

UNIT III:

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH AND RETENTION



SUMMARY — Recruiting and retaining members at all levels of the League — local, state, and national — is vitally important. This unit offers a variety of techniques to help your chapter or state division in promoting, recruiting, upgrading, and retaining members.

Under the League Bylaws, membership is open to any person who supports the goals and policies of the League. Consequently, membership in the League should be extended to *all* who subscribe to the League's conservation mission. As we know, conservation progress is brought about through democratic determination and a united effort by the members. The more members the League attracts, the stronger our conservation efforts will be.

Membership Basics

While we are all responsible for recruiting and engaging members, those holding specific membership duties should become familiar with the League's terminology and procedures. Understanding these basics will help you move efficiently through the process for renewing current members, giving you more time to focus on recruitment.

As you recruit new members, don't forget to let them know that their dues give them access to more than just the benefits of your local chapter. As chapter members they are part of a national organization that provides a broad network of resources and expertise as well as quality publications. While their local membership provides them opportunities for sharing ideas and problem-solving within the community.

Membership Types — An individual can join the League either by becoming a member of a local chapter or by becoming a member-at-large.

Chapter. The chapter system is the backbone of the League's membership and comprises over 90 percent of our members. In addition to contributing dues, chapter members develop and participate in many valuable on-the-ground conservation public service projects, and they help guide the work of our chapters, state divisions, and the national organization. The chapter membership year runs from January 1 through December 31. A pro-rated half-

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year membership is available from July 1 through December for new members. Renewing members must pay for a full year.

Member-at-Large. Members-at-large choose not to be part of a local chapter; they may lack the time to participate in their local chapter, or they may not live near a League chapter. As a result, members-at-large do not have local chapter privileges, such as access to chapter grounds. Although members-at-large make up a relatively small portion of the League's total membership, their membership support and voice still plays an important role in advancing our conservation mission. A member-at-large may become a chapter member by paying applicable annual chapter and state division dues in addition to national dues.

Dues Levels — A chapter membership payment includes three levels: chapter dues, national dues, and, if one exists, division dues.

Chapter. All chapter members pay local dues. These rates will vary, not only according to membership type, but also from chapter to chapter. Local dues rates are established by the chapter.

Division. If a chapter is located in a state with a state division, the chapter member must also pay dues to his or her state division. Division dues rates are established by each state, and, like chapter dues, will vary depending on membership type and state.

National. All chapter members and members-at-large pay national dues. National dues will vary depending on membership type. The dues for chapter members are set by the national Board of Directors, subject to a majority vote of the chapter delegates at the national convention. The national Executive Board establishes the national dues rates for members-at-large.

Membership Classifications — League chapters offer several classes of membership as provided for in Article 4 of the League's Bylaws. Chapters should offer all four classes of membership to their new and renewing members.

Individual. Individual membership entails a single membership for an adult. One membership card is issued. The member carries one vote, with chapter privileges determined by the chapter. The membership database and report forms use the code: RG.

Family. This membership category is for one or two adults and their dependents (up to age 17) living in the same household. Each family member is issued a membership card, and each adult member is

entitled to one vote. Chapter privileges are determined by the chapter. The membership database and report forms use the code: FM.

Student. This membership is for full-time students, 18 to 21 years old. A full-time undergraduate student over age 21 may also be considered a student member. The student's full-time status is determined by an official transcript from a high school, trade school, college, or university. The member receives one membership card and is entitled to one vote. Chapter privileges are determined by the chapter. The membership database and report forms use the code: ST.

Youth. This membership category is for persons 17 and younger. Youth members receive one membership card but are *not entitled* a vote, except at a recognized youth chapter meeting. Privileges are determined by the chapter and may be limited. The membership database and report forms use the code: YH.

Others. Individual, family, student, and youth memberships are also available to members-at large. Members-at-large also have three additional membership classes: Supporting (SU), Master (MA), and Corporate (CO). The first two classifications are considered individual memberships with a contributory level higher than the others; each receives one membership card. The third classification is open only to corporations.

Life Memberships — Any eligible individual, family, student, or youth member (whether a chapter or at-large member) may upgrade by becoming a Life Member or Life Benefactor with a designated single payment to the National Office. Family level life memberships are also available, so any eligible family members may also upgrade by becoming a Family Life Member or Family Life Benefactor. The national Executive Board determines the dues rates.

