or five on the ‘cool-not cool’ scale.”*

*“It’s ok, I guess. The only one I know who goes fishing is my granddad, and he goes by himself. (Has he ever asked you to go?) Yeah.”*

### **Positive Aspects of Fishing**

The two things that the eighth graders enjoyed most about fishing were catching fish and being outdoors. The importance of catching a fish was tied in with a general desire to accomplish something that is challenging. Spending time outdoors with friends and family was also viewed as an important component of fishing.

*“When the fish bites and then you pull it in. (The feel of that?) Yeah.”*

*“I think casting, like seeing who can cast the farthest. Just reel it in and cast it.”*

*“Going just to be somewhere quiet and just be out. (Are you referring to nature?) Yeah. (What do you like best?) I think that is a nice experience. I think it would be cool. (So relaxing and a nature standpoint is what I am hearing.)”*

*“I think some people really do like the experience of fishing, but that wasn’t why I liked it. I liked spending time with my cousins and experiencing the quiet. It wasn’t the fact that I was fishing. I could have been just sitting there and it would have been fine. I don’t think it was the fact that I was fishing that made the experience enjoyable; it was the fact that I got to spend time with my family and it was quiet. I liked it.”*

*“I think catching a fish [is the best thing]. That’s what you are going out to do. (In terms of the excitement, the challenge?) I think it is challenging. Not every fish is going to want to be caught. I think it is challenging and exciting... (So for you it would be the challenge. If you are involved with a lot of other sports, that challenge would be important. As a person who is competitive, if you are involved with a lot of other activities, does the competitiveness of fishing and the fact that it is not easy to catch a fish... ) It would probably make me want to get a fish more. If I went with my mom and she caught a fish before me, I would have to catch more than her.”*

*“Catching a fish and going outdoors. I know it’s not fun to get up in the morning, but when you are out there and awake, it is pretty neat. It’s like summer and you don’t have school that day. It’s fun being out there. (Is it the actual pull on the line?) Yeah, if you are sitting there for an hour, it’s pretty neat if you actually catch anything.”*

Studies have shown (Kellert 1985 and Kahn and Kellert 2002) that middle school children are at the age when they become much more interested in the environment and increasing their factual knowledge, and this was somewhat true for this focus group. When prompted, several eighth graders said that they would enjoy learning about the fish that they catch, but others said that this would not interest them. The focus group participants expressed a general interest in the biological aspects of fishing, but were not sure how interested they would be in learning highly specific details about the types of fish that they catch.

*“The fact that I am outdoors. I like the outdoors; I find it fascinating because all of these things are outdoors. I like studying things and learning about things, like fishing. I would like to learn some things about the fish before I catch it. I am a person that likes to know everything. [whispering] I am not a perfectionist! Well, maybe sometimes. If I were catching a fish, then my friend and me would probably compete and see who got the most. Or who would get the least. (Talk to me about the idea of learning about fish?) Last year I was in a competition that was an Environthon, and I learned a lot about fish and I found it really interesting. There is only one of a certain kind of fish in Pennsylvania that spawns in freshwater and lives in saltwater. Or maybe it is the other way around. It was quite interesting learning about things like that. I just thought it was neat. All of these things live; nothing is mechanical about it or easy to break about it. It’s natural; there is a way to figure it out. Not completely, but you can understand it more easily than most machines. And you can’t break it.”*

*“(Do you think if you went out with someone who showed you different parts or types of fish, or the different species that live in Pennsylvania, would that interest you?)”*

*“Yes. (A little or a lot?) A little.”*

*“Last year we studied fish and we dissected a fish and then you were supposed to go out and apply it to your knowledge of fishing instead of putting it in the back of your mind and never using it again. You learn how to identify a fish when you catch it instead of knowing how to identify a fish and never using the information that you learned. It’s like wasted time.”*

*“We had to identify 15 or 20 fish. I don’t remember which ones we identified or what they look like anymore, but if you looked over that, you would probably have more interest in what you caught. (Would that interest you at all?) Yeah, I would like to know what kind of fish I catch, just to know what I am catching.”*

*“I don’t really care what kind of fish I catch because a fish is a fish. Even though there are different types and everything, it’s a fish. I don’t know if I want to learn about the different types of fish that I catch because I’ll probably never remember it anyway. So, I am not sure if that would be interesting.”*

### **Family Issues Related to Fishing Participation**

Most of the eighth graders said that they fish with their families, although several said that they also fish with their friends. The childrens’ fathers were generally the family member with whom the focus group participants fished most often.

*“Family. (Mom, Dad, Brother, Sister?) Cousin. (Male, female?) Female. (Younger, older?) Older.”*

*“It could go on either side. I have a lot of friends that like to fish, and my dad really likes to. So, if it’s a summer day and I don’t have anything to do, I will call up my friends and see if they want to go fishing, and they’ll say ‘alright.’ Me and my dad go camping a lot over the summer so we usually fish then. So it’s both.”*

*“Family. But my family that I go with fishes year round with their friends, so I guess both.”*

*“During the summer every time we go to the mountains, and it’s a major part of my summer. It’s the time I spend with my whole family and not just my immediate family. My whole mom’s side of the family. Every time we go there, we go fishing. We go fishing every day for some quantity of time, so if I think of summer, I think of the mountains and fishing because that’s what we spend most of our time doing. It’s kind of relevant in my circle. (Is it relevant with friends in context with other friends or relevant in context with family?) Mostly with family because usually my whole family fishes. I don’t know any of my friends that fish. If they do, they don’t make it known. Maybe it’s not that important to them.”*

*“(Yours was with family? Have you ever been fishing with friends?) I used to go with church. We went on retreats every summer, and my friends were there from church. (Was that fun?) Yeah, but I was 5. That was fun but now it is not. (So you are just not interested anymore?) Except when I meet friends, which means I meet them there and then they are my friends.”*

*“Family.”*

*“Family.”*

*“Family.”*

The eighth graders were very open about with whom they would like to go fishing, as long as it was family or friends. Many of the students said that they would prefer fishing with their friends because it would be more fun, but all of the youth said that they would go fishing with their parents if they were asked. The only requirement that the eighth graders had was that the person who accompanied them was experienced in fishing.

*“I would want to go with my friends. If I went fishing, I would have more fun sitting there and passing the time with my friends because I have more to talk about with them. So we'd have fun in between times. So we'd have a joke. If I went with one of my friends, she would probably tangle the line and we would just laugh and it would just be fun. I would have more fun with my friends.”*

*“I'd go with someone who knows how to fish really well so that I would catch more, but I don't know anybody. I know no one who knows how to fish. Or I would take a friend.”*

*“I'd go either way. I think with my friends it would be more enjoyable, but if I went with my dad, I would be spending quality time and he would be teaching me stuff.”*

*“(So am I hearing friends and then family?)”*

*“It depends upon what members of the family.”*

*“(Who would be the best person to ask you, even though you have never been before but indicated that you might be interested in going?)”*

*“My dad. (How come?) Because I don't see him enough. (So it would be a way to see him?) Yeah and get to talk to him. (What would you talk to him about?) I don't know. Stuff.”*

*“I would get a friend who knows what they are doing because I would definitely not know what I was doing. And to be on the safe side and not do anything stupid, which I have a tendency to do, I would probably go with [xx] because she knows what she is doing and she has gone many times.”*

Fishing has been promoted as a recreational activity that brings the family closer together. Overall, the eighth graders felt that it was important to spend more time with their parents, though not necessarily through activities like fishing. A few eighth graders did not feel close to their family and felt that their parents would not be good fishing companions because their parents did not have an interest in fishing.

*“I would rather do something else with my mom or dad. Actually my dad really likes fishing, so if I wanted to bond with him then I would probably go fishing. With my mom,*

*it would not be fishing. (Do you feel a need to bond with your dad?) My dad wants to. I don't really want to; I'm an adolescent and I don't like him. Well, I do. I love him, but I don't like him. And he wants to be my friend."*

*"Something that I experience for the first time, I want to do with my friends. I don't want to do it with my family members."*

*"My dad likes fishing and he lives in Maryland and he goes to the Bay. I think it's a good idea because he switches hobbies all the time. I guess it's a good idea. I would rather spend time with my dad because I don't live with my dad."*

*"I would like to spend a lot more time with my parents, just not while fishing. Unless they have a magic ability with fishing, which I don't think they do, I would be the expert. We do different things; my parents don't like the outdoors. They don't like much to do with anything in the outdoors. (Even if it was with a church?) Nothing, they won't do anything."*

*"I think it's a good idea because when you are fishing, you are out in nature and you don't have everyday stress that is put on them. Obviously when you fish you are not at work and not at school. It's a relaxing period and it gives you time to talk about stuff that otherwise you wouldn't be able to tell them because your life is so hectic. It gives you time to chill out and talk."*

*"I don't have a desire to bond with my family. I don't really care, and frankly I don't trust either one of my parents with a fishing pole. It's a very dangerous combination. I might want to go with my brother. I don't get to see my brother because he is 14 years older than me, so I don't see him a whole lot, but I think it would be fun to push him and he is good at fishing and I think that he would help me."*

*"My dad just moved to Washington State, so I don't really see him. If he knew how to fish, I would ask him, but he doesn't. We would probably do something else, I don't know what, because I don't really know him that well."*

*"My mom can't fish and neither can my dad. I don't think that they have a desire to learn. I know my parents pretty well, and if I wanted to do something with my dad and I asked him what he wanted to do, he would probably take me running. We do that a lot just go out running on Saturday. So, that's basically what we do. I don't think my dad has fished, I am sure he has, but he doesn't talk about it. It's not something that he likes to do or something that he does often. I wouldn't trust my mom with a fishing pole."*

## Barriers to Fishing Participation

### Negative Aspects of Fishing

When asked to describe negative aspects of fishing, the eighth graders provided several. One focus group participant did not like the worms used for baiting. The boredom of having to wait for a catch was also mentioned. Many children play organized sports, which are generally fast-paced activities. Fishing, in contrast, is a much slower activity, which several eighth graders said contributed to fishing being dull. Comparisons were made between fishing and sports such as basketball, and basketball was clearly perceived as much more exciting. Another negative aspect of fishing was the fear of getting hooks caught. Catching a fish was very important to the focus group participants, so not always catching a fish was viewed as a negative aspect of the sport.

*"I don't like worms. They're long and they are slippery and they are slimy and they don't have eyes. Last year I almost passed out when we had to dissect a worm. It was not moving. I don't like when worms come up from out of the ground. I step on them. I don't like sitting and waiting."*

*"It's exciting casting the line, and I don't mind the worms. I think it's boring to sit and stand there. I don't know what I do wrong, but it takes me an hour to catch one fish. It's just kind of boring sitting there and holding the line and watching the waves. You couldn't do anything, you just had to sit there and wait in case a fish pulled the line."  
"Boredom."*

*"When you have to wait for the fish to come."*

*"The most annoying thing is getting your hook caught on something. You don't know what it is if it is underwater and it's not a fish. Or if you pull it back and it's hooked in a tree and then you cut yourself."*

*"It's not like a basketball game where you get two points or if you catch a fish you get three points. It's not really a sport like competing against other people. It's just catching fish."*

*"I think that people our age like things that happen not necessarily fast but they kind of keep you interested. Like basketball, it doesn't take the players a half an hour to get from one basket to the other. They move really fast. You don't really do much when you are fishing; you just sit there and wait for the fish to come to you. It's not one of those things that people our age get really excited about. Like 'wow, I caught five fish,' is not as exciting as, 'I scored so many points in a basketball game.' It doesn't happen as fast, so we kind of get bored easily because we don't have very big attention spans."*

*"I am kind of paranoid about cutting myself on a hook because there is that little ridge and if you get that in your skin, it's probably hard to get out. Tangling my line up, I do that a lot. Also, I don't like trekking through the mud to get to the lakefront. I am not a*

*really outdoorsy type of person; I like to fish in lakes that are in a clearing or something where there is not trees. Most of the time when I fish, I have to trek through mud and weeds that are taller than me. It's overbearing. I feel small."*

*"The one thing that I don't like about fishing is not catching fish because you can sit out there for hours, if you don't catch a fish then you just wasted your entire day. If you do catch a fish, it's like the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. If you catch a fish, it makes the hours and hours of wait worth it. If you don't catch a fish, it sucks. (Why wouldn't you catch a fish?) Luck. I see fish. I like saltwater fish. There are a lot of places for the fish to go. So it might be that the fish aren't in that particular area because they have a lot of room to spread out. It's mostly just luck. Whether you want to admit it or not, there is not a lot of skill involved in fishing. It's just luck. It's like gambling except you don't lose something."*

## **Future Recruitment into Fishing**

As with the hunting focus group participants, the eighth graders were asked to discuss the types of messages and advertisements that might be effective in encouraging young adults to go fishing. Clear, simple slogans could be used in commercials that appeal to young people. Several eighth graders commented on the lack of young people and appropriate role models in current commercials and advertisements about fishing. Fishing should be portrayed as a fun, "cool" activity that anyone can do. One eighth grader supported the idea of organizing fishing trips for kids, because not everyone has family or friends who can take them fishing.

