Understanding Urban Audiences
Community Workshop Results for Tualatin River NWR

Background

In the summer of 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) began creating an updated vision for the future of the National Wildlife Refuge System. More than 100 people from across the Service worked together to craft *Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation*.[1] This document lays out an ambitious plan for the next decade that addresses opportunities and challenges in the face of a changing America and conservation landscape.

To implement the new vision, nine teams consisting of Service employees were created, one of which was the Urban Wildlife Refuge Initiative team. The Initiative team aims to increase the Service's relevancy to urban citizens and contribute to the vision's goal of diversifying and expanding the Service's conservation constituency over the next decade. It grew out of the recognition that America's increasing population is more diverse and increasingly living in urban areas. Objectives set by the Initiative team include establishing measures that help to define and achieve excellence, creating a framework for developing new urban partnerships, and establishing a refuge presence in ten demographically and geographically varied cities in the U.S.

An underlying need for the Initiative is a better understanding of factors that facilitate or inhibit connecting urban audiences with wildlife and nature. To address this need, the Service's Human Dimensions Branch collaborated with U.S. Geological Survey and North Carolina State University on a research project aimed at understanding urban audiences, identifying barriers to engagement in wildlife-dependent recreation, and identifying strategies that the Service can implement to overcome these barriers.

This multiple-method research project includes: (1) a review and synthesis of the current literature to better understand what is known about barriers, motivations, and proven successful strategies of urban engagement in outdoor recreation; (2) interviews with refuge staff and partner organization representatives in urban areas to understand current refuge visitation in these settings, identify programs and strategies that have been successful, and identify institutional factors that promote or impede the ability to connect with urban audiences; and (3) community workshops to hear from community representatives about the needs and motivations for outdoor recreation participation, perceptions of barriers that exist, and suggested strategies to better connect and engage diverse urban residents with wildlife.

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[1] http://americaswildlife.org/vision/

Site Selection

Community workshops were conducted at seven refuges (see Table 1) selected through a multi-stage process. First, Service GIS specialists compiled a list of urban areas within a 25-mile radius of a National Wildlife Refuge, using the Census Bureau's definition of an urban area. The 25-mile radius was selected as the distance because it was the average distance traveled by local refuge visitors who participated in the 2010/2011 National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Survey.[2] A list of 301 refuges was generated and further refined by omitting refuges that met the following criteria:

- Refuges in U.S. territories (e.g., Puerto Rico)
- Refuges with populations less than 250,000 within 25 miles (based on 2010 U.S. Census data)
- Refuges with no public access
- Refuges whose 2012 annual visitation was less than 22,000

Seventy-one refuges were identified and further refined by Service employees with extensive knowledge about refuges. Through this process, some refuges were removed based on various access or physical attribute restraints. The research team then selected twelve refuges in geographically and culturally diverse urban areas; this list was modified and narrowed down to six locations based on input from key contacts from regions, the Urban Initiative team, and others in the Service. Potomac River NWR was later added to the project based on the utility of the research for their needs and available refuge funds.

Table 1. National Wildlife Refuge locations for community workshops

Refuge	Urban Area(s) within 25 miles[*]	Population within 25 miles[*]	Visitors 2013[**]
Tualatin River NWR	Portland, OR-WA	1,727,100	131,709
Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR	San Francisco-Oakland, CA San Jose, CA Concord, CA	5,019,028	685,400
Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR	Denver-Aurora, CO	2,277,371	180,000
Minnesota Valley NWR	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI	2,610,793	230,000
John Heinz NWR at Tinicum	Philadelphia, PA-NJ-DE-MD	3,949,328	140,000
Potomac River NWR Complex			
Featherstone NWR	Washington, DC-VA-MD	2,479,129	20[***]
Mason Neck NWR	Washington, DC-VA-MD	2,832,706	38,210
Occoquan Bay NWR	Washington, DC-VA-MD	2,774,276	38,210
Arthur R Marshall Loxahatchee NWR	Miami, FL	2,586,378	276,680

[*] Based on 2010 U.S. Census.

[**] Based on 2013 RAPP.

[***] Featherstone NWR is currently only accessible by water, and has very low visitation as a result.