Payment plans are available, but the member does not attain Life or Life Benefactor status until he or she pays the full amount. Members are exempt, however, from paying additional national dues while participating in a payment plan.

When an individual becomes a Life Member or Life Benefactor, he or she no longer has to pay national dues. In addition, lifetime membership exemptions (either Life Member or Life Benefactor) cover all national dues for those holding multiple chapter memberships. A chapter member with a lifetime membership exemption is still obligated to pay applicable division and chapter dues. (Some chapters and divisions may offer state and local life memberships, and rates will vary.)



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Life Member. Benefits include a lifetime subscription to *Outdoor America* magazine, a personalized certificate, a special pin, decal, and patch. Life Member status is available to an individual member; Family Life Member status is available to two adult individuals living in the same household. Membership database and report forms use the codes: LF and FL, respectively.

Life Benefactor. Benefits include a lifetime subscription to *Outdoor America* magazine, a special pin, decal, an engraved wooden plaque, a mountain parka, and a copy of the League's history, *Born with Fists Doubled*. A Life Benefactor will also receive a copy of the *IWLA Annual Report*. Life Benefactor status is available to an individual member; Family Life Benefactor status is available to two adult individuals living in the same household. Membership database and report forms use the codes: LB and FB, respectively.

Chapter Membership Positions and Responsibilities

Each chapter should designate one person who is responsible for overseeing membership renewals and recruitment. Whatever their chapter title — membership dues recipient, membership committee chair, membership secretary, or vice president for membership — their role in handling renewals, new member inquiries, and recruiting new members is one of the most important in the League. This person should *not* handle all membership matters alone: instead, he or she should lead a supporting membership committee.

Membership Committee — These volunteers provide invaluable assistance to the chapter by: helping with mailings of renewal and/or membership cards; recruiting new members; distributing posters and brochures throughout the community; attending other civic groups' meetings to speak about League membership, and helping to orient new members. Membership committees may want to designate a leader for marketing to potential new members. This position is often referred to as the chapter's membership marketing chair.

Membership Dues Recipient — The chapter membership officer, commonly referred to as the membership dues recipient or MDR, is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operation of the chapter's membership program. This includes responsibility for maintaining accurate, up-to-date, and complete membership records for all new and renewing members. Described below are the main duties of this important volunteer position.

Processing and Fulfillment. An MDR should maintain a file, either electronic or hard copy, of both new and renewed members. Each year

the MDR will use the computer printout or roster furnished by the National Office with the billing materials to validate the current members. Discrepancies on current year's memberships should be reconciled with the National Office immediately.

The chapter billing roster can be used to record payments from renewals and new members. The MDR can record next to each person's name the amount of the payment received, the date it was received, and who's sponsoring the new member, if applicable. Sponsor names are used to determine membership recognition awards and aid in acquiring renewals in future years.

It is extremely important that dues payments be sent to the National Office soon after they are received to prevent any lapse in membership or delays in processing of member credentials. Once membership payments are received at the National Office, the MDR will be sent corresponding membership cards to distribute to the respective paid members.

Membership Tools

The National Office provides membership support, marketing materials, and transmittal forms to help chapters manage and grow their membership. Many are supplied annually; others are available upon request as needed.

Support Materials –

- **MDR 101 Handbook.** This chapter membership officer's manual and accompanying CD-ROM is a must-read for chapter membership volunteers. It supplies the most current step-by-step directions on the billing system, including important deadlines and responsibilities. As membership responsibilities shift to new volunteers within a chapter, this manual should always be passed on to the new officers.
- **Chapter membership application forms.** Chapters may use these generic application forms to sign up new members. The form includes a detachable membership dues receipt.
- **Temporary membership card.** A temporary membership card may be issued to a newly recruited chapter member. This membership card is valid for 60 days, or until the member receives a permanent, numbered membership card prepared by the National Office.
- **Chapter roster.** This computerized list generates two types of reports: a list of active, paid chapter members, or a list including both expired and paid members. Membership officers should review this roster carefully, since it contains important functional details like

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name, address, phone, and e-mail, join date, membership type, and membership expiration date.