*"A good slogan. I have no clue what it would be. (What would you say?) Well, you know how Nike is 'just do it.' Something that is universal that makes kids think that fishing is cool. Something that has to do with a friend and maybe bring in a new high-tech rod that has an automatic caster."*

*"I would tell them fishing would be great if you try it again and get used to it. I don't know. A river that has a lot of fish in it so you are not mad if you don't catch it. A better rod."*

*"I would make a commercial and put young people in it."*

*"You want to get rid of the stereotype and turn it into 'anybody can do it'."*

*"I would say a way to relax and get away from everything, school, everyday stress. Like if your family gets on your nerves, like mine does. Also, to have a new experience. The more different experiences you have, the more you know. The more ways you can learn from your mistakes. I think it's a great way to have different kinds of experiences. It makes me feel more connected to people. I think it's neat to learn about different people and learn about different things and experience certain things. Everyone could have a chance to go fishing, but it's the experience that you have that's good. It's a way to relax."*

*"I would organize trips for kids that they can take to go fishing because some kids probably want to go fishing but they don't have parents or friends that want to take them or don't have the time to take them and they get into it.... Your friends come with you and they might not want to go but then they actually end up liking it and it gives them a way to do something that they might not have done before."*

*"I like the idea of a group of kids, like an after school program. (Would you go on a fishing after-school trip?) Yes."*

*"I would say to show them that anyone could do it. Like have a commercial with old people fishing, or kids or multi-millionaires in their business suit fishing. Let everyone know that you can do it. If you have arms, you can do it."*

The eighth graders also felt that the use of celebrities and high-tech gear in the advertisements would be appealing to young people. In the age of the Internet, computer games, and technology, young people want to experience things that are fast, current, and high-tech. The eighth graders said that having certain rock bands would appeal to them, such as Blink 182 and Green Day.

*"I think I would pay someone famous to do a commercial. A lot of people like Linkin Park; people like that could do a commercial."*

*"I was going to come up with an advertisement campaign and have an A-list celebrity say that they fish, and that makes people want to fish because they idolize those people. It's like if they fish, then it's cool now. The other thing I would do is get a designer clothes company to produce a fishing rod, and then everyone would want to buy it. Like a fishing rod by Ralph Lauren. I would go on the celebrity thing because most people are influenced at least a little bit by their idols, and if their idols fish, they might be more motivated to fish as well. (Who is one of your idols?) John Lennon."*

*"I would do fishing with celebrities, like a camp with people like Michael Jordan. And then another famous person in charge of one, and then there could be lots of them all over the country."*

*"That would be cool."*

*"I would tell them to get rid of the worms and find another way to get fish. New bait. I wouldn't have a funny commercial. Have them teach in the schools or have another extracurricular activity if anybody signs up for it."*

*"I think people are more motivated by high-tech gear. If something is out of the ordinary, they will want to buy it but then they will feel bad because they don't use it. I think it would be cool to have theme tackle boxes. They could make Barbie fishing rods."*

*"So, I think if they make cool gear, people will be more interested. Also, I would combine it. I would do an outing where you took the kids fishing and then afterwards you*

*could swim in the lake or do something else, so that if they were totally bored with the fishing part they could do something they enjoy and then maybe grow to like the fishing, but go for the other thing.”*

## Chapter 4: Tenth Graders' Attitudes toward and Participation in Hunting and Fishing

### Factors Associated with Participation in Hunting

#### Participation and Interest in Hunting

Most of the tenth grade focus group participants said that they do not hunt, nor were they interested in hunting at all, for various reasons. This is a marked difference in attitudes compared to the younger children, especially the second graders. Even though the interest level was low, many of the tenth graders said that they have family members who either currently hunt or used to hunt. However, this did not seem to make them any more or less interested in hunting. Only one focus group participant said that he/she has been hunting with a family member - an uncle.

*"Personally I am opposed to hunting; I really care for animals a lot, and I feel that it's good to hunt to keep the population down, I realize all that, but [as for] myself, I would never hunt. (Does anyone in your family hunt?) My dad used to hunt, but he just gave it up a few years ago. (What did he hunt?) Rabbits and that's about it."*

*"My uncle and my grandma hunt a lot; they hunt deer and turkey, and my grandma hunts pheasants. (Have you ever hunted?) No."*

*"My dad used to hunt, my uncle hunts, my grandparents hunt, [and] I've hunted before. (What did you hunt?) Deer. (Do you hunt anymore?) No."*

*"No one in my family hunts. I know that my dad grew up on a farm and he hunted in Illinois, he may have hunted here in Missouri. (Have you ever hunted?) I've never hunted."*

*"I personally have not hunted, but my dad has; he's killed a lot of deer. (But you've never hunted?) No."*

*"I do hunt and my uncle hunts. (What do you hunt?) Turkey. (And you've gone hunting with your uncle?) Yes."*

*"I just went hunting for the first time this spring. They [dad and uncle] go about three months a year. (Here in Missouri?) Yes. (And this is the first time you've been hunting?) This is actually the second time. (Did he ask you if you wanted to go hunting?) Yes he did. (How old is your uncle?) Mid-40s."*

Only one tenth grader had previously taken a hunter education course, and there was very little interest by other focus group participants in taking a hunter education course. However, the student who took the class found it to be an enjoyable as well as worthwhile experience. When

probed further on a related issue (firearms safety), the focus group participants showed a higher level of interest in taking a firearms safety course, due to the concern about gun safety and school shootings.

*“I did. (Ok, and what did you think about that?) I thought it was pretty easy. (Did you like it?) Yes. (Did you think it was important to do that?) Yes.”*

*“(If you were to have access to information about the safety of hunting as compared to the safety of firearms in general, is that something that would interest you? In your case where you have no interest in hunting, are you interested in firearm safety?)”*

*“I think that it’s a good idea to be safe. But, I don’t think that I would ever take a course in one because I don’t think that I would ever need to know how to use one.”*

*“(How about the rest of you?)”*

*“Yeah, I would.”*

*“I took a course in firearms safety when I was in Boy Scouts.”*

*“I think that you should know how to be safe with one [a gun.]”*

*“I would be willing to learn about them. Even if I never choose to use one, I would be willing to learn about it.”*

## **Perceptions of Hunting**

High school is a time when peer pressure can exert a strong influence over youth behavior and influence general attitudes towards what is and is not “acceptable.” Interestingly, the tenth grade focus group participants did not have strong feelings on whether or not they think that hunting is considered “cool.” Overall, they felt that hunting is just another hobby that people have, and whether or not someone chooses to hunt does not influence their attitudes toward that person. The tenth graders did not feel that hunters at their school were unusual in any significant way, nor would they label a hunter in a positive or negative way.

*“It’s not that it’s un-cool. It’s just that no one is like, ‘Oooh you’re a hunter; I want to hang out with you.’ It’s not that it’s really cool either.”*

*“It’s just something that you do.”*

*“Yeah, it’s like any other hobby.”*

*“Yeah.”*

*"It's not like you're going to be friends with somebody just because they hunt. It's just kind of like, 'Oh, you hunt. I watch TV.'"*

*"(For the kids in your high school that do hunt, is there anything unusual about them?)"*

*"Not really."*

*"They wear camouflage a lot."*

*[Laughter]*

*"(So there is nothing unusual about them?)"*

*"Some of them."*

### **Positive Aspects of Hunting**

Even though most of the tenth graders held unfavorable attitudes towards hunting, those who participated said that they enjoy hunting because they can be outdoors and they find hunting to be an exciting activity. Only a few positive aspects of hunting could be gleaned from this focus group due to the low level of hunting participation by the tenth graders.

*"I like being outside a lot, so just being out there."*

*"Just the excitement that comes up. Like when you see a turkey that you've been waiting on for like four or five hours and it finally comes up and you get your chance. I don't know, it's just the excitement of it."*

### **Barriers to Hunting Participation**

Overall, there seemed to be many more barriers to hunting for the tenth graders than motivators that would make them more interested in hunting. For example, the kids were much more interested in participating in other activities besides hunting. Even though the tenth graders could name many outdoor recreation activities in their state in which they could participate, very few said that they actually do these things. Rather, there was a higher level of interest in going to the mall or the pool instead of engaging in outdoor activities like bike riding or visiting parks. These types of activities (going to the mall or pool) are "typical" activities in which teenagers participate, which likely influences their preference for these activities over hunting.

*"Fishing."*

*"You can play sports like football and baseball and things like that. You can go to the parks."*

*"Yeah, and a lot of parks have ponds to fish."*

*“You can go ride your bike in the parks. Yeah, and we have a trail.”*

*“A lot of people our age don’t go to the parks or anything.”*

*“There’s a lot of things to do but people just don’t do it.”*

*“(Why not?)”*

*“They’d rather go to the movies or the mall or something like that.”*

*“We go to the pool and stuff like that, but we mostly stay inside and watch TV and eat. I think some of us would rather sit inside an air-conditioned house than be out in the heat and the humidity or something like that.”*

Interestingly, lack of time for hunting was not a prominent reason given for not hunting. However, one tenth grader said that he used to hunt when he was younger and said that his dad no longer has time for hunting.

*“(Why did your family quit hunting?) They just got busy. (Busy doing what?) Jobs, they’re just always at work. My dad just doesn’t really have the time to do that anymore. (Did you ever hunt with him before?) Yeah, when I was 8.”*

As previously mentioned, several focus group participants were concerned about hunting safety and felt that other kids have a general fear of guns, especially with the school shootings that have occurred in other schools. They felt that this fear might prevent both themselves and others from hunting. In addition to safety, one focus group participant said that hunting requires patience and questioned whether he/she would have the patience for hunting. Another tenth grader said that he/she would not hunt without an experienced adult. When the younger kids were asked what would prevent them from hunting, many said that their own parents’ concern about safety would keep them from hunting. It seems quite possible that if a child learns when he/she is very young that hunting is not a safe activity, it could carry over into their teenage years and prevent them from ever hunting.

*“I think that some people are scared of guns. Last year there was some guy that shot his brother or something like that.”*

*“The thing that I don’t like about it, last summer we went turkey hunting and I had a turkey in sight and I had a 12-gauge shotgun and I shot at the turkey and I didn’t have my balance so I fell back and the gun fell back on me and I broke my nose. So that kind of discouraged me for a while.”*

*“And you have to have a lot of patience. You have to be able to sit there for two or three hours straight and watch grass or look at a tree.”*

*“If I didn’t have an experienced adult to go with me [I wouldn’t go hunting]. I never go hunting by myself because you have to have a driver’s license, and not many of my friends have one. (In Missouri, can you go hunting by yourself?) I’m not really sure.”*

### **Negative Aspects of Hunting**

Many of the focus group participants simply did not want to hunt for ethical reasons. When asked why they object to hunting, the tenth graders said that killing animals, especially if the meat was not used, was highly objectionable to them. The tenth graders appeared to feel that hunting is done mostly for the pure sport. This perception seemed to drive their negative attitude toward hunting. One focus group participant said that he/she enjoyed the shooting range more than hunting because he/she wouldn’t have to be exposed to a lot of blood from killing an animal. The tenth graders seemed to have a feeling of responsibility that if they shoot an animal, they must use the meat.

*“Animals have always been a very important part of my life, and I’ve always cared about them a lot, and I find it really upsetting that people could stand to just shoot them or however they’re going to kill them. Like he said, I find it bad that people would just kill it for the fun of it. If you have to kill the animal, I think you should put it to use and not waste the whole life. All my friends and I are against it, and I would never go hunting.”*

*“I still don’t think that I could go and kill an animal. It’s just not right to kill them without using the meat. (Do you think that you can kill the animal and not eat the meat? Is that your impression?) Yes, I think some people can and some people do.”*

*“I don’t like hunting; I don’t like the thought of killing an animal.”*

*“It wouldn’t exactly be fun. (What about it wasn’t fun?) It just wasn’t fun, and I’m not used to seeing a lot of blood. (So you did kill something?) I didn’t. (So you didn’t like the blood. Is there anything about hunting that you liked?) I liked to use the gun. I go to the shooting range with my dad.”*

*“I think that if you’re going to do it, then you need to eat it and be responsible with your gun. (But you don’t hunt?) No. (Have you ever thought about hunting?) No. (Why not?) I wouldn’t want to kill an animal without using it.”*

*“My stepdad and his whole family hunts, but I was never into it. (Your stepdad and his family do it but you don’t because you object to it?) Yes. (And what is it about hunting that you object to?) Just killing an animal. If they are threatening your home or you life, or like wolves if they’re eating your livestock, then you can kill them because they are taking away the profit of your life, but a deer is minding its own business and you just go up and shoot it, it’s wrong. They’re not intruding on your property.”*

*“My family does but I don’t because if you kill the deer you have to use the meat and eat it and I don’t like deer meat; I don’t like it at all. (Tell me more about that.) I’m kind of a vegetarian.”*

## **Future Recruitment into Hunting**

The focus group participants were not asked whether they would be willing to one day take their own kids hunting. Rather, the discussion focused on whether they would be more interested in hunting or attending summer camp if their friends did it too. Several of the tenth graders seemed more willing to attend camp and hunt if their friends wanted to go with them. One focus group participant remained adamantly against hunting, even if all of her friends were to change their minds and participate.