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[2] http://pubs.usgs.gov/ds/685/DS685.pdf

Methods

For each refuge, a protocol for contacting and inviting potential participants was followed. With assistance from refuge managers and staff, people with extensive ties to the local residents and communities of interest were identified. Individuals or organizations were contacted by the researchers to participate in a workshop at the refuge. See Community Workshop Findings, below, for more refuge-specific methods.

The research team for each workshop typically consisted of a discussion facilitator and two note takers. Notes were recorded on flipcharts that participants could view throughout the discussion to ensure that key points were captured accurately. Participants had multiple opportunities to review, clarify, and fill-in any information they felt might be missing. A second note taker recorded near verbatim notes on a laptop, identifying individual speakers with an anonymous coding system. Notes were edited for clarity immediately following the workshop. No audio or visual recording was used.

Both workshops lasted approximately two hours. All participation was voluntary; no money or other incentives were provided to the participants. To begin each session, participants were welcomed by the facilitator and refuge staff (if available), and then asked to introduce themselves and indicate the organization or community they represent. If present, the refuge staff was excused before the discussion began. Then, the facilitator reviewed the goal and guidelines for the session and began the discussion, which was guided by the following questions:

- Speaking on behalf of local community residents, what comes to mind when they hear outdoor recreation?
- What motivates people in this community to participate in outdoor recreation?
- What barriers prevent greater access or enjoyment of outdoor recreation opportunities by people in this community?
- What can be done to promote greater participation in outdoor recreation and use of the refuge by people in your community?

Following the discussion on barriers to outdoor recreation opportunities, participants were asked to indicate the three barriers they perceive as the greatest factors in limiting participation in outdoor recreation for nearby communities by marking them on the flip-chart notes. Participants were asked to do this again for strategies that could encourage greater engagement with the refuge. At the conclusion of the discussion, refuge representatives were invited to speak with the workshop participants and answer any specific questions about the refuge. The primary role of the refuge staff at this point in the discussion was to listen to the workshop participants, and be available to answer any specific questions the facilitator may not have been able to answer.

Analysis and Reporting

All notes from the workshop were compiled and organized by the guiding questions. Each set of notes was analyzed to identify themes representing workshop participants' comments. Themes for each question are summarized below, and, where appropriate, specific examples are provided from the notes. While these should not be considered verbatim quotations, as no recording devices were used, they adhere to the meaning and context of the speaker's original statements.

This report captures workshop findings for an individual refuge. Findings for individual refuges were prepared independently of one another by the workshop leaders, therefore variations in presentation may exist across the seven reports. Results for this refuge will be combined with results from workshops held at the other 6 refuges in a final report. A final report will include major themes and patterns that emerged from the combined data, as well as management and communication implications that could be drawn from the themes and patterns. Final results will be instrumental in the design of future strategies for communicating with diverse urban audiences, and for providing tools and resources that Service staff and affiliates can use to better engage all of America.

A group of youth "Puddle Stompers" from Head Start find a rough-skinned newt at Tualatin River NWR. Credit: USFWS

Community Workshop Findings for Tualatin River NWR

Workshops were conducted with community representatives at Tualatin River NWR (Tualatin River) in January 2014. To recruit participants for these workshops, contacts were identified by the refuge staff and research team, and then a snowball technique was used; those identified were asked to recommend other individuals and organizations to participate in the workshops. These individuals were then contacted. Furthermore, following an extensive Internet search, organizations with a focus on recreation, conservation, environmental education, or other community-based activities (e.g., social or environmental justice, libraries) that work within the communities near the refuge were also contacted to participate. Forty-five organizations were identified and contacted via email and phone to participate; thirteen people participated in the workshops, and five additional individuals who did not attend provided input via email or phone (Table 2).

Table 2. Organization of individuals who participated in the community workshops.

Organization
Audubon – Portland
Confluence Environmental Center
Educational Recreational Adventures
Muslim Education Trust
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Oregon Zoo – Education Program
Oregon Zoo – Parks and Regional Programs
Soul River; New Currents Outdoors
Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District
Univision – KUNP
Wisdom of the Elders
Follow-up correspondence; not in attendance
City of Portland
Oregon Metro
The Intertwine
Verde

Summary of Key Themes

The following summarizes themes that emerged from discussions around the following questions for the workshop.

1. **Speaking on behalf of your local community residents, what comes to mind when they hear outdoor recreation?**

Seven general themes emerged from participant discussions on outdoor recreation. These themes are summarized below.