- **Dues statement or renewal notice.** This four-part invoice is prepared for each soon-to-expire member. It contains details on the total amount due (combining national, division, if applicable, and chapter dues). In September, the chapter MDR will receive a set of dues statements to include in the first renewal package. The MDR will receive a similar set of dues statements in a second renewal package by mid-December. An optional third renewal notice is available for chapters upon request; that package is sent to members in late February or early March.
- **Membership card.** The National Office supplies membership cards for paid members. Membership cards are issued after the National Office receives the paperwork and member's payment from the chapter's MDR. The card's cover design changes annually. This approach is consistent with our Bylaws under Article 4, which state that no member of a local chapter or division shall be considered a member in good standing or be entitled to credentials bearing the name of the Izaak Walton League unless and until that member's current national dues have been paid. In addition, the Bylaws provide that only a member whose dues are paid is an active member, entitled to IWLA credentials.
- **Member decal and pin.** Official League member decals are forwarded with the membership cards to the MDR. Additional quantities are available for purchase to accommodate other chapter needs. Member pins are also available for purchase from the National Office. Chapters receive these pins at very near cost if they purchase them in bulk. For more information, call toll-free (800) IKE-LINE (453-5463).
- **Billing envelopes.** A sufficient supply of window envelopes will be shipped to each chapter for mailing dues statements, membership cards, and member decals. The chapter will need to add postage and a return address to all envelopes. We suggest adding a line to the return address information to request address correction services from the post office so the chapter can be easily notified of bad or updated addresses. This service carries an additional fee, but it may save on postage costs in the long run. Chapters will receive additional billing envelopes with the second and optional third billings (indicating "second" and "final" notice, respectively).
- **Tally sheet.** This three-part transmittal form is designed for monthly membership accounting and processing. The form provides the chapter with a copy for its files in addition to the copies for the National and

division offices. To ensure prompt processing of members, chapters should send tally sheets along with new member report forms and renewals to the National Office every month, preferably twice a month. The League's Bylaws require each chapter to remit the national and state portions of the dues they collect to the National Office within 30 days of receipt from the member.

- **New member report form.** Designed for monthly membership processing, this transmittal form gives the MDR a tool to list new member information: name, membership class joined, address, telephone, e-mail, and sponsor.
- **Change of name/address/telephone number/e-mail form.** This transmittal form is used to update personal membership records. It is important that this form be submitted with available information changes as soon as possible so that members do not miss receiving their copies of *Outdoor America* or other League communications.
- **IWLA membership business-reply envelope.** The National Office provides chapters with postage-paid reply envelopes to make it easy to mail membership transmittal forms (tally sheets, new member report forms, and change of name/address/telephone number/e-mail form) along with dues payments to the National Office at no cost to the chapter.
- **Welcome letter.** Also available from the National Office upon request is a "welcome new chapter member" letter from the League's executive director outlining some of the benefits of membership.
- **New member postcard.** Upon joining, all new chapter members will receive a postcard directly from the National Office welcoming them to the League and offering them information about specific areas of interest to them.

Note: In this fast-paced society, the use of e-mails greatly expedites communications between League staff, leaders and members. It is, therefore, equally important to gather and transmit members' current e-mail addresses using these forms (e.g. new member report and change of name/address/telephone number/e-mail).

Member Marketing Materials —

- **Chapter brochure template and stock.** Full-color brochure stock is available, along with instructions and templates, for a chapter to custom design and over-print its own tri-fold membership brochure. A reasonable supply of blank chapter brochures are available free of charge for a chapter's use. Refer to Appendix F to see a sample blank chapter brochure.



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- **Camera-ready advertisements.** Promoting a variety of League memberships, these advertisements can be used in a chapter newsletter, on its Web site, or for local newspaper advertising efforts.
- **Chapter Web site templates.** As a free service to chapters, the National Office offers templates that allow a chapter to establish and maintain its own Web site. Chapter Web sites facilitate communication with members and the wider conservation community in their areas. For the chapter Web page registration form and design template specifics, refer to Appendix G.
- **IWLA fact sheets.** The League has created a series of one-page fact sheets that describe our mission, achievements, programs, and goals. Chapters are encouraged to use these fact sheets to help educate new members and during public events for people interested in learning more about the League. Refer to Appendix H for the IWLA Fact Sheets order form.
- **Bulk quantities of *Outdoor America* magazine.** Larger quantities of the League's members-only quarterly magazine may be available as hand-outs for chapter membership promotions when inventory permits.

When ordering these items, be sure to include your name and address on any request, since they may become separated from other mail you send to the National Office. Or call toll-free (800) IKE-LINE (453-5463) to request these items. Refer to the *IWLA National Directory* or the League's Web site for more details on staff contacts who can assist you.