*“Probably if your friends or someone went.”*

*“Yeah, my friends have a lot to do with it, if a bunch of us went.”*

*“(So your peer groups are a big influence on you. So if your friends right now would all sign up to go to summer camp, would you then?) It would probably make me want to do it more because then you have someone you know there. (So if five or six of your friends were to all sign up and go to summer camp, that would influence you?) It would influence me more. I would still do it right now but I just don’t want to.”*

*“That’s how you get into a lot of stuff that you do. Like if I’m with my friends and we all don’t have anything to do, then we might go fishing or something like that. (Would that influence you to go hunting?) Yeah, I think it would because when you’re with your dad you have to be all serious, you know. But, if you’re with your friends, then you can joke around. It’s like you have to be more mature when you’re with your parents.”*

*“(Your dad doesn’t really have the opportunity to go hunting, but if you had an opportunity to go with a group that had other adults, would that influence your decision to go?) Yeah, it probably would.”*

*“(Would that overweigh your distaste for hunting?) It probably would, I haven’t ever been. I would go, I probably wouldn’t shoot anything myself, I would probably just watch them.”*

*“Well, I know that my friends would never ask me to go hunting in the first place because they all feel the same way I do. But, even if my friends were to all change their minds, I would never go hunting, ever! That’s the last thing I would do. (Are you open enough to the concept of going on an experience-hunting trip?) You mean would I go just to watch? (Yes.) No, I don’t even want to watch it. (You said that your family just fishes?) Well it’s part of my immediate family, my uncles and my grandmother fish and hunt. My dad used to hunt, but then he just kind of quit. When his friends started going pheasant hunting he started hunting again. (Do you go with them?) No.”*

## Factors Related to Participation in Fishing

### Participation and Interest in Fishing

Although most of the focus group participants are not currently active anglers, all of the tenth graders had gone fishing at least once before. However, compared to the other two younger age groups (second grade and fifth grade), the interest in fishing among the older focus group participants dropped significantly. Most of the participants have family members who fish, which is how the participants were initiated into fishing when they were younger. One tenth grader said that he/she used to go fishing with a friend in a backyard pond.

*"I don't fish anymore."*

*"I used to fish, but I don't anymore."*

*"I'm not much of a fisher."*

*"I fish. (Do you fish all the time?) Not too much because I moved up here about a year ago and there's not much to fish up here. (How did you get started fishing?) My parents, my mom and her husband used to fish a lot. It just doesn't seem to me to be anywhere to go fish. Where I used to live, I could go anywhere. (Do you know how to find out information about how to go fishing?) Not really. (But you started fishing with your family?) Yes."*

*"(You used to fish but you don't anymore?) No. (How did you start fishing?) My stepdad pretty much. He used to go because he was a farmer and we would go to his parents' house and he lived on a lake. (So why did you quit?) I don't know. I just really didn't like to go fishing anymore, and then my stepdad moved out about a year ago. (So what didn't you like about it?) I don't know; it's just not really thrilling."*

*"(You say that you've never fished before?) Well, I've fished a couple of times, two or three times when I was younger. I was never really into it though. (Did your family fish?) No, I used to live in Ohio and my friend had a pond in his backyard and we went fishing once or twice and that's really about all I can remember about fishing. (But your family doesn't fish.) My family does not fish."*

*"My dad and my brother fish all the time, and they have four ponds that they go to fish in all the time, and I usually go too. They drag me along, but I don't really like fishing because I get bored really easily and I think fish smell weird. I fish sometimes for an hour or two and then I don't. (So you do fish?) Yeah, they usually bait them for me because I don't like touching worms and all that. I just reel it in. (What do you catch at those ponds?) Trout and sometimes there's bass or something like that. I don't remember the names. It's just different things. (How often?) I don't know, my brother and dad go all time. (How often do you go though?) Maybe three or four times a year, maybe five. (And it's always with your family?) Umm hmm. (Do you ever go with*

*anyone besides your family?) No, not really. My friends sometimes come with my brother, but other than that, no."*

In addition to the drop in level of fishing participation compared to younger-aged focus groups, most of the focus group participants also seemed to have a reduced rate of participation in other outdoor recreational activities than when they were younger. One tenth grader said that he/she used to go biking as a child. Other types of activities mentioned were sledding in the wintertime, playing ball or going to parks. When prompted, several participants said that their friends sometimes go hiking, caving and swimming, but they themselves did not express a high level of interest in these activities, even though they have the opportunity to be involved. This is similar to the focus group conducted for hunting – the tenth graders knew about outdoor recreation in their state and where they could go, but did not seem to have a high level of interest in participating in these activities.

*"I used to do archery all the time."*

*"I used to go hiking."*

*"When I was younger I used to go biking. I'm not much of an outdoor person."*

*"(What is available for people your age to do around here as far as outdoor recreation?)"*

*"There are parks. There's a park right next to my house. We hang out on the playground and we go sledding there in the wintertime."*

*"Some people just go outside and play ball."*

*"(Even if you don't do them, what do other people your age do for outdoor recreation?)"*

*"I have a friend that goes hiking in New Mexico."*

*"(What other things do people do in the outdoors around here?)"*

*"There are a lot of caves. I've never been there. (Would you be interested in it?) Maybe, maybe it would be interesting to go down there and see what is down there. (So you might want to go caving?) Yeah."*

*"A lot of people swim. (Do you?) Not really, not here. If I swim then I swim indoors at the pool. (Are there a lot of places to go swimming outdoors?) No. A lot of people go to Southwest Missouri for that."*

## **Perceptions of Fishing**

Focus group participants did not express strong opinions one way or another regarding how "cool" other youth their age think fishing is. As with hunting, the tenth graders felt that

youth will fish because they want to, but they felt that most youth who attend their school probably do not fish because they would rather do other things, such as shopping. Even though the focus group participants did not specifically say that fishing was not a “cool” activity, there was some suggestion that the activity of fishing has a stigma of being an activity in which wealthier people do not participate, as well as an activity that does not reflect a desired type of lifestyle.

*“(So what I’m hearing from the others is that there are no perceptions one way or the other about fishing in this school as far as being cool or un-cool. Is that correct?) Well if you fish you fish. (Do a lot students fish at this school?) I really doubt it. (Why not?) Because, I think that it would be more popular to go shopping than fishing.”*

*“Yeah, it’s too money oriented out here. People live in nice homes; they don’t go fishing. I guess you could [say] that people think that it’s lower of them to go fishing. They would rather go to the mall or go somewhere other than fishing.”*

### **Positive Aspects of Fishing**

Even though most of the tenth graders said that they do not fish very often, their reasons for enjoying fishing when they do it were consistent. Being outdoors, relaxing, and spending time with family were the main reasons why the participants enjoy fishing. Even though one focus group participant enjoyed catching the fish, compared to the younger children, the tenth graders overall did not feel that it was as important to actually catch a fish. Rather, they enjoyed the actual act of fishing because of the other benefits.

*“It’s kind of relaxing.”*

*“Catching the fish.”*

*“Like I said before, I’m not much of a fisherman, but I will do it every once in a while. It’s fun to spend time with the family and just kind of visit. It’s fun to be outside, at least for a little while.”*

*“[It’s] relaxing.”*

*“Being able to sit and talk to people.”*

*“Satisfying.”*

### **Barriers to Fishing Participation**

Unlike the younger children, the tenth graders did not cite their parents as a factor that would prevent them from fishing. However, the fact that parents are often busy was brought up as one reason that focus group participants did not fish. If the child really enjoys fishing with

his/her parents, then this could be a significant factor in preventing fishing participation among youth interested in going fishing. Several of the focus group participants said that they simply did not have an interest in fishing. Others, however, were more specific and said that transportation was difficult, because many of them do not yet have a driver's license. Other focus group participants said that they did not know where to go fishing.

*"Maybe it's just a lack of interest. I know that's how I am. I've never been around fishing."*

*"(So then is transportation a problem for you with your access to outdoor recreation?) Sometimes. (Will your dad not take you?) Well sometimes he gets really busy doing other stuff. (What does he do?) Well he actually is on the School Board. He goes to the shooting range and does that kind of stuff. (But he doesn't take you fishing?) Well he wouldn't want to go fishing. (Does he fish still?) No, I don't think my dad ever did. (So the major issue for you is transportation?) That and I don't know where to go."*

*"Maybe if there were some way to go. (What would it take for me to get you information on how to go?) I don't know. (Do I just need to get you information about some place to go?) Well I don't live with my mom anymore, so I don't have anyone to go with and I wouldn't have a way to get there even if I did know where to go. (So you need someone to go with and you need information on where to go?) Yes."*

*"I don't know. (Are you just not interested in going at all?) Not really. (So even if I found you a place to go fishing you wouldn't go?) Probably not. (Do you still have your fishing gear?) Probably somewhere. (So what do I have to do to get you interested in going fishing again?) I don't know."*

### **Negative Aspects of Fishing**

Overall, there were a variety of reasons why the tenth grade focus group participants did not like fishing. One tenth grader felt that too much patience is needed to wait for a fish to bite, while other participants did not like the smell of the fish or the actual act of catching the fish. Another tenth grader seemed to not enjoy being outdoors and getting dirty. Several times, the feeling that fishing is boring or not thrilling enough was brought up as a reason why the tenth graders did not enjoy fishing. One focus group participant enjoyed video games much more because he/she felt that there was more control over the situation and there was more action, which made it fun. Although catching a fish was not brought up as one of the best things about fishing, it appears that this is still important to tenth graders because fishing becomes boring if no fish are caught.

*"Waiting for the fish. I'm really impatient, so when the fish don't bite, I get really mad."*

*"They smell and then you smell like it for a day after. It's just not a good smell."*

*"I'm kind of wimpy, I don't like getting dirty and I don't like the smell either."*

*“Catching the fish.”*

*“I just don't think it's fun. (You don't enjoy it?) No, you just sit there, and I just don't think it's fun.”*

*“Sometimes it gets to you because you have to wait forever.”*

*“It's just not really thrilling.”*

*“There are video games that are out about fishing. That's more fun to me. (Is that as fun as catching a fish outdoors?) Well, when you're indoors you don't have to sit around and wait for something to bite and you can put it on pause and go get something to eat and if it gets boring you can change the channel. But, if you're outdoors and you're on a boat then you can't just change the channel. In the video games you can control the atmosphere but outdoors—. (Is that important to you?) I just think it's more fun.”*

*“Well like what he said about thinking of a strategy, I like those types of things, but being able to catch one more than once every 24 hours is important.”*

## **Future Recruitment into Fishing**

When asked if they would be willing to mentor younger kids on fishing, one focus group participant said “yes” if he/she knew more about fishing. Lack of information seemed to be one of the factors limiting the participation levels of the tenth graders. It may be that school clubs would be a good avenue to teach children to fish. However, most of the after school clubs that the tenth graders could name were not oriented much towards the outdoors. Many of the clubs were language, art, or sports clubs with very few outdoors or science clubs, and no hunting or fishing clubs. However, one focus group participant said that if there was enough interest, a teacher would sponsor a club. This suggests that the interest is generally not there among tenth grade high school students.

## Chapter 5: Twelfth Graders' Attitudes toward and Participation in Hunting and Fishing

### Factors Related to Participation in Hunting

#### Participation and Interest in Hunting

Participants for this focus group were recruited based on the fact that they had hunted when they were younger, and some continue to hunt today. The focus group participants said that they started out hunting fairly young, between the ages of 6 and 12. Their fathers introduced all of the youth to hunting. One participant mentioned that the amount that he/she currently hunts has dropped because his/her father no longer hunts as often. All of the youth appeared to have had an enjoyable experience when they first started to hunt, even if they were just observing.