Common outdoor recreation activities: Participants described activities that are commonly associated with outdoor recreation, including hiking, biking, hunting, walking, fishing, fly fishing, paddling, kayaking, camping, birding, and nature observation while outdoors. Participants described walking as the most common and important activity for local community members. A few activities mentioned may be considered to be more arduous, such as longer-term expeditions and fishing year-round despite tough winter conditions. Other activities included angler events, horseback riding, and archery.

Unstructured outdoor activities: Participants suggested that many community members thought outdoor recreation consisted of various activities that are best performed outside in an unstructured way. Such activities included being in nature, general outdoor exercise that was not in a gym, self-discovery, free play for children, having peaceful engagement with the outdoors, and being out in unconfined open spaces.

Social, cultural, and family-based activities: Another focus of discussion was activities and facilities, such as playgrounds, that encourage socialization among friends, families, and community members. For example, participants mentioned the following activities: singing, dancing, entertainment, music outdoors (including hip hop and reggae at an anglers' event), storytelling by parents and grandparents, family trips and experiences, having intergenerational moments of engagement, and building community. Going to the park with the extended family was stated as a particularly important activity for many Arabic and Latino families. Pow-wows and vision quests were also discussed as important cultural activities in which some community members participate.

Food-related activities: Participants indicated that many families from diverse backgrounds engage in food-related activities in the outdoors. These types of activities include having picnics, gardening, growing food in raised beds, "breaking bread" together, and foraging (primarily by Native American families). Tea drinking outside in Portland's rose gardens was also mentioned. Such activities often include opportunities for friends and family to socialize. Participants indicated that picnics, which can become elaborate full-day events, are especially important to Latino and Russian families.

Sports: Sports such as swimming, soccer, football, volleyball, and tennis were mentioned by participants as forms of outdoor recreation that are common in local communities. Soccer was mentioned as particularly important to many Latinos. Physical defense classes were also mentioned as outdoor activities in which people participate.

Service-related activities: Participants indicated that community members also participated in outdoor activities that were perceived as providing benefits to others or the environment (i.e., service-related). Activities included tree planting, walking for a cause, beach cleaning, and restoration activities.

Educational activities: Participants discussed activities that are associated with learning how to do things or learning about things in the outdoors. These activities included developing skills to identify how river currents affect recreation activities such as fishing (i.e., "reading" the water) and learning about river health, entomology, career options, water quality, fly tying and fly fishing, and the salmon life cycle. Participants also

mentioned that being in the outdoors was important because it teaches people how to listen and be quiet.

2. What motivates people in this community to participate in outdoor recreation?

Participants' responses to this question were grouped into twelve themes. These themes were broadly related to outdoor recreation rather than being specific to Tualatin River, and are important to consider because they represent ideas voiced by members of communities near the refuge. These themes are as follows:

Family and social interaction: Participants indicated that interaction with family and friends was a strong motivator for people to be outdoors. Opportunities that allowed for intergenerational social interaction, story-telling, and bonding with others were mentioned as important activities to many local community members.

Building community: Similar to social interaction, participants also mentioned that building community was an important motivation for being outside. Community members are increasingly interested in or financially restricted to local travel options, and many people want local connections to the communities in which they live.

Heritage: Participants discussed an interest in holding cultural events (e.g., pow wows, cultural gatherings) to maintain a sense of heritage as an important motivation for being outdoors, and to participate in activities that are considered to be traditional (e.g., hunting, fishing). Outdoor recreation also allows immigrant families a way to start new family traditions that may not have been possible in the places where they grew up.

Educational opportunities: The educational value of nature was identified as a motivator of outdoor recreation participation. This was discussed in two ways: in relation to the general educational value of nature, and in terms of teaching students and youth important physical and mental skills (e.g., leadership skills, social skills, how to resolve conflicts).

Overcoming fear: Participants indicated that some community members are motivated to participate in outdoor recreation to overcome fears or existing stereotypes. Specifically mentioned were fears related to being outside (e.g., snakes, bears, getting dirty), authority or park rangers, and what is perceived to be allowed or normal activities for people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Curiosity/Discovery: Participants discussed how people, particularly youth, are innately curious about the world in which they live, which translates into an interest in nature and the outdoors. For many people, this curiosity leads to discovery, because people are encouraged to wonder about nature and be amazed by what they find in nature.