Methods to Increase Membership

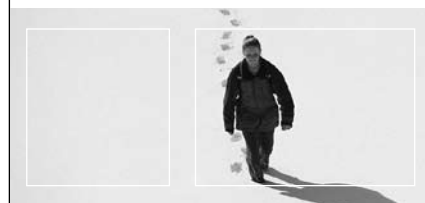
The League has put together a number of well-tested and proven techniques to increase your chapter's membership and suggested activities for your membership committee. If you develop other successful approaches, please be sure to let your state division and the National Office know so that they can continue to refine and supplement the techniques summarized below.

Timing — Timing is critical to the success or failure of a new member campaign. In general, our experience suggests that new member campaigns are most successful in fall and early winter. But if you live in an area where summer activities attract the most prospective members, then a campaign in July may be more successful. Tailoring membership campaigns for what will work best in your area is the key to success!

Planning — Maintaining momentum is also important. Ideally, the actual solicitation should not take more than one to three months. As a result, proper preparation is essential to campaign success. Start by developing a

calendar of membership activities that includes both renewing members and new member campaigns. A calendar of membership activities might look something like this:

July	Respond to National Office request for current dues and membership officer information.
August	Establish your membership goals for the next 12-month period. Evaluate last year's membership program. List its strengths and weaknesses.
September	Receive billing and renewal components from the National Office. Send out first dues notices.
October	Check your renewal rate. Rewrite your program with improvements. Remind members of the renewal process in your newsletter. Launch the League's fall chapter <u>new</u> member promotion: "Join for next year now — (October, November, December) — and receive the rest of this year free."
November	Send a letter to all members who did not renew in the previous year asking them to rejoin. Indicate to them that, "We would like to have you back." It is more cost-effective to bring back a lapsed member than recruit a new one.
December	Send out second renewal notices. Send letters to renewed and soon-to-expire members. Include a couple of blank membership forms saying, "Give a friend a holiday gift, or give yourself a gift — renew your own membership." Remind members of the renewal process in your newsletter.
January	Intensify your renewal efforts. (If renewals slow down drastically this month, it may mean a decrease in membership by the end of the year). Start calling or visiting homes of unpaid members. Hold a special function at which paid members get a price break or get in free.



Note: Members who have not renewed as of January 1st will receive their last issue of *Outdoor America* (winter issue) with a special cover wrap featuring a renewal.

February	<p>By now, 90 to 95 percent of current members should be renewed.</p> <p>Use your monthly reminder to let unpaid members see how their money is being used to support local, state, and national programs.</p> <p>As an additional reminder, ask the National Office to provide a third renewal notice with “final notice” renewal envelopes for the chapter to mail to expired members.</p>
March	<p>Have a door prize drawing at your March meeting. Only those members who have renewed by meeting night will be eligible. Evaluate the progress of your new member program.</p>
April	<p>Try a new approach to secure those last few renewals and intensify your member program.</p>
May	<p>Plan outdoor activities to promote membership.</p>
June	<p>You should have reached nearly 100 percent of your goal for renewals and new members.</p> <p>Evaluate your progress.</p> <p>Include membership promotions in your summer activities.</p>
July	<p>Offer half-year memberships for new members.</p> <p>Sponsor a booth at your county fair.</p>
August	<p>Start the planning process for next year’s membership program. Encourage a meeting of the newly elected officers to put together ideas.</p> <p>Get acquainted with new members through a special new member meeting. Ask them why they joined and find out what they hope to accomplish through their membership in the League.</p> <p>Evaluate your program and make some corrections for next year. Plan a fall festival or party that is open to the public.</p>
September	<p>Start the new membership renewal process.</p>

Membership Campaigns

Although every chapter event, project, or activity offers an opportunity to build membership, and every day offers every member the same opportunity, consider launching an annual membership campaign.

In all promotions, be sure to define precisely what membership in your chapter means, including:

- Benefits — Why would someone want to join?
- Responsibilities of members
- Qualifications to join
- Costs

Be sure to focus on the chapter goals, whether they involve stream monitoring for clean water or other, on-the-ground conservation work. Reaching these goals is why you want people to join, so tell them what you do! Share both the tangible benefits of joining (such as access to a lake for fishing) and the intangible (including fellowship with other conservationists).

What are the actual steps and timeframe it takes for someone to join? Is it as simple as filling out a membership form at an event booth, or do they need a sponsor or need to attend a set number of meetings? Use your Web site as a community outreach tool so that potential members know what they need to do to join.

