

# Wildlife Council **Best Practices**



# What is The Nimrod Society?

We advocate for the creation of state Wildlife Councils that tell the real story about hunting and fishing and the essential revenues these activities generate to support every kind of outdoor recreational experience.



## We work to foster...



### Our Outdoor Heritage

Hunting and fishing licenses pay for most fish and wildlife conservation. Yet, most are unaware license revenues are essential support for high-quality outdoor recreational experiences of every kind.



### Sustainable Wildlife Management

Anti-hunters use misinformation to undermine hunting and fishing and their central importance in their messaging to the general public. Hunting and fishing provide critical funding to state wildlife agencies and help balance wildlife populations with habitat.



### Educated Voters

As wildlife issues become more politicized, the general public could be asked to weigh in on conservation issues.

# What is a Wildlife Council?

Wildlife councils are **charged with promoting the positive aspects of hunting and fishing** to the general public through accurate and factual education and marketing campaigns.



## The general public doesn't hunt...

- Most people simply don't know that hunting and fishing license fees are essential to the user-pay North American Model of Conservation.

Using marketing and other outreach, Wildlife Councils set the record straight and ensure fact-based marketing reaches non-hunting demographics.

- About 70% of state wildlife agency funding is derived from hunters and anglers.

Quite simply, managing for sustainable populations of fish and wildlife and providing high quality outdoor experiences of every kind wouldn't be possible without hunter and angler dollars.

- **Evidence shows, the general public supports hunting and fishing when they know the facts.**

# How to Establish a Wildlife Council



Wildlife Councils are **created and funded through legislation**. The Nimrod Society helps advocates navigate the legislative process.

We can help advocates craft messages and identify sympathetic legislators. Working with state wildlife agencies is also something The Nimrod Society will help facilitate.

Creating a community of advocates will help better show the council's potential relevance.

## Stakeholder Engagement

Hunting, fishing, conservation and shooting clubs can be reliable grassroots allies when establishing a Wildlife Council.

## Agency Engagement

State wildlife agency engagement and support is critical. Helping wildlife managers understand how Wildlife Councils add value is an important step of the process.

## Legislative Engagement

Ultimately, legislative action is required to establish a council and secure its funding. The Nimrod Society can help connect partners, agencies, nonprofits and stakeholders to engage lawmakers.

### Model Wildlife Council Legislation

A wildlife council is created within the department of wildlife (the "Wildlife Council").

The Wildlife Council shall consist of the following 9 members:

- Two individuals who have held hunting or fishing licenses in this state for at least once during each of the last 3 years, at least 1 of whom shall be a hunter and at least 1 of whom has purchased a fishing license, appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate from a list of individuals furnished by the hunters' and fishermen's organizations.
- Two individuals representing local businesses in this state that are substantially impacted by the wildlife industry, appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate.
- Two individuals representing agricultural producers in this state, appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate.
- One individual with a marketing background, who is not an employee of the state, appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate.
- Two individuals whose economies are substantially impacted by the wildlife industry, appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate.

Among members under subsection (2), the governor shall make an effort to ensure representation from all geographic areas of this state.

Members first appointed to the Wildlife Council shall be appointed within 90 days of the effective date of this section.

Members of the Wildlife Council shall serve for terms of 4 years or less, whichever is later, except that of the members first appointed 2 years shall serve for 3 years, and 3 shall serve for 4 years. The appointed members shall serve 2 full terms.

# Who are Wildlife Council Members?

Wildlife council members are hunters, anglers, marketing professionals or business owners impacted by the industry.

**The legislation establishing councils generally prescribes criteria for each seat on the council.**

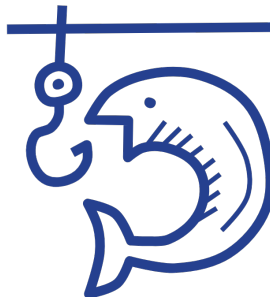
Recently, legislative attempts to place anti-hunting advocates on the Michigan Wildlife Council were defeated because the founding legislation explicitly defined the purpose of the Council and the backgrounds of prospective members.



## Hunters



## Anglers



## Business Owners



Hunting and fishing **generate substantial amounts of income for small businesses** (throughout the country (restaurants, hotels, gas stations, grocery stores, markets, etc.).

Economic impacts of hunting and fishing on **rural economies is roughly three times (3x)** that of the economic benefits to the agencies themselves.