Fun/Adventure: Exploration and having fun were considered motivations for why people participate in outdoor recreation. The unpredictability of nature, while at times a barrier, can also be something that is very fun about being outdoors. There are many surprises that happen in nature, which can make being in the outdoors "cool" for some people.

Improve physical health and wellness: Participants described outdoor recreation as a means for ensuring general health and wellness, providing opportunities for exercise, and fighting diabetes. Participants also mentioned that some activities (e.g., gardening) help people learn about healthy eating habits.

A place of healing: Participants indicated nature was a place in which the mind and spirit can be healed. Examples included participation in outdoor recreation as a means for overcoming post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for veterans, as well as for youth who are living through difficult inner-city struggles. Participants described many of nature's processes as inherently healing (e.g., new growth every spring), which helps to teach people that healing of oneself and others is a natural cycle.

Spirituality: The outdoors was also described as a place that was sacred and allowed people to be in touch with their own ideas of spirituality. Participants indicated that spirituality in this sense had many important yet different components. For example, people may be motivated to participate in outdoor recreation to experience a holistic understanding of balance within nature, their own connections to nature, or the connections of the body with the mind.

Service: Participants described certain activities performed outdoors as a way for people to be of service to others and their community. Protecting the earth, water, and rivers, as well as addressing environmental and social justice issues, were ways in which people were motivated to be outside.

Sustenance: Participants mentioned that some community members also participated in particular outdoor recreation activities as a form of sustenance. Examples provided included hunting and fishing for food, and foraging for specific resources that could be eaten or had traditionally been gathered for food.

3. What barriers prevent greater access or enjoyment of outdoor recreation opportunities by people in this community?

The major themes that emerged as barriers are summarized below with supporting comments. An asterisk (*) indicates that the comment was specific to Tualatin River.

Lack of awareness: A general lack of awareness of the outdoor recreation opportunities that exist was discussed. This was related to opportunities in the Portland, Oregon area, and also more broadly to not knowing about public lands in the U.S.

"Arabic and Spanish communities go to picnic areas and don't realize what else is out there. One, because in their homeland, the Middle East for example, they lack that. They didn't have any parks where they are from; they went to the beach and had a picnic."

"The concept of public land is unfamiliar… In the U.S. you can go to all these places. I think it's a barrier that people don't know about the concept of national forests or wildlife preserves; it's so foreign to other cultures and even low-income communities in this country."

Unwelcoming: Some physical aspects of public lands were seen as unwelcoming, such as big metal bars and fences. Also, in relation to Tualatin River, the prevalence of signs posted with rules banning certain activities was also seen as unwelcoming.

"If a place has big metal bars it can be off-putting."

* "The overt rules are a barrier. No dogs, that's a barrier. Even walking in here, there's a big sign, 'No Food or Drink' – the first thing the refuge says is 'no'."

Transportation: Transportation-related issues, such as lack of personal vehicles among urban residents, and the refuge location being considered far from the city, were discussed as barriers to participation in outdoor recreation.

"There are families that don't have cars."

* "It would take a long time to get to the refuge with public transportation from in the city, and it's too difficult to make happen." [Commonly heard comment from people declining to participate in workshops]

Costs: The cost associated with gear or equipment for specific outdoor recreation activities was discussed. In particular, the costs associated with fly fishing and with purchasing multiple permits, admissions passes, and licenses were discussed.

"People are not going to buy a year pass; they buy a day pass."

"In my experience, fly fishing is…also expensive. How can we encourage more people to participate?"

Technology: Technology such as gaming, iPods, cell phones, and computers were identified as distractions that limit people's engagement with nature and the outdoors.

"Access to technology is preventing youth from getting outside. They have a propensity to be in front of the computer."

"People are inherently interested in what's around them in nature – biophilia. But this is squashed in dominant American culture by distractions. If you get rid of the distractions, you get that back. There is something intrinsic about nature – it's not the same as exploring the internet."

Language: Some participants felt that recreation professionals ignored the need for communication in languages other than English. This was seen as a symptom of cultural incompetence and a contributing factor to a feeling of not belonging by some members of diverse backgrounds. However, there was also discussion about some members of the Hispanic community being offended when spoken to in Spanish by those considered to be outsiders.

"The Hispanic population is bilingual. They speak Spanish and English. They are more comfortable with Spanish and feel welcomed and respected when you speak Spanish to them."