*“(You were exposed to hunting as a youngster. What were some of your early memories of it?) I thought it would be a lot of fun, but the first time I went hunting, I was too young to use a shotgun so I just went along. (How old were you the first time you went out?) Seven or eight.”*

*“(Did you go out the first time to just watch?) Yes.”*

*“(Are you a hunter?) Yes. (Talk to me about your first hunt.) The first time I went I was about six years old. The first whole season I didn't carry a gun. (Who'd you go with?) My dad and a bunch of friends. (Your friends or your dad's?) Some of my friends, but mostly my dad's. When I turned 8, after I had used a BB gun for a year, he bought me a .410, and that same season I ran out of shells, and I was close to my limit, so I had to start using a shotgun. So from then on, I go hunting every year. We go dove hunting and quailing here.”*

*“I have a few times [gone hunting] but not really. (Tell me about your first experience.) My dad and I went rabbit hunting one time; I think I was about 12. My dad told me a bunch of stories about how he used to go elk hunting and deer hunting and about hunting. (Is your dad an avid hunter?) Not anymore, but he used to go a lot. (How come he doesn't go anymore?) When he married my mom, my mom didn't like the guns in the house, but now that they got divorced, I think he might start doing it again. (Do you think you don't go as much because he doesn't go as much?) Yes, that's probably the biggest reason. (Do you miss hunting?) It's fun, it's nice to enjoy, it's relaxing just out there in the desert.”*

#### Participation Levels by Family and Friends

All of the twelfth graders said that they currently have family members who hunt or who used to hunt, which seemed to have an influence on how much the kids hunt. One participant has a little brother who is becoming more interested in hunting, while other participants

mentioned that their father, uncles and grandfathers have an interest in hunting. When asked about female relatives, such as sisters, focus group participants said that their female relatives' level of interest was much lower.

*"I have a little brother that's started getting interested in it. (How old is he?) He's 10."*

*"DAD: It's always been a family thing. My dad had four brothers and when we went hunting, we all went together-all the uncles and cousins. It's a big family deal, and it brings us together. They lived on a farm. When I was growing up they butchered their own livestock. So we grew up knowing that animals are meat. So I'd like to see him have that connection of what role animals play in a person's life. And I'd like him to learn about the conservation aspect of it too and find out we're not out there to just kill things, but that we're also out there to preserve things too. I wanted to share it with him if he was open to it. (Does your daughter go hunting?) No but she goes fishing with us. But she has shot with us. She went out with us and learned how to shoot the pellet gun and how to handle firearms. But she's more interested in girl things now."*

*"(Is the family tradition of that important to you?) Yes. I have an uncle that wanted my dad to go white tail deer hunting."*

*"DAD: It's on both sides of the family. My in-laws have a hunting cabin, and the guys go hunting for a week. (Do you both go?) We haven't had a chance yet, it's just so far away and he doesn't get off school easily."*

*"(Talk to me about your family and hunting.) My dad started hunting himself. Grandpa after he got back from WWII, he didn't like to kill things. (So your grandfather hunted before WWII?) Yes, he used to hunt a lot. After my dad moved out he started himself. My sister doesn't like to hunt. She's only had a few guns. And I like to hunt. (Did your grandpa teach your father to hunt before he went to the war?) He wasn't born yet. He was born after the war. He [grandpa] died before I got to meet him."*

*"I think my dad learned to hunt and fish more with his friends than my grandpa. My grandpa would go with my uncle to rodeos and stuff, but grandpa also hunted. I think having my grandpa hunting rubbed off on my dad. I have a sister, but she hates everything: hunting, fishing, and camping. We invite her to go camping, but she doesn't want to, so she stays at a friend's house."*

Focus group participants felt that girls are less interested in hunting because hunting is traditionally an activity that men do. They did not feel that girls are discouraged from hunting, but rather they simply are not interested.

*"Probably tradition. (Are we biased against them going, or do they just not want to go?) Probably both."*

*"(Are there any girls in your class that hunt?) No. I know adult women who have hunted, but then I also know a woman who's against it. I don't know."*

*“DAD: Two of the friends we hunt with, the one brings his wife and she hunts, and the other is totally against hunting. And the one that hunts is pretty good. Nobody discourages it. I don’t think there’s anything against it.”*

*“(So it sounds like it’s a decision on the young girls’ part more than men discouraging. Is it mostly squeamishness?)”*

*“My wife doesn’t hunt, but when she was young, she was always there. She remembers when they would bring home the doves and her and her mom would both be cleaning them. But she never went hunting. I don’t think she was interested. If she was cleaning birds, she obviously wasn’t squeamish.”*

Family and friends were named as the most likely group of people with which focus group participants were interested in hunting. Also, they said that they generally hunt with the same group of people. The kids’ parents had some concern about hunting with new people, mainly because of safety concerns and trust issues. This comes from negative experiences where some of the parents said they saw reckless behavior at shooting ranges. One father said that he would encourage his son to hunt if a friend wanted him to go, but would make sure that his son was aware of proper safety and firearm handling procedures.

*“Family and friends.”*

*“There’s a group that usually goes. (The same people?) Yes. The same people.”*

*“I’ve had different people go with us. Most of our relatives are out of state, so they don’t hunt here. But I have a friend from church that we go with, and then he and I [my son and I] went squirrel hunting, just us. But generally it’s the same people.”*

*“I usually go with my dad and that’s it.”*

*“Dove hunting I go with my friends or by myself. There’s a group that goes.”*

*“DAD: I have a problem hunting with new people that you don’t know. I want to keep a distance until I see how they handle a firearm because not everyone knows how to do it. Even guys that do occasionally they will point a muzzle at you. I have an eye out for safety at all times. [My son] is real good about keeping the gun pointed at the ground or the sky because it’s something he’s been taught from the start. I think it’s just dangerous going out with people you don’t know.”*

*“(If your son had a friend that wanted to go?) I’d be very protective but I would encourage him to come with us to learn safety and to keep his eyes out for dangerous things. But I’d be like a mother hen. (So you’d be more willing to take a child than an adult you didn’t know?) Kids are more likely to take direction and adults are more likely to say, ‘I already know what to do.’”*

*“(Does your dad take any other kids out?) No, just me.”*

*“(Did you dad take any of your friends?) I think he took one of my friends once. Usually when I go with friends, we go alone. But I just started to go by myself in the past year. So I started going by myself because he has work. (Was that a big deal for your dad to allow you to go by yourself?) He was more worried about my friends. I have one friend, and he and his dad are really safe with firearms, but he’s the only friend I really take, the only one I feel safe with without an adult.”*

*“DAD: I’d be leery going out with a group I didn’t know. Like a church group: they’re fine at church, but they don’t have firearms. As far as allowing someone else to come into the group, it’s never been an issue if there were friends that wanted to come along: they are welcome. There isn’t anyone who wouldn’t be welcome. If the church said there is forty of us going dove hunting, do you want to go, I would say no because I would be forty one. (Because the group would be large.)”*

*“DAD: I’m nervous at the range. Guys can’t seem to know when the bell rings.... you hear four more shots.”*

*“I saw a guy at the range who got kicked out because he did that twice. And another guy got kicked out because he stepped out. It wasn’t near the term break, and he walked out there not even thinking and then realized and turned back.”*

*“There are a lot of people there [at the range] that I wouldn’t trust.”*

As with the concerns expressed by other focus groups, safety was the biggest concern among parents, because even under careful supervision, they felt that accidents can occur. However, with the older children, the parents were less likely to prevent their kids from hunting than with the younger kids (as was seen in the previous focus group discussions).

*“Big concern. And we have a 100-foot rule for shotgun. And you can still put out an eye or break skin. I don’t like going out where there is a lot of people because then it gets crazy.”*

When questioned about their hunting habits, most of the youth said that they hunt on opening day. One participant said that he/she hunts through most of the season, although school limits the amount of time that can be spent hunting.

*“Dove opening day. We only go one day a year, and that’s opening day. (Is there something special about opening day?) It’s Friday. We get there the night before opening day so we’re set up and ready to go.”*

*“(When you have kids will you go on opening day?) Yes, because the animals are less disturbed and not quite as knowing as [when] all the people [are] there. After they hear shots, they know not to go there.”*

*“It seems like opening day. That way everyone puts in for it at work to have off.”*

*“(Do you hunt opening day?) Opening day and the whole way through until the second season. Not every day because I have school, but as much as I can.”*

*“For squirrel we only went opening day. But for opening day, it’s a tradition you wait and mark it on the calendar. And then you decide if you want to go again.”*

Even though friends were named as the group with which the focus group participants would most likely hunt, as a whole, the youth said that most of their friends don’t have strong opinions one way or another about hunting. There did not seem to be any image surrounding hunters at school, but the twelfth graders did acknowledge that they knew of some kids at school who oppose hunting.

*“They don’t think about it.”*

*“I don’t know anyone that opposes, but pretty much all our friends don’t think about it.”*

*“I’ve told my friends about going hunting. They’re not against it, but I don’t think they’ve thought about doing it. But I wouldn’t call them supporters.”*

*“(What about your friends and people you know: support or oppose hunting?)”*

*“I work with mostly blue-collar people, and I know a lot of people who hunt or have in the past and don’t really have a problem with it. I don’t really know a lot of people that are opposed to it.”*

*“(Do fellow students look up to you or look down on you because you hunt, or don’t they care?)”*

*“(Any status with being a hunter?) No. I think there are people who strongly oppose it. The Mormon group at school, I had one of them turn around and ask me not to talk about it. (Why didn’t they want you to talk about it?) Guess they don’t like it.”*

*“I think for us it’s a family issue.”*

## **Perceptions of Hunting**

When asked if they have any remorse about killing animals, the focus group participants said that they do not, because they were taught when they were young that hunting is not a bad thing to do. However, one youth said that he/she doesn’t have concern about killing animals because he/she has killed so few animals that it hasn’t registered yet. The same person, however, was concerned about the animal’s suffering and, therefore, tries to kill the animal as quickly as possible. What is important to note is that the twelfth graders’ parents apparently had some influence on teaching their kids about killing animals and hunting for food, and that it is not a bad thing to do.

*"It wasn't really hard. I thought it would be. But I had learned a lot since I was young and I was always taught that it's not bad to hunt. You're helping not hurting anything. You're taking a life but you're saving too."*

*"DAD: Neither one of us has gotten an elk or a deer, just dove. And our plans are for the meat. If we get a decent set of head or antlers, we would mount the head. I would actually be more remorseful if I shot something, knew I hit it, but didn't get it, left it out there to suffer. That would be a waste to me. I wouldn't feel good about that at all. But as far as the actual kill, it is one more step other than buying the steak in the store. But I don't think that bothers me."*

*"DAD: Cleaning your kills is very important and [has] always been important for everyone and me I've ever hunted with. I've never seen anyone do any joy killing. You go out there to accomplish a task: bring home a trophy; bring home meat, something necessary for food and survival. It's pretty much an accomplishment to have a trophy and you can't get the trophy unless you kill the animals. So killing them I think is a necessary by-product of the sport. I'd much more appreciate the chase, the calling in wild turkeys. I love that part of it, that's thrilling to me. Even calling in coyotes. I'd just as soon call it in and observe it and know I've been successful in what I've set out to do."*

*"(Any concern over killing animals?) No, not really. I haven't killed many things, so I really don't have much of a feeling for it. Just after I shoot it, I want to kill it quickly. I don't want it to suffer."*

### **Positive Aspects of Hunting**

The challenge of the hunt is one of the major reasons why the focus group participants enjoy hunting. Other reasons for hunting were to enjoy the outdoors and spend time with family and friends. More so than the other age groups, the twelfth graders generally enjoyed the process of hunting, that is, actually going out and getting the animal and then being able to claim it as an accomplishment. Even though this age group enjoyed hunting when they brought something home, the actual act of getting something was not as important as other aspects, especially just being outdoors and getting away from the city.

*"I like the chase and the kill. I enjoy hunting and killing my first deer and hunting elk."  
"(You love it.) Yes. I've always been an outdoors person. (What are some of the best things about hunting besides the challenge?) The meat afterwards."*

*"(Is it spending time with your dad or is it hunting?) It's everything. It's just an enjoyable experience. (Why do you hunt?) I like the meat that comes from the animals. Most of it tastes pretty good. And having a mount to show everyone that you did it. Just the adrenaline, not so much the killing. A lot of times tags are given out to lower the population, so it's nice to think that you're taking one but maybe saving a hundred. Getting out there even if you don't get anything, being with family and friends it's nice to just to spend time. (Could you pick one out that you like the best?) Probably spending*

*time with family and friends. Because even if you don't go out, you can still have fun just staying at the camp. (So if you went out alone and got an animal, that wouldn't be as good?) No, because you wouldn't have anyone to share it with when you got it."*

*"(What's the best part of hunting for you?) The challenge. I like to hunt. I go camping too. I just like the outdoors and being away from the city."*

*"I hunt for the fun of it. You're trying to catch something to kill it and then you're going to take it home and eat it or mount it. But after you catch it, it's yours. You go on this thing to get this animal and when you got it, you have it. Whether it's meat or whatever. It's just fun. (Is it the challenge?) Probably. You're out in the desert terrain, and you're walking around trying to find an animal. For me it's something out of the ordinary. (Could you have a good day even if you didn't get anything?) Probably. Just because I went out there."*

The focus group participants felt that hunting is an enjoyable experience and would tell others the same thing. The youth felt that non-hunters should at least try it once for the experience, and then form an opinion about it. The parents who were present in this focus group felt that educating youth about hunting and the need for it is important, even if the youth does not become a hunter.

