



Shareable media promoting conservation from the Outdoor Industry Communication Council (OICC) – see below for more details.

How the New Outdoor Industry Communication Council (OICC) Unifies and Amplifies Conservation Content

Every state wildlife agency is committed to increasing participation, getting more of their citizens in the field with a fishing rod or hunting rifle in their hands.

Every sporting goods manufacturer has the same goal. They'd like to increase the number of active Hunters, Anglers, Trappers and Shooters (HATS) in America in order to build demand and create customers for their products.

And conservation groups similarly aim to recruit more members to achieve their mission to protect and improve habitat and conserve more land for wildlife.

Despite the common goals and audiences of these three groups, historically there has been little coordinated communication between them. Each agency, manufacturer, and non-profit has its own message and channels to communicate with their specific audience, but a new initiative aims to share information across various organizations and platforms. It's called the Outdoor Industry Communication Council (OICC), and its messages range from overviews of how conservation is funded in America and the prodigious economic impact of hunting and fishing to profiles of people and noteworthy initiatives in the outdoor industry.

The need for this coordinated messaging has been recognized by the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, which along with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, awarded a Multistate Conservation Grant to the Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation (OSCF) to develop an integrated communication strategy. The goal: to reach as many entities that collectively deliver fish and wildlife conservation in America to educate the masses on conservation topics.

"We hope to achieve that goal by delivering content that's timely, informative and useful," says Jim Curcuruto, executive director of Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation, who manages the OICC effort along with Jon Gassett of the Wildlife Management Institute and content creator and freelance journalist Andrew McKean. "But we also aim to make the content free, simple to access, and easy to distribute in whatever medium our partners want."

Content, in the form of press releases, social media posts, and infographics, is housed at the OICC [website](https://www.outdoorstewards.org/outdoor-industry-communication-council-) (<https://www.outdoorstewards.org/outdoor-industry-communication-council->



[oicc/](#)), where the new content is available approximately twice a month. Though still in its infancy, the OICC already boasts more than sixty partners that range from industry icons such as Focchi USA and Sig Sauer to conservation groups such as Ducks Unlimited, National Deer Association and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and wildlife agencies ranging from Nebraska Game & Parks Commission to Pennsylvania's Game Commission. Content is aimed to be shareable, whether on partners' websites and social channels, in electronic newsletters, in podcasts, or in printed publications.

"Membership is free and open to every entity in the outdoor industry, whether you're a manufacturer, retailer, media company, trade association, NGO or a state/federal wildlife agency," says Curcuruto. "The more partners we have, the bigger the audience for this content, which is simply designed to make partners' constituents better informed that they are the engines of conservation funding in America. Research has proven that relatively few hunters, anglers, trappers, and recreational shooters—which we call “HATS” —recognize the important part they play in our conservation successes, whether that's restoring huntable wildlife, creating more fishing opportunities, or building safe and accessible shooting ranges. Ultimately, we'd love for that woman who fishes five times a year to recognize her role in our conservation movement, or for that guy who hunts once or twice a year to understand he's an important part of how we maintain and grow our hunting traditions."

Why hasn't a coordinated communications strategy been implemented in the past?

"In our industry, like every other industry, members have a tendency to put their own name and voice on things, which means that we have hundreds of messages that are each slightly different," says Gasset. "All that noise can be confusing and buries the message that it's all of us buying gear and licenses that make our industry a self-perpetuating engine of conservation and recreational opportunity."

Topics available for immediate distribution include an overview of the outdoor industry's \$80 billion economic impact, details of the 400,000 American jobs that are created or sustained by the outdoor industry, and how a single hunter's seasonal purchases help fund wildlife management. Additional features profile a production-line manager at a firearms manufacturer, how to get started in recreational shooting, and how to recruit the next generation of hunters and target shooters, and how to find a hunting outfitter.

Beyond spreading a unified message to millions of constituents, Curcuruto, Gasset and McKean hope the OICC partnership can be used to foster relationships between agencies, manufacturers, and conservation NGOs.



"Perhaps an ammunition manufacturer has a new biodegradable shotshell for waterfowlers," says Curcuruto, pulling out a hypothetical example of content cross-pollination. "That could be an interesting sponsorship opportunity for a waterfowl organization, or for a state agency that has an interest in reducing hunting-related litter at its marshes."

Prospective partners can sign up to become members of the OICC through its website, or by contacting Jon Gassett at the Wildlife Management Institute (jgassett@wildlifemgt.org) or Jim Curcuruto at jim@stewardsofconservation.org or (203) 450-7202.

About the Outdoor Industry Communication Council (OICC):

Formed around the commitment to educate all Americans about the origins of conservation funding in America, the Outdoor Industry Communication Council (OICC) is managed by Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation (OSCF) and Wildlife Management Institute (WMI). OICC works with outdoor writers to develop informative content that is available to all outdoor organizations and media at no cost. A primary goal of the OICC is to better inform and promote the positive contributions that wildlife agencies, industry manufacturers, NGOs and end users such as hunters, anglers, trappers and target shooters make to conservation. Outdoor organizations interested in conservation are welcome to use any OICC content to expand the reach of messages created by the OICC. To become a member of the Outdoor Industry Communication Council, contact Jim Curcuruto of OSCF (203) 450-7202 jim@stewardsofconservation.org or Jon Gassett of WMI at (502) 330-9025 jgassett@wildlifemgt.org. There are no costs involved to become a member of the OICC. Members may utilize OICC materials as they see fit with no restrictions. For additional information visit <https://www.outdoorstewards.org/outdoor-industry-communication-council-oicc/>

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