**Wildlife council members develop and implement outreach and marketing strategies to make facts available to the non-hunting, non-fishing public.**

# Council Members Expectations

## Be an active participant...



Keep an open mind.



Listen attentively.



Engage with colleagues

## Carry this message forward...



At events.



With friends and family.



During your travels.

**Wildlife council members are responsible for hiring and overseeing the third party marketing agency hired to run its campaign.**



The Nimrod Society is a resource to help wildlife councils and prospective councils navigate and overcome challenges. Do not hesitate to reach out to the Society for any reason. We want to help you on this journey.

# Agency Interaction

State wildlife agencies **serve as information resources to the wildlife council process.** Their intimate knowledge of wildlife management and its interaction with the public is invaluable. Generally, agencies serve as treasurer of the council.

State wildlife agencies are stretched for funding and are caught in a predicament: catering to their traditional funding base while also helping the general public understand their mission.

**The council's work, and that of its chosen third-party marketing firm, will be additive to agency efforts.**

Reaching the non-hunting, non-consumptive public is critical for establishing sustainable funding for wildlife agencies and securing our outdoor heritage.



**We are all in  
this together.**



# Engaging With a Marketing Firm

Marketing firm selection is one of the most critical foundational steps for a council.

**Members should seek a balance between market expertise, know-how, subject matter knowledge and research capabilities.**



## Tips for selecting a firm...

- Request and review past work indicative of results.
- Understand research capabilities and processes.
- Gain knowledge of the firm's subject matter experience.
- Learn about the firm's ability to adapt to research trends.
- Establish an open communication arrangement.
- Communicate with past clients of the firm.





# What Have We Learned?



To establish a Wildlife Council, **positive buy-in from the state wildlife agency is needed**. At the same time, the agency should understand its role is not to direct the council or attempt to divert messaging away from hunting and fishing.

**Stakeholder groups are critical allies in the Wildlife Council process.** They know legislators, have insight and represent the public.



**License package increases** have proved to be the most palatable way of funding Wildlife Councils to date. This also ensures hunters and anglers are funders of the initiative.

**Enthusiasm is hard to maintain.** Hunters, anglers and stakeholders need to remain engaged and tuned into the messaging that council members are approving and putting out.



# Nimrod Society

Perpetuating Sportmen's Heritage and Wildlife Conservation Through Education

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Dear Colleague,

Hunters, anglers and trappers license dollars are the foundation of most state fish and wildlife agency budgets and their activities help support economies, big and small, rural and urban.

Yet only 4.9% of the population hunts and 15% fishes. That's an almost 29% drop since 1980. Today, most Americans don't understand that the funds generated by hunting and fishing are the economic basis for other outdoor activities, like bird watching, hiking, and camping.

The Nimrod Society was founded in 2010 for the sole purpose of assisting in the establishment of state wildlife councils to provide education and outreach about the benefits of hunting and fishing to the 80% of the public in the middle, who don't, and probably never will, hunt or fish but aren't against the activities.

Wildlife Councils are designed to build appreciation for the important roles that hunters and anglers play in natural resource management and in providing high-quality recreational opportunities for all. And all the evidence points to success.

The data collected by wildlife councils in Colorado and Michigan demonstrate that when presented with the facts, the general public will support hunting and fishing because they understand their conservation and economic benefits.

Partnerships are always more powerful than individual efforts, and today we're asking that your organization consider endorsing our mission of establishing Wildlife Councils through the United States and the work that The Nimrod Society and its partners are working to accomplish. We are simply asking you to support and, when plausible, advocate for the wildlife councils.

Your endorsement will add to weight to the wildlife council approach and more importantly, help us in our mission to assure that our outdoor heritage, conservation and hunting and fishing thrive in perpetuity.

Yours in Conservation,



Nick Green

*Director of Communications & Marketing, The Nimrod Society*



## Let us know what your needs are.



Support to get started?



An advocacy roadmap?



Model legislation?



Case studies?



## We are here to help!

**Contact:** Nick Green   **Email:** [nick@nimrodsociety.org](mailto:nick@nimrodsociety.org)   **Phone:** 231.492.7514

**“In a civilized and cultivated country, wild animals only continue to exist at all when preserved by sportsmen. In reality the genuine sportsman is the most important factor in keeping wild creatures from total extermination.”**

President Teddy Roosevelt



[nimrodsociety.org](http://nimrodsociety.org)

The Nimrod Society is a 501(c)3 nonprofit. Its mission is to help the general public understand the positive impact hunters and anglers have economically and on conservation.