*"At the very least they should be informative to everyone."*

*"(Do you agree that someone should do something to expose youth to hunting and try to increase positive opinions on hunting?)"*

*"I think so."*

*"I don't have a problem introducing youth to it. That sounds like a good idea."*

*"It's not necessarily hunting, it's knowledge about hunting. I think people should know that hunting must happen. So I think they should let people know what hunting does and how it affects the forest and wildlife and benefits it in the long run."*

*"(I'm getting the idea you're more worried about informing people about hunting rather than increasing participation.)"*

*"I have selfish reasons. (Because of limited space?) Yes and the increase in hunters in this state. There are fewer and fewer places to hunt birds particularly and there's less and less chance of drawing tags each year. Arizona has more hunters for the game than most other states. Look at how hard it is to get an antelope tag."*

*"My dad's been hunting for 23 years and never been drawn [for an antelope tag]."*

*"We get more and more hunters in Arizona every year without soliciting. So I think education is more important than recruiting."*

*“(Does everyone feel that way- that there’s enough hunters now?)”*

*“Yeah. You just don’t want people getting interested in hunting and be stupid about it. Recruiting people might not be the smartest thing to do. It might be smarter just to make people more knowledgeable about what happens. There are a lot of hunting shows out there like on TNN that show a certain guy going out there in his hunts and getting something or not getting something. Maybe they should talk more about safety during those shows instead of just trying to get the game. Or they should have a show on informing people.”*

## **Barriers to Hunting Participation**

### **Negative Aspects of Hunting**

The twelfth graders could name very few aspects of hunting that they disliked and said that it is generally an enjoyable experience for them. The weather and becoming physically tired were two negative factors, but the enjoyment of hunting compensated for this. One focus group participant had some concern about safety, especially with the high turnout on opening day, and preferred hunting in areas that are less crowded.

*“I don’t really dislike anything about hunting. The whole experience is enjoyable usually. You can get tired like hiking around, but that might not be as enjoyable as just sitting there.”*

*“No, nothing I can think of.”*

*“Only thing is dove hunting probably on opening day, just scary because there’s too many people. Then after that, it calms down, there’s not so much shooting going on. That’s something I dislike about hunting. (Is it the crowds that bother you in general?)”*

*“No, safety reasons are my concern. I don’t go camping to go dove hunting. Where we go we don’t usually run into too many hunters. So it’s relatively safe.”*

*“(Anything you dislike about hunting?) Probably just the heat.”*

*“The biggest complaint from my family is bugs. They don’t go there because there are bugs.”*

## **Future Recruitment into Hunting**

When asked if hunters should be interested in getting non-hunters to hunt or to be more accepting of hunting, the participants felt that it should be left up to the individual to make a personal decision as to whether or not to hunt. There was a general willingness to provide information to friends who might like to go hunting, but no interest in trying to encourage non-hunters to hunt if they do not want to or are against hunting. The discussion centered on the idea

of personal freedom to hunt or not hunt, and one twelfth grader adamantly felt that non-hunters should not make negative comments toward or about people who enjoy hunting. One father said that he would like to allay some of the prejudice against hunting, especially the stigma surrounding the sport.

*“I think it should be up to the person if they want to go hunting, then let them know so they can go. It’s more up to the person themselves if they want to go to take classes and learn how to use the weapons.”*

*“If you don’t like to hunt, that’s fine. But stay out of it; it’s none of your business. Don’t say I shouldn’t do something if I enjoy doing it. (Do you feel as a hunter you should be responsible to increase their positive image of hunting?) If they’re interested, I’d like to help them start to hunt because it is fun. But if they don’t want to, that’s ok. (Is it important to you to increase positive opinions on hunting?) No. (You don’t care?) Not really.”*

*“DAD: I think if we can allay some of the prejudice, it’s a good idea because there is an anti-hunting and anti-gun movement out there that’s very big and it’s gaining ground all the time. We may lose more of our privileges as time goes on. And it’s because of the stigma. They’re uninformed and lied to; there’s a bias, and people in high places have political agendas. And that’s what we need to be afraid of, and that’s the reason why we would introduce someone to our sport: To show him or her it’s not something criminal or barbaric and that it’s a natural thing. I think an armed citizenry is essential. (How about participation?) I don’t think the number of hunters needs to be increased. I don’t think participation is as valuable as education. Remove the stigma.”*

*“If people were interested, like my friends, I would help them. If they wanted information on it, I would tell them to take a class. When you’re out there, you don’t want people who aren’t hunters thinking badly of you. So take care of the forest, and when you take pictures if you get a big game animal, clean it up. So it’s an image to keep up and to take care of.”*

All of the focus group participants said that they would probably take their kids hunting one day, just to give their kids the opportunity to try the activity and discover for themselves if it is something they enjoy. The twelfth graders who hunt said that they would be disappointed if their kids did not want to hunt. The participants who hunt said that they enjoy hunting and would probably try to make hunting a fun experience for their kids.

*“Yeah. (How come?) My dad never really got to do it with me a lot, and hopefully when I have a child my dad will still be able to go out and hunt with us. So we could spend time in the outdoors and learn stuff.”*

*“If they want to come out. One of the first times I went, I didn’t carry a gun. I wanted to go because I saw my dad come home each day with my dog. So I chose to come out. And every time after that he asked me. (Do you hope they want to go?) I’d enjoy going with my kids. (Would you be disappointed if they didn’t want to go?) No, that’s their*

*opinion. If they don't want to go hunting, then that's ok. As long as they know gun safety and where there should be hunters."*

*"Yeah, I probably would. But if they wanted to continue hunting, I would leave that up to them. Like I would ask them if they want to go hunting and if they really wanted, I would bring them with me. If they didn't that's ok. Its fun, but it's really fun when you do it with your family. (Would you be disappointed if you had sons and they didn't want to go hunting?) I probably would be a little disappointed. I really think of hunting—it's ok with a friend but-with family. It's like you're teaching them how to hunt, the safety issues, you're showing them what to do. So I think it would be really fun."*

*"Yeah. I would start them off early but not too early. Probably 8 or 9. I would start taking them camping and getting them introduced to wildlife and nature. And I probably would like them to hunt and be a little disappointed if they didn't. (How come?) Because I enjoy hunting and it is fun to do with people you are close to. It's a good way to bond with people. And I enjoy it myself and would hope they would enjoy it."*

In addition to taking their own kids hunting, everyone said that they would be interested in teaching other youth about hunting, as long as they wanted to hunt for the right reason. For example, they would not be willing to take other youth out for the pure purpose of killing something, but rather instead if they were willing to learn how to be a safe, respectful hunter.

*"If they're really interested, I would take them out and teach them."*

*"Yeah."*

*"And if they didn't have the opportunity, like I have a dad that hunts, owns guns, and we do all types of hunting and shooting, and if they didn't have that same scenario, then, yeah, I would help them. I would teach them how to shoot and how to be safe, how to be a respectful hunter. But if someone just wanted to kill something, I don't think I'd take him or her. If you're talking about informing people, I do think a program should be made to go to schools and show them what would happen exactly if hunters did not hunt. There are just little things that people should know."*

## **Factors Related to Participation in Fishing**

### **Participation and Interest in Fishing**

Participants for this focus group were recruited based on the fact they had fished before and continue to fish today, although at various levels of consistency. For example, one youth said that he fishes only four to five times a year, while another youth said that he has been fishing almost his entire life and fishes whenever he can. The twelfth graders were split on how much they actually enjoy fishing now; some said that it is one of the top things they like to do, while others said that it only gives them medium satisfaction. All of the focus group participants were either initiated by their parents, grandparents or friends. Often, fishing is done in conjunction with other outdoor activities, especially camping.

*“I’m originally from Connecticut. That’s where I first started fishing. A guy across the street had a nice pond he let us go to. (How old were you?) I was probably 11. We’d go over there all summer and fish. When I moved out here, fishing isn’t as good as it was in Connecticut but I try to go once every month or so here with my friends. (It was you and your friends that started fishing?) My parents never; I think I only went fishing with my dad once. (Are you very interested in going fishing?) I’d list it as one of my main hobbies. (So after you moved here you started seeking out places to fish?) Yeah, I tried to find better spots. Pretty much we would go to the place across the street, but I moved here and started reading the newspaper. In the sports section it tells you all the hot fishing spots. But I don’t have a boat or anything. (How long ago did you move?) Five years.”*

*“I’ve been fishing for close to my entire life. I lived in Mexico for a long time, and we’d go trout fishing. We moved back here and recently my dad got a boat, so we stay up overnight at the lake and fish in the marina. I pretty much go fishing whenever I can. (How often do you go fishing?) Whenever I can. It varies. (But you go a lot?) No, not really. (Not as much as you want?) No.”*

*“(How old were you when you started fishing?) Young, probably 2.”*

*“(Was your fishing always with your dad?) None of my friends really liked it, but my dad pretty much. (Would you say it’s one of the top things you like to do?) Yeah. I love the outdoors; I don’t like the city much.”*

*“(Do you go fishing?) Yeah. I go fishing. (When?)”*

*“DAD: About four or five times a year.”*

*“(Do you like it?) Yes. (Do you remember the first time you went fishing or were you too young to remember?) Too young.”*

*“DAD: We go deep-sea fishing and fly fishing.”*

*“(One of the top things you like to do?) Top thing.”*

*“I just kind of do it around the house. There’s a pond by us; actually, it’s a community lake. We go out there fishing and just hanging out having a good time. I got into it at 6 or 7. My dad and grandpa, they take me out on a boat all the time when we used to live in Colorado. We’d go fishing out there all the time on the weekends usually and go camping and hang out. (One of the top things you like to do?) It’s up there. (Did you ever go traveling to go fishing?) We never used to travel too far, just close. There are little ponds and lakes that they stock. (How often do you go?) About once a month. It varies. Haven’t done it much lately. But I’m starting to do it more when I can go outside.”*

*“I picked up fishing when I was little because my dad always used to go fishing. (How little?) I was 6 or 7. (He’d take you with him?) Yeah, he’d go out fishing and he liked it.”*

*And then we moved out here and there wasn't too much around, just the community lakes. But then I really started to pick it up when I went to Oregon to stay with my aunt and uncle for a little. There's a lot of fishing out there, and my uncle is really into it. And I came back and every now and then we'll go out backpacking to a river to go fishing. Not too much. (How about your love of fishing?) It's more of a medium thing. If I have an opportunity to go, I'll go, but it's not something I'll go out and do."*

*"I started fishing with my grandpa, who lives in Minnesota. He has a lake behind his house, and I started fishing there because we used to have all our cousins over and we'd go fishing off the dock just for fun. (How old were you?) I don't know."*

*"DAD: Six probably."*

*"(How old are you now?) Thirteen. (Do you remember it?) Yeah. (Talk about your earliest fishing memory.) I remember one time when I caught a little sunny fish and it swallowed the hook and I had to hold it and my mom had to pull the fish off, and it was gross. (How much do you like fishing? A lot, a little?) It's medium. It's not one of my favorite things. (What are your favorite things?) Like to do? I like to talk on the phone and hang out with my friends."*

*"We try to go backpacking usually every other month, and we try to fish there. We try to go where there is a river so we can catch something good. We'll go out then every other month usually. (Do you go camping to fish or fish while you're camping?) We fish while we're camping. Camping and backpacking is more of the main thing, but fishing is something to do while we're there."*

*"(Do you go camping to fish?)"*

*"We used to go at 5 or 6 in the morning and wait until the sun comes up and go fishing."*

*"Yeah. When we go camping it's really annoying when I can't fish at all and I'm just stuck in the camp. Last time we went camping, we camped on a hill only four minutes from the river, and I was only able to leave camp once to go fishing and that was really annoying knowing there was a river down there and I couldn't go down there. I really like to camp to fish. And just go."*

## **Perceptions of Fishing**

Overall, the twelfth graders felt lucky to have been introduced to fishing, because they feel they have been exposed to new experiences and have learned more about the natural environment than if they had not fished.

*"Uh huh. (Why?) Because you get to be outdoors and sometimes get to stay home from school. (You feel luckier because?) You can see big fish they haven't seen before. (You're experiencing things they are not?) Yeah."*

*“I feel luckier because it’s opened up a whole new world for me. It’s completely different. Other people go camping, and I’ve never done that. But it’s opened up a whole new world for me, just the sights I’ve seen. It’s taught me how to be independent. It teaches you stuff.”*

Many of the focus group participants felt that fishing is a good opportunity to allow interaction with one’s family, because it provides more one-on-one contact with the person you are fishing with than other action-type sports such as skiing. Two twelfth graders admitted that they became closer with their family and friends after spending time with them camping and fishing.