"I had an experience where people were offended that I was trying to speak Spanish. They were like, 'What do you think, I don't speak English?'"

Coolness factor: How cool an activity is perceived by youth was brought up and participants expressed that more needed to be done to appeal to youth at an early age.

"Youth have their own language and we need to tie into them and make the outdoors cool – we need to add the cool factor."

"Early exposure is really important. Later on people are set in their ways and too cool to do outdoor recreation."

Lack of diversity in recreation: Participants indicated that a lack of people who represented their communities or looked like themselves was preventing participation in outdoor recreation.

"There aren't a lot of role models that look like the communities we want to serve...In my work, I hear, 'I didn't know you could get paid for that. You can go to college for that?' It's lonely being a person of color in this field. Recruiting folks from the community that have a similar background is incredibly important."

"I have a black friend that says [outdoor recreation] is just something white people do."

Not inclusive: Participants did not believe there was enough positive integration of different cultures in the outdoors. This was discussed in terms of staff at open spaces and leaders of outdoor programs needing to be more inclusive.

"A lot of people's attitude is 'this is America, take it or leave it'."

"I received an email from a guy on the east coast saying he was sick and tired of being judged. He was getting judged on how he dressed, how he talked, everything. All he wants to do is fly fish. The people he was connecting with are not peers, but leaders, and he's being judged by them."

Cultural competence: The cultural competence of leaders and other professionals in the outdoor recreation realm was viewed as lacking. Participants believed that even people who mean well do not always interact effectively with people of different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds.

"There is ignorance among adult leaders…I worked with the president of a fishing organization that wanted to help and reach out to get inner city kids in the outdoors and he didn't understand why the program flopped….He sent me an email that was very ignorant, referring to the inner city population he wanted to connect with as 'gang members'…He wanted to do good, but didn't know how to communicate and work with other folks."

"Often times you see organizations that try to integrate and engage people in the outdoors in a forceful and aggressive way...We need to break down barriers that other organizations put up. Cultural competence is needed."

Unmet needs: The typical programming offered for outdoor recreation was not seen as meeting the needs of some communities. In particular, programming that is family-oriented was seen as a need for Hispanic communities.

"Hispanic communities are often so close-knit they would prefer kids to be with their mother, grandmother, or relative instead of sending them to camp [where they would be exposed to outdoors]… family is so important, sending kids off with strangers is a really foreign thing."

"There's a social motivation for engaging with family and friends."

"There is a cultural perspective of families first. No one else is trusted. With our camps and working with the Native American community, we try to make it as intergenerational as possible."

Family dynamics: Participants discussed limitations due to family dynamics. For example, working parents may be unable to take their children outside. Also, low-income households may be less likely to focus on getting outdoors because they have other concerns such as feeding their families.

"If both adults work there's a lot less supervision. If kids aren't motivated and encouraged to get outside they default to the computer."

"Low income families or working class families that work multiple jobs would rather have their kids at home than out where they can't reach them."

Cultural and familial relevance: Some participants' comments indicated a general disconnect with nature that may be present due to cultural or family values passed down generation to generation.

"Back when I was growing up in the Middle East, people would visit together and talk [at home]. We were disconnected from nature."

"When the family doesn't have enthusiasm for going outdoors, they aren't passing that on to their children."

Fear: Participants discussed fear of outdoors and concerns for safety when outdoors. Not being familiar with the outdoors, the unpredictability of nature, and a disconnect between real versus perceived risks were part of this discussion.

"There was a maintenance man from Central America that was in charge of cleaning the trails, but he wouldn't leave the building. He said, 'In the forest there are spirits and there are snakes.' There aren't any poisonous snakes here in Portland, but he was from a place where a snake bite kills you."

"Lots of youth come to the outdoors with fear. 'I'm not going to sleep outside. Something's going to get me,' they say."

"Kids won't go into a forest or certain area if they don't see an adult."

Negative stigma of outdoors: Participants indicated that there were negative historical and cultural contexts associated with being outdoors that prevented participation. For example, one participant talked of how her husband did not want his nieces gardening; having children gardening or having any type of outside job was seen as degrading and as an indication that the patriarch could not adequately provide for his family.

"There's a class difference. When we go out camping, we're doing what the poor do their whole lives, not by choice, but of necessity. In many countries, respectable families go to hotels."

