

Implementing MRRP: Defining the Target Audience



Different audiences will have varied interests in MRRP. For example, a non-fishing member of the public will need a different level of information than an avid angler. In one case, you may be teaching something new, while in the other, you may be “preaching to the choir”. Therefore, it is important that you define the specific target audience or group(s) of people that you wish to reach with your MRRP message.

In general, there are four target audiences to reach with the MRRP message; fishing interests and industries, recreational waterway users, animal protection and habitat restoration interests, and the general public. You may choose to select just one or several audiences for your program. Be careful in considering the size of your audience. A very large audience could be too diverse for one program and a small audience might not result in a recognizable significant impact.

Fishing Interests and Industries

Fishing interests and industries are the primary targets to reach with the MRRP message and it is imperative to have their input and approval from program initiation for MRRP to be successful. This audience can make the biggest difference in reducing the amount of line entering the environment and the amount of line being recycled. Fishing interests also have an interest in preserving the aquatic habitat for future fishing generations. Members of this audience include anglers of all types, fishing clubs, fishing line and tackle manufacturers, fisheries management agencies, seafood markets, seafood restaurants, marinas, fishing periodicals, and boat manufacturers to name a few. Anglers can be further divided into saltwater and freshwater anglers, licensed and unlicensed anglers, those who fish primarily from boats, bridges, docks and banks, river fishermen, ocean fisherman, waders, trollers, beach casters and cane pole fishermen.

There are various means of reaching this target audience. The first and easiest means of contacting them is to invite them to man your advisory committee. Other methods of contact include conducting presentations at clubs, displays at trade and professional shows, and demonstrations at fishing tournaments. Printed media to reach this audience should announce the program and provide information on how line can be recycled. In Brevard County, Florida, it was demonstrated statistically, that once anglers were aware that line could be recycled, the amount of line being recycled increased in direct relation to the increase in awareness!

Recreational Waterway Users

Other recreational waterway users are people who use waterways for any other activities besides fishing and can potentially be impacted by monofilament line pollution. This audience includes people who boat, ski, scuba dive or snorkel, swim, operate personal water craft, ski, surf, and windsurf. This audience is concerned with being able to enjoy their sport in a safe and beautiful aquatic environment. Fishing line and gear can be hazardous to waterway users. Instances have been documented of skiers and boaters being hooked by hanging gear, boat and personal watercraft intake valves being clogged by monofilament, and divers becoming entangled underwater and drowned.

Methods to reach this audience include requesting their participation on advisory committees, advertising at businesses that market to this audience and printing materials to share at boat shows and expos. Printed materials should include information on how monofilament debris can be hazardous to humans in the aquatic environment and what they can do to help reduce the problem.

Animal Protection and Habitat Restoration Interests

This audience includes any person, organization or group that has an interest in animal protection, litter reduction, or habitat preservation. Examples include wildlife hospitals and sanctuaries, bird watchers, endangered species protection organizations and agencies, beautification organizations, nature conservation organizations and parks. This audience is concerned with protecting the quality of life for humans and other animals and should be involved in program implementation from the beginning. Fishing line debris is extremely detrimental to wildlife and hundreds of thousands of animals are impacted annually. Animals impacted include sea turtles, manatees, whales, dolphins, birds of all kinds, crustaceans, raccoons, fish, dogs and many other animals that rely on the aquatic environment for survival.

Methods to reach this audience include requesting their participation on advisory committees, conducting presentations at club meetings and conferences, and printing educational materials that describe the impacts to wildlife and explain how entangled wildlife should be handled. (See "How to Handle an Entangled Animal" brochure).

General Public

The general public includes anybody who does not fit into the other categories, but may be interested in knowing about MRRP. Members of the general public can be inspired to participate in the program as volunteers and educators out of a sense of community responsibility. MRRP is a positive "feel good" type of program that provides many opportunities for participation.

The general public can be reached at fairs and festivals, schools and civic organizations, and through broad spanning media coverage. Techniques to reach this audience include designing media with affective advertising, engaging public participation in local events, and educating the public through presentations.

Background Information

Once target audiences are selected, additional background information should be gathered to learn how to accurately reach each individual. This information includes demographics, knowledge of issues, attitudes or perceptions and different communication channels. Gathering this information will assist you in tailoring your education program to fit the audience needs and concerns. The following will briefly describe these four key categories of information.

- ❖ What are the demographics or characteristics of your target audience? They could include gender, age, race, socioeconomic level, organizational affiliations, spending patterns and other population indicators. This information is helpful in establishing a sampling profile of your target audience. In the case of anglers, it is useful to know the number of anglers, the most popular fishing locations and fishing habits, the number of fishing licenses sold, and where anglers buy their tackle, bait and licenses.
- ❖ How much does your target audience understand about monofilament debris and MRRP? Do they know fishing line is recyclable? What do they currently do with their line? Are they familiar with hazards associated with monofilament debris? Do they know what to do if they find an entangled animal? Understanding their level of knowledge will assist you in developing the correct type of educational media needed for an effective program
- ❖ What are their attitudes and/or perceptions of monofilament debris? Do they believe that leaving monofilament in the environment is a problem? This type of information is also critical to the development of the correct type of educational media needed for an effective program.
- ❖ How does your audience receive environmental information? What are the appropriate communication and dissemination channels? Is it the newspaper, radio or television? How should printed materials best be shared to reach the targeted audiences? Understanding this information will provide you with the correct method of disseminating the information.