*“I think fishing provides more quiet time, more time to talk. If you’re skiing, you’re not talking. If you’re fishing, you’re out there all day with just the person next to you. (Do you talk to your dad when you’re fishing?) Yeah. (Do you feel like you have a better relationship with your dad-do you feel like fishing has helped you develop a stronger relationship with your dad?) Probably.”*

*“Backpacking-you hike all day and you get pretty close hiking. And then the campsite, you set up the tent and work together and sit around and talk together. We did this backpacking trip this summer, and every night all ten of us would sit around and say what was good about today. And we became really close by the end of twelve days.”*

*“(Are there other activities other than fishing that provide that type of setting? Or do you think that the outdoors is a unique place for that to happen.)”*

*“I’d say golf. You’re still outside: nature is your course.”*

It is equally important to develop a deeper understanding of why youth think that fishing is not a very popular sport among people their own age. The overall opinion of the focus group participants was that kids who don’t currently fish were likely not exposed to fishing when they were younger, or other activities hold their interest more.

*“Because they never got into the outdoors. Their parents never took them outdoors or parents were too busy working. They just never got outdoors to experience it themselves. (Are you saying that your love for the outdoors is due to your parents exposing you?) It started there, and then I found other people that were interested and kept going. They introduced me to it. I don’t think I’d be backpacking and all that if my parents didn’t introduce me to it.”*

*“I don’t think people hear about it enough. Kids may not know it, but they may want to. They just never hear about it because their parents never take them out. I’m sure some people, if they heard about it some other way like TV, they might try it.”*

*“Some people, like my friends, don’t want to try to fish because they think it will be stupid and boring. But they never give it a chance and they don’t want to. I don’t know why.”*

*“They don’t have any patience for it. It’s a time-consuming thing. You have to plan out when you’re going to get there, you have to figure out what you’re going to use and where you’re going to fish, and they don’t have the patience to just sit there and wait. They get bored because they don’t appreciate the whole thing. They don’t appreciate the fishing. Fishing, the whole part of it is that you’re outdoors. You can’t like fishing and not the outdoors because they go hand and hand. I think people just don’t get introduced to being outdoors. It’s tough to get people who grew up into the city to be into that. They don’t understand it.”*

*“(What makes you an angler and some of the people you go to school with not?) I was introduced to it at a young age, and I was constantly put into it. Most of my friends, they were never introduced to the outdoors at all. They don’t even classify hunting and fishing as a sport. They consider sports like football, basketball and baseball, and they’d rather do that than go outdoors.”*

The focus group felt that overall, much more effort could be made at advertising fishing, and making it more well-known as a potentially fun activity. They felt their state fish and wildlife agency has not done enough to promote fishing among youth. Parents of the focus group participants felt that if youth had more exposure to fishing or aquatic habitats, they would be more likely to have an interest in fishing. They explained that youth these days do not spend as much time outdoors playing or exploring the natural environment and, therefore, do not have an affinity for activities like fishing. One focus group participant felt that there were too many different types of licenses that were required to fish in different types of water.

*“I think that they should at least make it present. Right now AZGFD doesn’t really show much, you don’t hear anything about them unless you really look for it. They can make themselves available to the ordinary public, not people out usually hunting and fishing, then I’m sure a lot more people would give it a chance and go out and enjoy it and experience fishing and maybe present it to their children or others.”*

*“(So it’s something worthy of other people besides family members doing?)”*

*“DAD: They can do more to expose kids to it. They could go to a school and set up a pool with fish in it and let them catch it. Once they experience it, they’ll love it instantly. Most of them don’t experience it. Most of his friends would love to go but their parents won’t. I wouldn’t let my son go with someone else if you don’t really know the parents of the kids.”*

*“DAD: When I was a growing up here, it was not unusual for me to prowl around the river and ponds fishing or for my parents to drop me off at the park with a lunch pail and a fishing rod. Would I let him do that today? No. It’s not the fact that I don’t trust him as much as I don’t trust other people. (So it’s a safety issue?) If the cops were present, visible, it would be a different story. But you don’t see any of that. I need to feel that he’s protected if I’m going to let him go to the lake by himself.”*

*“(So what separates you from your classmates is the exposure?)”*

*“The opportunity.”*

*“(And you feel comfortable for or support organizations promoting fishing.)”*

*“How about more free days? We had one free day of fishing a year now?”*

*“You can fish in the ponds.”*

*“But you can’t fish in the pond with a river license.”*

*“Make it simple, charge \$5 more, whatever, but I have to buy three licenses to go fishing. If you just want to fish wherever you want. You don’t say, oh, I can’t fish there because I don’t have that license.”*

Overall, parents were much more comfortable allowing their children to go out fishing with trusted individuals, or in groups.

*“My parents used to not let me go out, but since then I’ve gone backpacking and proved to my dad that I can take care of myself out there, lived on my own for the most part out in the woods. And I got older so he let me go out with other people more that he didn’t know.”*

*“Groups are better. It makes you feel better there’s at least three or four people there.”*

*“Me and him tried to go backpacking once to a river to go fishing, and there was no beaten path so it was going to be bush whacking. And his parents said no. But since another person was coming to go with us, they let him go. If the AZGFD, if they had groups, more people would be able to go.”*

*“But if you’re just with your son, you don’t want a big crowd out there with you.”*

*“(If he wanted to have three of his friends from school go fishing with you, would you feel comfortable with that?)”*

*“Absolutely.”*

*“Yes.”*

*“I’ve taken groups.”*

*“(So it has to be a very trusted individual to let your child go? Is it the day trips or the overnight trips?)”*

*“It’s the same.”*

*“The same.”*

*“I would think, I don’t know because I’m not a parent yet, but I would think if I take my kid fishing, I’d say is there a friend who wants to come? Not only would I introduce their friend to fishing, but maybe they’d be more comfortable for them to be with their friend out fishing. I think I’d like my kid to take a friend with him.”*

### **Positive Aspects of Fishing**

Catching a fish and relaxation were cited as the two best things about fishing. The relaxation of being away from the city combined with the adrenaline rush that comes from catching a fish was seen as the best aspect of fishing.

*“When you catch the fish. (Because?) I don’t know it’s just the most exciting part. And catching big fish. Being there with people you know and having fun. (Do you take friends with you?) Sometimes.”*

*“Before I went up to Oregon, it was catching fish. Because in Arizona it’s so hard to catch fish. You had to really work at it and finally catch something. But after I went to Oregon, the fish there are so different. No matter what you stick in, they’ll take it. And after that, it was just hanging out and talking with people until you catch the fish. It’s different everywhere we go. When we’re backpacking, I think the best is just walking along the river trying to catch the fish.”*

*“It’s relaxing. You can try really hard or you can just cast it out and let it sit there. Or you can go fly fishing out in the stream and try hard all day. (So it can fit your mood?) Yeah. I’ve heard people say it’s a stress reliever because it causes more stress. (In what way?) Tangling and all that. It relaxes me just sometimes; I don’t understand how people can call it a relaxing sport. Some points I have a blast and laugh at other people all frustrated.”*

*“I like catching a fish. (How come?) I don’t know, it’s just exciting. (How is it exciting?) I don’t know, it just is. (And you’re smiling.) (Dad does he smile when he catches fish?) When he was 9 years old, we went fishing and it hit him. That rod was gone and it nearly pulled him off his feet and then he was addicted. He landed his first one on his own last year.”*

*“I think I just like getting away, sitting out on a boat in the middle of the lake, away from all the hustle and bustle of the city or walking a streambed or river or creek. (It’s relaxing to you?) Yes. But then there’s also the adrenaline rush when you get a hit whether it’s a sixty pound fish or a small, one pound bass, you get an adrenaline rush every time because it’s fun.”*

*“My fishing experiences here, I’ve sort of de-emphasized the catching of the fish because I don’t catch too many out here. I must be going to the wrong places. I just go to the river but something always seems to happen. I go with friends and we usually make a day out of it if we go to the river. If we’re fishing or hiking we make an adventure out of*

*it. Either my friend breaks their pole or their line; it's just hilarious what they do. It's just an adventure."*

*"The experience is as exciting as the fishing. Taking them to where you're going. Walking up and down the river banks. You don't know what's around the next corner. The adventure's part of it."*

## **Barriers to Fishing Participation**

Since catching a fish was named as one of the best things about fishing, not catching a fish was viewed as the worst thing. The youths said that they found it frustrating when they go out all day and don't come home with anything. Other things that were mentioned as negative aspects of fishing were equipment getting broken and fishing line getting broken. However, these were viewed more as frustrations and not concrete reasons to not enjoy fishing.

*"I don't like sitting there and waiting, for like an hour. And you don't catch anything. And then you go home and you didn't even catch a fish. I hate that."*

*"Really, it's all fun. The tangles, are fun, you just laugh. Sometimes it gets frustrating but I don't think there's ever a time I had a really bad time fishing."*

*"Sometimes when you tie a knot wrong, after you've been fishing for an hour and you finally get a hit. Just frustrating sometimes, but it's fun too."*

*"When the string snaps."*

*"There's not really anything I don't like. If you let yourself get frustrated then, you're trying too hard and you're not having fun. If you're having fun, you don't get frustrated."*

*"I always end up breaking all of my fishing equipment and I don't know why. Like snapping my fishing pole in the door or losing a lure. It's sucks when you lose a four-dollar lure. I just break stuff. That's what happens when I go fishing. I lose something or I break something."*

Several youths said that they would like access to more information about fishing, especially regarding where to go. The focus group participants said that a good fishing spot was often difficult to find. Although more information about fishing spots was desired, one focus group participant said that the information should not be too highly publicized to avoid overcrowding.

*"(Is there a lack of information for you?)"*

*"Yeah."*

*"Yeah."*

*"Yeah. It's tough to find out the good ones. We usually just went to the river because it was five miles from where I lived."*

*"(So there is a lack of information? Would you want more information?)"*

*"You have a problem with locations and what's available. Most people that go out fishing it's a one- to two-hour drive, at most, if you want to go fishing. Also, most people that come here don't know how to fish Arizona. It's different. You're not going to go to Oregon and do the same type fishing. So each state almost has a different style."*

*"You just keep moving round to different spots until you find one. When you're living at home, my parents wouldn't let me drive that far to go fishing by myself."*

*"I like the information to be confidential. If you really want the information, you'll know where to look. It's nice because if everyone knows where it is, everyone is there and then it's too crowded."*

*"Most people won't put the effort into it."*

*"It's knowing the environment where you're fishing and the time of day."*

## **Future Recruitment into Fishing**

All of the twelfth graders were interested in one day teaching their own kids about fishing. As with the hunting focus group participants, though, they would want their own kids to decide for themselves if they want to continue to fish. Since these participants think that fishing is a fun and enjoyable experience, they want to share the experience with their own kids.

*"Uh huh. So they see a whole bunch of different places."*

*"Yeah. I'd want to introduce it to them, but I don't know that I'd force them to do it. I'd say, would you like to tag along with me?"*

*"I'd introduce them to the outdoors in general. If they want to go backpacking or fishing. I'd introduce it to them, but I wouldn't say you have to go with me, I'd say just try it. You may like it, if not, it's not a big deal."*

*"Whatever. I probably would [want to take them fishing]. Because it's fun and they might be really interested in it."*

*"I'd definitely show them. Bring them with you once and if they like it, great, come with me next time, if not, it's ok. (So present them with the opportunity?) Yeah, present it to them. Some people just don't like to do it."*

There was much discussion on programs that could be initiated to help encourage youth to go fishing. Perhaps the simplest and most obvious strategy they felt, would be to increase available information about fishing, where to fish, how to buy a license, etc. Kids who have never been exposed to fishing are not likely to have first-hand knowledge about this type of information and may think that becoming involved in fishing is more difficult than it really is. Several focus group participants felt that marketing should focus on the message of social interaction as a reason to enjoy fishing.