"Gardening, working, or spending time in the outdoors is a part of a heritage that people are trying to get away from."

Discomfort: Participants discussed how being outside may be viewed as an uncomfortable experience. This comes from growing up mostly indoors and in the city. Specifically in Portland, the outdoors may also be considered uncomfortable because of the cold and rainy weather.

"Inner city kids don't want to be anywhere near dirt… it's really hard to tell them it's not icky."

Health: Participants felt that some people may be out-of-shape or believe they are not healthy enough to participation in outdoor recreation.

"If you are overweight, then there's the barrier that you can't do [certain activities]."

4. **What can be done to promote greater participation in outdoor recreation and use of the refuge by people in your community?**

Six themes were identified as possible ways to engage urban audiences and promote greater participation in outdoor recreation. These themes are summarized below.

Improve cultural-competency: Participants indicated that training staff and outdoor recreation leaders to understand the complexity and differences within and among diverse cultures was an important strategy to implement. Teaching children to be culturally-competent was also a recommended strategy, because then children go on to teach others (e.g., friends, peers, parents, grandparents).

"English is the dominant language. How can we be culturally-competent? It's very important. Volunteers could greet people in different languages so people feel welcome and a sense of belonging. You serve everyone despite their backgrounds."

"There is incredible diversity within every community mentioned here today… We need to be careful not to assume that a connection with one person and what they tell us is generalizable to the whole community. Many points of data are needed."

"Work on diversification of internal culture and how to be culturally competent… It is important to have diversity [among staff] when teaching diverse kids about careers."

Understanding the area: Participants indicated that the use of available tools could help to depict different areas near the refuge and prioritize where the refuge could effectively direct its energy and resources. For example, one participant mentioned use of the Regional Equity Atlas, which is an online mapping tool that helps to assess levels of access for different populations to key resources that meet people's basic needs, including health and well-being.

"Try to get away from providing resources to people who don't need or won't use those resources."

Equality empowerment: Participants discussed the importance of using messages of equality, empowerment, and positive integration of people with diverse backgrounds.

"We have to empower people. We are all as equal as anyone else. Male, female... We need messages of empowerment and to get away from a culture where people are less equal."

Partnerships: Workshop participants emphasized that the refuge could partner with local agencies, nonprofits, and for-profit businesses. Partnerships were viewed as important ways to connect with local communities. Suggestions also included partnering with universities and offering college internships, and making key contacts with people who are trusted within the community and will participate in or endorse refuge programs. Participants also discussed how skill-based workshops could be held at the refuge (and in its facilities), but be instructed by non-refuge staff partnerships.

"We would love to partner… it's really difficult to find a place to hold events [e.g., skill-based workshops] even if it doesn't involve shooting guns. Also, it's really hard to find places close to a population center to do these things."

"It's very important to reach out to who's who in the community. Bring people with different backgrounds into the conversation to bring balance to decisions. Not to be 'politically correct', but to have sincere balance."

"I would like to see land management agencies…partner with non-profits. Non-profits can stretch the dollar so much further than agencies... Non-profits can do the work and have twice the output for the same amount of money."

"Another strategy is having a key contact that endorses the program, a key person that is trusted in the community."

Outreach: Getting the word out about the refuge was discussed as a strategy to engage audiences. Suggestions for outreach were to make sure it speaks to the audience trying to be reached, keep messages simple, have signs in multiple languages, identify talking points that connect and educate, emphasize that natural areas belong to the people, and use local media to get the word out.

"The [local Spanish] TV station has a platform for doing this type of outreach. We'll do interviews and have people come to the station. It is simplified and visual….We also have

repetition, so people hear the message over and over. There are a lot of ways the station can help and it's not just a 30-second commercial. You can make it educational and connect with them."

"Advertising, creating bulletin boards, welcoming people in different languages is really important."

Programs: Participants discussed the importance of having a variety of activities and programs available to visitors. For example, participants mentioned the importance of having activities where people of similar cultures could participate together, having leadership opportunities, offering free programs, and getting kids exposed to nature at a young age. Another suggested strategy was offering transportation with welcoming, culturally-relevant leaders who go to the community and lead by example. This strategy would allow families the opportunity to follow the lead vehicle to the site, showing community members places in which they can participate in outdoor recreation.

"Don't just bring the children, but grandparents too. The benefits of this are that participants learn more, kids are well-behaved, and they have shared experiences with the family."

"Bring people right out there into the outdoors. Teach them about it and that's how you address fear."

"We offer free programs and we go to specific neighborhoods."

"We would like to have opportunities for college interns to have hands-on experiences, and also to have leadership opportunities to mentor and develop skills with organizing classrooms and teaching."

Identifying Top Barriers and Strategies

During the workshop, participants were asked to identify the three most important barriers and the three most important strategies that the Service could implement to reduce those barriers when considering the best way to engage local communities in outdoor recreation.

Collectively, the three largest barriers were identified as:

1) lack of knowledge and awareness of outdoor recreation opportunities and places in which to participate in outdoor recreation,
2) lack of transportation to effectively access available recreation sites, and
3) staff at recreation sites not being culturally-competent.

The three strategies for engagement that were most heavily emphasized were:

1) creating effective partnerships,
2) provision of transportation, and
3) community outreach and marketing.

Conclusion: Addressing Barriers at Tualatin River NWR

Participants in the community workshops suggested several strategies that refuge management could implement to engage urban audiences and address barriers to participation in outdoor recreation for local community members. **First, participants indicated that partnerships were one of the most important ways that refuge staff could do more with less.** Partnerships included working with non-profits, other agencies, and businesses that are already doing similar work related to connecting diverse urban audiences to nature and outdoor recreation. Participants indicated that many of these organizations lack the space (e.g., land, facilities) for conducting classes or programs and are in need of places to take people, particularly places that are close to urban areas. Therefore, staff could utilize refuge lands, including the facilities at Tualatin River, to host other partners who would then teach classes or run programs from that site. These partners often have extensive ties to particular communities, which could greatly reduce the difficulty of connecting with these communities, and increase the refuge's relevance by being an asset to those communities. Participants also indicated that a unified effort to engage urban audiences would consist of going into local communities and meeting with people directly, as well as taking people *to* the refuge.

Second, participants discussed how the Service and Tualatin River could fund grants or partnerships with organizations that could then provide group transportation (e.g., charter buses, school buses) for members of local communities to help with barriers arising from a lack of transportation. In addition to refuges providing transportation options themselves, participants discussed how the refuge could partner with organizations that could provide transportation within their own local communities. This would minimize a variety of barriers, such as: lack of transportation, residents' lack of awareness or knowledge of where to participate in outdoor recreation, and a lack of culturally-competent role models available that residents would want to learn from. Participants did not view providing transportation as a cure-all for getting people engaged with the refuge; therefore, various strategies were suggested that address both transportation barriers and cultural barriers. One specific suggestion was to have people connected with diverse ethnic or cultural communities coordinate programs and take a bus or other transportation option to the local community to bring people to the refuge. Anyone who wished to drive could follow behind the bus. For example, a charter bus could pick up school-aged kids on a weekend day, and then families (e.g., parents, grandparents, siblings) could have the option to carpool behind that bus to the refuge. This would allow families a way to experience the refuge together. This approach would help to foster greater trust in residents' own abilities to participate in recreation activities and trust between residents and the refuge, as family members would be invited to join the adventure with their children in a way that is more comfortable and convenient for them.

Finally, participants indicated that more outreach and marketing designed specifically for different communities would greatly increase the draw of the refuge to urban audiences. Participants discussed in detail one example of such outreach and marketing: the television station, KUNP-Univision Portland. This station has a platform for interviewing people from the Latino community on different topics. Outreach and marketing needs to address any safety concerns that might be pertinent within certain cultures, as well as address why people go to refuges or participate in outdoor recreation in a way that is culturally-relevant. In light of

staffing and budgetary constraints, refuge staff could offer college or high school internship programs that focused on marketing and outreach, and *specifically recruit individuals from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds*. More leadership opportunities for individuals of diverse backgrounds could also help to overcome historical and cultural barriers related to the perception that the outdoors is not a place for people of diverse backgrounds or a place for people to hold respectable careers. In terms of other ways to help with outreach and marketing, existing volunteer staff could be provided with additional training related to conducting outreach to urban audiences, including cultural-sensitivity training. Similarly, individuals from partnering organizations can be oriented and trained to conduct outreach to the communities in which they work.

Overall, participants indicated that there were many ways to address the variety of barriers that exist, and they were interested in future opportunities to continue this type of conversation.