*“I’d say promote it more. They don’t have to have commercials, but have free days where people can go out and have someone there that knows what they’re doing to show people how to do it. (Would you take advantage of that?) No. (Would you have?) If I was just starting out. To start out, someone has to have an interest in it anyways. If they saw this, they could learn the basics. If there’s no one there to teach them, they’re not going to pick the rod up themselves and go fishing.”*

*“(Is there not a whole lot of information out there?)”*

*“I’ve never heard about this free fishing day actually.”*

*“One day a week, the back page of the newspaper, there’s stuff on the Fish and Wildlife Service and they have what’s going on.”*

*“You probably have to gear it more towards kids and their families and kids and their friends. Most people, you’re going to have to be fishing for awhile before you’ll go out by yourself and go fishing. Most people do it as a social event. Get the family, get the friends, publicize it and get people into it. Make people more aware of it, which is hard to do because it’s not like a lot of the sports today that have a lot of action. It’s a different kind of sport. It’s not a physical sport; it’s a mental sport. You’re trying to catch a wild animal that has a brain. You have to go and figure out, ‘what is this fish going to eat?’”*

*“I would publicize it a lot more. Like organized groups, take them out, and show them the basics and let them attempt it on their own.”*

*“(What would you say on why they should try it? What kind of message would appeal?)”*

*“Angle it towards more social interaction along with fishing because if you go out with friends and family you’re going to socialize all day long. Then you’ll talk about it, and do it again. If people know they’re going to have fun, whether they catch fish or not, then I’m sure they’ll do it. People think they’re going to go out there and not catch anything and not have fun. I’ve had fun even when I didn’t catch anything. There’s more to it than just catching a fish.”*

*“(What would you say to make them want to go.) I’d let more people know about it. Probably catching fish. (So it’s just fun?) Yeah.”*

*“I think the best way to get it known out there is friends telling friends about it. Offer more free stuff about it. It’s just so expensive to get started. With all the licenses, it’s not cheap. So it would be good to be able to try it without spending money on a whole year’s license.”*

*“(Did you know about fishing tackle loaner programs and that the state has rods and reels that they would loan people?)”*

*“They have camps for soccer, football, baseball, softball, but not fishing camps. An outdoors camp in general. Parents send their kids to camps for a week in the summer. Why not have them go fishing?”*

*“They would probably be more likely to send them to a camp with other kids than along with a parent and their son.”*

*“I liked his idea about just a quick commercial clip of instructors showing them how, and of kids actually standing by the pool catching fish.”*

*“Once a kid catches a fish, then it’s instant. Maybe have them in the sporting goods store. Catch and release.”*

*“I know if I hadn’t caught anything the first time I went out fishing, I probably would never have gone again. Once they catch it, they’re going to be addicted. For me, I didn’t have patience when I was little.”*

*“DAD: When I was growing up, it was common to see the catch and release ponds. But the only thing you see now is when there’s a cover charge to get in. When I look at the fishing in Arizona, I think it has to do with the visibility that the AZGFD has to the general public.”*

*“It’s the kids in the shopping malls on the weekends that don’t have exposure, that that one opportunity could make the difference between them being exposed to fishing.”*

*“(What are things you’d say to other girls to get them to go fishing?) Just the same as everybody’s been saying. I don’t know, it’s just fun. Probably the most fun would be girls going with their friends. Nothing else is going to get them into fishing like their friends or family.”*

## Major Findings

These focus groups are part of a larger study to better understand the attitudes toward and participation levels of hunting and fishing among the nation's youth. To develop effective strategies to increase participation levels, it is important to first understand the attitudes, opinions and motivators of various age groups so that the audience can be targeted most effectively. The information gleaned from the focus groups, as well as information compiled from the review of literature, indicate that opinions of youth towards hunting and fishing change from second grade to twelfth grade. However, there are also several similarities between the age groups.

- **Overall, almost all of the focus group participants had fished at some point in their lives and several had hunted. However, there appeared to be a marked drop-off during the teenage years.**

Many youth said that they continue to participate, although the frequency dropped considerably as age increased. Interest in hunting and fishing also dropped as age increased - second graders were much more interested in both hunting and fishing than twelfth graders.

- **Hunting and fishing are activities closely associated with the family.**

Many of the focus group participants (regardless of age) said that members of their family hunted and fished in the past or currently do so. In addition, almost all of the focus group participants said that they were initiated into hunting or fishing through a male family member. Promotion of these activities through the family structure is likely to be effective, because the most common response provided to the question of whom the youth would like to hunt or fish with most was "family or friends." Generally, it was the male family members who hunted or fished. Most commonly, it was the youth's father, brother or grandfather. However, a few participants said that female family members also participated in these activities.

- **Although youth were more comfortable learning how to hunt and fish with family or friends, they were receptive to learning from other experienced individuals.**

Although "family and friends" was the most common response as to whom the focus group participants would want to go hunting or fishing with, it is important to note that several youths stated that they would be willing to go with other individuals, such as representatives from the state fish and wildlife agency. However, parents of the youths had many more reservations about this suggestion and reiterated that they would want their children to go hunting and fishing only with individuals they knew personally. They were much more comfortable letting their children participate with other family members, or individuals whom they knew very well. However, many parents did say that they would want to accompany their children if they went hunting or fishing with someone like a game warden. Youth hunting and fishing activities could be promoted as a family activity, and parents could be invited along on first-time hunting or fishing trips with conservation officers. Once the parents become acquainted with the individuals taking their children hunting and fishing, they may become more supportive of letting their children participate without them present. This situation would be

highly beneficial to both youth hunting and fishing promotion efforts, as well as to busy parents who may not have the time to take their kids hunting and fishing.

- **Hunting and fishing are generally not topics of discussion between youth and their peers.**

The focus groups demonstrated that youth of all ages generally do not discuss hunting and fishing with their peers. Overall, youth of all ages felt that their peers have a neutral attitude towards hunting and fishing because they did not see their peers show support or opposition at school. Many youths were unaware of other students that hunted and fished at their school. This finding supports the premise that hunting and fishing are closely tied to the family; therefore, discussion of these activities and exposure to these activities is occurring within the realm of the family. However, when probed, the youth showed support for promotion of hunting and fishing activities through the school, but were concerned that the school board would not approve.

- **Girls showed an interest in fishing more so than hunting. Despite their interest, they felt that fishing (and hunting) are viewed as traditional male activities.**

Although the female focus group participants were more interested in fishing than hunting, hunting and fishing should be promoted to both males and females, because both groups expressed at least some interest, especially at the younger ages. Many of the focus group participants across the ages felt that hunting and fishing are traditionally viewed as male activities. However, it is important to note that the girls showed an interest in both activities. Several female focus group participants noted that fathers tend to take their sons fishing more than their daughters because they think that girls would not enjoy the activity and would be afraid to get dirty. Although many of the female youth said that was somewhat true, they also said that they would be willing to try the activity.

- **Youth were more supportive of hunting when they knew that the animals were utilized.**

In general, youth of all ages were much more supportive of hunting if the animals were used for food. Interestingly, many youth were under the impression that people primarily hunt for fun rather than for food. This impression seemed to fuel several of the youths' negative opinion of hunting, beginning with the fifth graders, because they could not understand why anyone would be interested in simply killing an animal for fun.

- **The importance of catching a fish (while fishing) was consistent across age groups as a factor that increased enjoyment. However, as age increased, spending time with family and friends, and being outdoors became more important reasons to go fishing.**

The youngest children were most interested in actually catching a fish, or bringing home deer meat, while the older children were more interested in enjoying the act of hunting or fishing, or being with their family and friends. Thus, it appears important to promote fishing and hunting in ways that are directly relatable to second through fifth graders; something that they can touch

and experience. Even though catching a fish was not expressly stated by tenth graders as the most important reason for fishing, the focus group suggested that this desire may carry through the tenth grade.

- **Eating the fish and game that they caught was very important to the second graders.**

Almost all of the second graders said that the best thing about hunting and fishing was eating the fish or game. In fact, knowing that they could eat the meat appeared to override any concern that the second graders had about killing animals.

- **Many youth, especially the older age cohorts, felt that hunting and fishing are boring activities.**

Fishing and hunting (mostly fishing) was commonly cited as being boring and not thrilling enough. In the age of video games and television, hunting and fishing must be promoted as activities that are fun and exciting, in addition to being a way to spend time with family and friends.

- **Access to hunting and fishing opportunities appears to be a problem for youth.**

Many of the focus group participants were limited in how much they could hunt and fish because they didn't have anyone to go with, didn't know where to go, or didn't know enough about it. Increasing the amount of available information would solve at least two of these problems. Surprisingly, there were very few outdoors clubs in the youths' schools. Perhaps if clubs were available beginning in elementary school, the interest in wildlife and nature (and perhaps hunting and fishing) could be carried through the teenage years. The interest appears to wane somewhere in the middle school years, as demonstrated by the high schoolers who said that a teacher in their school would sponsor a club if there was sufficient interest. Yet, these students said that few students showed an interest in forming any kind of outdoors club.

- **Both parents and youth were concerned about hunting safety.**

One of the major concerns about hunting was safety. Even the youngest children said that their parents were concerned about them getting hurt, and this concern seemed to influence the attitudes that the children develop about hunting as they get older. Several of the tenth graders were concerned about firearms safety, especially in light of the school shootings that have occurred. Interestingly, there was not much concern about fishing safety, even though drowning is a real danger. This suggests that there should be increased communications to the public on hunting safety and making both parents and youth aware that hunting is a safe activity when done properly.

- **Older youth (beginning in the eighth grade) felt that hunting and fishing are not adequately promoted.**

Almost all of the focus group participants felt that hunting and fishing are not adequately advertised or promoted to youth their own age. Many of the youths said that they rarely, if ever,

see promotional materials or advertising on hunting and fishing. The youths had many suggestions as to how these activities could be advertised and promoted. All of the youths were highly supportive of organized hunting and fishing trips with other kids their own age. Eighth graders were particularly interested in seeing modern, high-tech gear for hunting and fishing. "Brand name" fishing poles and gear were highly supported by the eighth graders, especially the girls. The use of celebrities in commercials about hunting and fishing was also supported. This is an interesting finding, because it supports the idea that if hunting and fishing is seen as a "cool" activity, then youths may be more likely to participate. However, when directly questioned about how "cool" their peers view these activities, most of the focus group participants said that other kids their age have a neutral attitude. The importance of the "coolness" of the activity, however, becomes more apparent when the focus group participants said that the use of celebrities, "cool" gear, and good, solid advertising may encourage participation.

- **Youth go through various stages of cognitive development, which affect their views on the natural environment (including hunting and fishing). Therefore, promotion efforts must be tailored to meet the needs of different age cohorts.**

Research indicates that children go through various stages of cognitive development, which has a profound effect on how they view nature and the environment, and, in turn, how they view hunting and fishing. Kellert (1985) found that younger children expressed far less interest in animals, particularly wildlife, than did older children and that younger children consistently placed the needs of people over animals and expressed minimal concern for the rights and protection of animals. Research (Kellert 1985 and Kellert and Kahn 2002) also shows that young elementary school children relate to the world in very concrete ways. In the focus groups, even though the second graders said that they felt some sadness about killing animals, the fact that they could eat the meat, or catch a fish, appeared to override any concerns that they had about killing an animal. In addition to this egocentric attitude, the younger children in these focus groups identified with the *tangible* aspects of hunting and fishing – eating the fish/meat, catching the fish, or making something out of the deer antlers.

Between fifth and eighth grade, studies have shown that a major increase in factual knowledge occurs (Kellert 1985 and Kahn and Kellert 2002). Children at this age are interested in learning not just the basics of fishing or hunting, but also facts about the natural environment. This was somewhat true of the youth in this study. The fifth graders were still very much interested in the physical acts of fishing and hunting, but the eighth graders demonstrated more interest in learning about the fish that they caught and the game they killed, and the aquatic habitats where the fish lived as long as they weren't learning detailed facts that they thought would never be useful to them.

In the aforementioned study by Kellert, the changes that occur between the eighth grade and the eleventh grade include major increases in ethical concern for animals, a growing appreciation of wildlife, and an ability to deal with abstract concepts such as ecosystems and biological diversity. This developmental stage is readily visible when comparing the fifth and the eighth graders with the tenth and twelfth graders. The older children showed much more concern about killing animals, and were more negative toward hunting because of issues related to animal rights. However, the twelfth graders appeared to have a much more sophisticated attitude toward animal welfare, recognizing that death does happen. Although the older youth

showed more concern over killing animals, several older youths said that they were taught when they were young that hunting or fishing is not a “bad” activity simply because animals are killed.

Encouraging hunting and fishing through existing social structures, such as school, was suggested by the high schoolers as a means of increasing interest in hunting and fishing. Although neither peer pressure nor how “cool” hunting and fishing is viewed seemed to affect whether middle and high school students participate, it is important to note that many of the social activities in which they do participate are typical teenage activities, such as going to the mall or to the pool. Although they may not have specifically said so, the kids may view hunting and fishing as activities that most kids their age don’t do, which may negatively influence their interest in or actual participation levels.

## **Literature**

- Duda, M. D., S. J. Bissell and K. C. Young. 1993. Factors related to hunting and fishing participation in the united states. Phase I: Literature Review. Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Grant 14-48-0009-1252. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Washington, DC.
- Duda, M. D., K. C. Young, and S. J. Bissell. 1998. Wildlife and the american mind: public opinion on and attitudes toward fish and wildlife management. 1998. Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Grant Agreement 14-48-0009-96-1230. Responsive Management. Harrisonburg, VA.
- Kahn, P. H., Jr. and Kellert, S. R. (eds.) 2002. Children and nature: psychological, sociocultural, and evolutionary investigations. MIT Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts. 348 pp.
- Kellert, S. R. 1985. Attitudes toward animals: age-related development among children. *Journal of Environmental Education*. 16: 29-39.
- Responsive Management. 1996a. 1995 Fishing motivation study. Report prepared for the American Sportfishing Association. Responsive Management, Harrisonburg, VA.

## **Appendix: Discussion Outlines**

### **FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION OUTLINE FOR FACTORS RELATED TO HUNTING PARTICIPATION AMONG THE NATION'S YOUTH**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

**A. RULES. THIS FOCUS GROUP IS PART OF A STUDY WE ARE DOING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS THE NATION. DURING THESE FOCUS GROUPS WE WILL BE TALKING TO ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ABOUT HUNTING.**

#### **II. FACTORS ON PARTICIPATION**

**A. DO YOU HUNT? HOW OFTEN DO YOU HUNT? (DISCUSS WHO, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, SPECIES HUNTED, ETC.)**

**B. HOW DID YOU GET STARTED HUNTING? (PROBE FOR FAMILY, FRIENDS, AGE, ETC.)**

- 1. WHO SPECIFICALLY DO YOU HUNT WITH? PROBE FOR SPECIFIC FAMILY MEMBERS OR FRIENDS.**
- 2. DO YOU HUNT WITH SCOUTS, CLUBS? (MAKE SURE THEY UNDERSTAND CLUBS, INCLUDING CHURCH GROUPS.)**
- 3. WHEN DO YOU HUNT? AFTER SCHOOL, WEEKENDS?**
- 4. WHY DO YOU HUNT?**
- 5. WHERE DO YOU HUNT?**

**C. IF YOU DON'T CURRENTLY HUNT, DID YOU EVER? (SAME PROBES ON WHO, WHEN, WHY, WHERE – *SEE ABOVE*)**

- 1. WHY DID YOU STOP?**
- 2. WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO GET YOU BACK? (TRY TO GET GROUP TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE. WHAT ARE THE VIEWS OF KIDS THEIR AGE ON GETTING DROP-OUTS TO RETURN)**

**D. IF YOU HAVE NEVER HUNTED, WHY NOT?**

- 1. HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT GOING HUNTING?**
- 2. WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO GET YOU TO GO HUNTING? (TRY TO GET STUDENTS WHO HUNT TO DISCUSS THIS. WHY SHOULD SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER HUNTED TRY?)**
- 3. DOES ANYONE IN YOUR FAMILY HUNT? IF SO, WHO?**

**E. WHAT OTHER TYPES OF ACTIVITIES DO YOU THINK KIDS YOUR AGE DO INSTEAD OF HUNTING? (PROBE ON OUTDOOR RECREATION)**

#### **III. VALUES/DISVALUES**

**A. WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF HUNTING? WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT HUNTING?**

**B. WHAT IS THE WORST THING ABOUT HUNTING?**

**C. WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO GET YOU TO STOP HUNTING? WHAT IS THE ONE THING YOU LIKE LEAST ABOUT HUNTING?**

**IV. CULTURAL ISSUES**

**A. DO YOU KNOW OTHER KIDS YOUR AGE WHO HUNT?**

**B. ARE YOU AWARE OF ANYTHING THAT IS A BARRIER FOR KIDS YOUR AGE TO HUNTING PARTICIPATION. CAN YOU NAME ANYTHING THAT WOULD, OR THAT ALREADY DOES, KEEP YOU FROM GOING HUNTING?**

**C. HOW IS HUNTING VIEWED BY OTHER KIDS YOUR AGE? WHAT DO YOUR FRIENDS SAY ABOUT HUNTING? HAVE YOU EVER HEARD THEM SAY ANYTHING ABOUT IT?**

**V. RECRUITMENT**

**A. THINKING OF OTHER KIDS YOUR AGE, WHAT COULD BE DONE/ SOMEONE DO TO GET MORE KIDS YOUR AGE TO GO HUNTING?**

**B. DO YOU THINK THAT THERE IS A NEED FOR SPECIFIC HUNTING PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES (MODERATOR: GIVE EXAMPLES) FOR KIDS YOUR AGE?**

**C. IF YOU WERE TO ENCOURAGE OTHER KIDS YOUR AGE TO GO HUNTING, WHAT WOULD YOU DO OR SAY?**

**D. WHAT COULD YOUR ...**

- 1. STATE AGENCY (EXPLAIN THIS)**
- 2. YOUR SCHOOL (ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY PROGRAMS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS?)**
- 3. PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS YOUR CHURCH**

**...DO TO ENCOURAGE OTHER KIDS LIKE YOU TO GO HUNTING?**

**4. HAVE YOU EVER SEEN ANY ADVERTISING ABOUT HUNTING FOR KIDS YOUR AGE?**

**5. WHEN YOU ARE A PARENT ONE DAY, WOULD YOU TAKE YOUR KIDS HUNTING? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

**VI. END. QUESTIONS/ANSWERS**

**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION OUTLINE  
FOR FACTORS RELATED TO FISHING PARTICIPATION AMONG THE  
NATION'S YOUTH**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**A. RULES. THIS FOCUS GROUP IS PART OF A STUDY WE ARE DOING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS THE NATION. DURING THESE FOCUS GROUPS WE WILL BE TALKING TO ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ABOUT FISHING.**

**II. FACTORS ON PARTICIPATION**

**A. DO YOU FISH? HOW OFTEN DO YOU FISH? (DISCUSS WHO, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, SPECIES, BOATS, ETC. SALT VERSUS FRESH WATER WHERE APPROPRIATE)**

**B. HOW DID YOU GET STARTED FISHING? (PROBE FOR FAMILY, FRIENDS, AGE, ETC.)**

- 1. WHO SPECIFICALLY DO YOU FISH WITH? PROBE FOR SPECIFIC FAMILY MEMBERS OR FRIENDS.**
- 2. DO YOU FISH WITH SCOUTS, CLUBS? (MAKE SURE THEY UNDERSTAND CLUBS, INCLUDING CHURCH GROUPS.)**
- 3. WHEN DO YOU FISH? AFTER SCHOOL, WEEKENDS?**
- 4. WHY DO YOU FISH?**
- 5. WHERE DO YOU FISH? (LAKE, POND, STREAM, FROM A BOAT/BANK?)**

**C. IF YOU DON'T CURRENTLY FISH, DID YOU EVER? (SAME PROBES ON WHO, WHEN, WHY, WHERE – *SEE ABOVE*)**

- 1. WHY DID YOU STOP?**
- 2. WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO GET YOU BACK? (TRY TO GET GROUP TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE. WHAT ARE THE VIEWS OF KIDS THEIR AGE ON GETTING DROP-OUTS TO RETURN)**

**D. IF YOU HAVE NEVER FISHED, WHY NOT?**

- 1. HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT GOING FISHING?**
- 2. WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO GET YOU TO GO FISHING? (TRY TO GET STUDENTS WHO FISH TO DISCUSS THIS. WHY SHOULD SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER FISHED TRY?)**
- 3. DOES ANYONE IN YOUR FAMILY FISH? IF SO, WHO?**

**E. WHAT OTHER TYPES OF ACTIVITIES DO YOU THINK KIDS YOUR AGE DO INSTEAD OF FISHING? (PROBE ON OUTDOOR RECREATION)**

**III. VALUES/DISVALUES**

**A. WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF FISHING? WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT FISHING.**

**B. WHAT IS THE WORST THING ABOUT FISHING?**

**C. WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO GET YOU TO STOP FISHING? WHAT IS THE ONE THING YOU LIKE THE LEAST ABOUT FISHING?**

**IV. CULTURAL ISSUES**

**A. DO YOU KNOW OTHER KIDS YOUR AGE WHO FISH?**

**B. ARE YOU AWARE OF ANYTHING THAT IS A BARRIER FOR KIDS YOUR AGE TO FISHING PARTICIPATION. CAN YOU NAME ANYTHING THAT WOULD, OR THAT ALREADY DOES, KEEP YOU FROM GOING FISHING?**

**C. HOW IS FISHING VIEWED BY OTHER KIDS YOUR AGE? WHAT DO YOUR FRIENDS SAY ABOUT FISHING? HAVE YOU EVER HEARD THEM SAY ANYTHING ABOUT IT?**

**V. RECRUITMENT.**

**A. THINKING OF OTHER KIDS YOUR AGE, WHAT COULD BE DONE /SOMEONE DO TO GET MORE KIDS YOUR AGE TO GO FISHING?**

**B. DO YOU THINK THAT THERE IS A NEED FOR SPECIFIC PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES (MODERATOR: GIVE EXAMPLES) FOR KIDS YOUR AGE?**

**C. IF YOU WERE TO ENCOURAGE OTHER KIDS YOUR AGE TO GO FISHING, WHAT WOULD YOU DO OR SAY?**

**D. WHAT COULD YOUR ...**

**1. STATE AGENCY (EXPLAIN THIS)**

**2. YOUR SCHOOL (ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY PROGRAMS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS?)**

**3. PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS YOUR CHURCH**

***...DO TO ENCOURAGE OTHER KIDS LIKE YOU TO GO FISHING?***

**4. HAVE YOU EVER SEEN ADVERTISING ABOUT FISHING FOR KIDS YOUR AGE?**

**5. WHEN YOU ARE A PARENT ONE DAY, WOULD YOU TAKE YOUR KIDS FISHING? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

**VI. END. QUESTIONS/ANSWERS**

# RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT

**R**ESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT is a nationally recognized public opinion and attitude survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues. Our mission is to help natural resource and outdoor recreation agencies and organizations better understand and work with their constituents, customers, and the public.

Utilizing our in-house, full-service, computer-assisted telephone and mail survey center with 65 professional interviewers, we have conducted more than 1,000 telephone surveys, mail surveys, personal interviews, and focus groups, as well as numerous marketing and communication plans, needs assessments, and program evaluations.

Clients include the federal natural resource and land management agencies, most state fish and wildlife agencies, state departments of natural resources, environmental protection agencies, state park agencies, tourism boards, most of the major conservation and sportsmen's organizations, and numerous private businesses.

Responsive Management also collects attitude and opinion data for many of the nation's top universities, including Auburn University, Colorado State University, Duke University, George Mason University, Penn State University, Michigan State University, North Carolina State University, Rutgers University, the University of California-Davis, the University of Florida, the University of Montana, the University of New Hampshire, the University of Southern California, Texas Tech University, Virginia Tech University, West Virginia University, and others.

Among the wide range of projects we have completed during the past 15 years are studies on how the general population values natural resources

and outdoor recreation and their opinions on and attitudes toward an array of natural resource-related issues.

Responsive Management has conducted dozens of studies of hunters, anglers, wildlife viewers, boaters, landowners, park visitors, historic site visitors, hikers, birdwatchers, campers, and rock climbers. Responsive Management has conducted studies on endangered species, waterfowl and wetlands, and the reintroduction of large predators such as wolves, grizzly bears, and the Florida panther.

Responsive Management has conducted research on numerous natural resource ballot initiatives and referenda and helped agencies and organizations find alternative funding and increase their membership and donations. Responsive Management has conducted major organizational and programmatic needs assessments and helped natural resource agencies and organizations develop more effective programs based upon a solid foundation of fact.

Responsive Management conducts training workshops on the human dimensions of natural resources and presents numerous studies in presentations, workshops, and as keynote speakers at major natural resource and outdoor recreation conferences and meetings.

Responsive Management has conducted research on public attitudes toward natural resources and outdoor recreation in almost every state in the United States, as well as in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Japan. Responsive Management routinely conducts surveys in Spanish and has conducted surveys and focus groups in Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese.

Responsive Management has also

conducted numerous natural resource and outdoor recreation studies with specific target audiences, including Hispanics, African-Americans, Asians, women, children, senior citizens, urban, suburban and rural residents, large landowners, and farmers.

Responsive Management's research has been featured in most of the nation's major media including CNN, Crossfire, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and on the front page of *USA Today*.

## **RM conducts:**

- Telephone surveys
- Mail surveys
- Personal interviews
- Park/Outdoor recreation intercepts
- World-Wide-Web-based surveys
- Focus groups
- Needs assessments
- Literature reviews
- Data collection for researchers and universities

## **RM develops:**

- Marketing plans
- Communications plans
- Outreach plans
- Business plans
- Program evaluation
- Policy analysis
- Public relations plans

## **Responsive Management**

130 Franklin Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Tel: 540-432-1888

Fax: 540-432-1892

E-mail: [mdduda@rica.net](mailto:mdduda@rica.net)

Visit our Web site at:

[www.responsivemanagement.com](http://www.responsivemanagement.com)

Please visit our Website at [www.responsivemanagement.com](http://www.responsivemanagement.com)