Action Plan — As your committee develops its plan of action, consider some of these possible reasons why someone might be interested in joining:

- To feel needed
- To share skills
- For a change of pace
- To be with people who enjoy the same things
- To gain leadership skills
- To demonstrate commitment to a cause
- For fun!
- To donate their professional skills
- To give back to the community
- As a family tradition
- To be an advocate
- To have an impact and feel good



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- Because they were asked
- Because of who asked them
- Because of their personal experience with a cause
- To gain access to particular services
- To get to know/be involved with a new community
- To stay busy
- To make new friends
- To do something different from their daily jobs
- Because of interest in the group's mission and goals

Recruiting Methods — There are several ways to recruit new members: person-to-person, direct mail, special events, and promotions. Here are some guidelines for each.

Person-to-Person. One of the best ways to recruit new members is person-to-person. Friends, neighbors, relatives, and colleagues not only make great members, but often become great volunteers. Although individual members should be encouraged to approach their friends and neighbors on their own, a chapter should consider launching an organized person-to-person membership campaign.

For the initial meeting, call together your membership committee, best workers, and other chapter officers. Emphasize at the outset that membership is the one thing you propose to discuss at that meeting. Show how, with careful planning, increased membership can be achieved in a few days of hard work if everyone helps.

Bring to this meeting as complete a list as possible of prospective members in your chapter area. These lists can include rosters of agricultural, business, fraternal, professional, and religious organizations, as well as the telephone directory. You may need to request those attending the meeting to supplement this list. Have everyone brainstorm about names of potential members or people who have access to potential members, as well as ideas for exciting places and times to meet with prospects.

With your group of volunteers seated around a table, go through the lists, selecting names of people who should belong to the Izaak Walton League. Careful advance selection of prospective members increases the likelihood that your chapter will succeed.

Teams. The two-person team is very important. Experience has proven that in work of this kind two people are much more effective than one working alone. One person may procrastinate or lack the initiative to get started, but he will never let a partner down.

As a team member, your success with prospects will also be much greater. It is harder for a prospect to turn down two people who have taken the time to make a personal call and extend an invitation to join the League.

When the teams have been paired off, request that the group swap seats so that teammates are together. This engenders the team idea at once. When pairs are all seated, proceed with numbering each team and be sure that your secretary records the names and number of each team. Furnish everyone with a sheet of paper, at the top of which they write their names, their teammate's name, and team number. Now you are ready to assign prospects.

Here we use the volunteer idea — another considerable advantage — by permitting the teams to select the prospects they will contact. Beginning with the first name and address on your list, which you read aloud, let one of the teams select that name by calling out the team number. The teammates will both record that name on their lists — and you or your secretary will record the team number after the name on your master list. This assignment work can be done rapidly, but accuracy is important.

When all names of member prospects have been assigned based on who knows who, geographical location, or place of business, check carefully against the master list. At this point, your chapter secretary can arrange to type copies — one original and two copies — so that each person on the team has one.

After completing the assignments, have your best recruiter give a short pep talk. Ask him or her to briefly outline the League's program and policies at the chapter, state, and national levels; this will send the group away energized with a sense of purpose and the motivation to act. Remind the teams to tailor their approaches to their audience; promoting the benefits of chapter membership to a family with young children would require a different approach than the one you might use with an unmarried professional.

In mailing announcements that your chapter is seeking new members, you may want to include well-written stories about League accomplishments and your chapter's conservation program. You might have a writer or journalist in your group who can provide you with such stories. Timing is important here. The first story should precede the actual contact of new prospects by no more than two days. You can follow up by sending additional stories during and after the membership drive.

Direct-Mail Solicitation. You can contact many more prospects through the mail than you can through personal solicitation. Because a single letter is easily ignored, plan to send a series of two or three letters; the second or third letter frequently pays off.

Prospective members should be persons who: (1) can afford to join; (2) are in the habit of supporting worthy causes; and (3) have a stake in environmental conditions and/or an interest in conservation and outdoor recreation.

When conducting a new member direct-mail campaign, consider these tips:

- Send letters to a large number of prospects to receive volume discounts on printing.
- Personalize your letters — in these days of electronic communications, a personalized letter that doesn't look like junk mail is more likely to catch someone's eye.
- Try local lists or sources such as members of the Chamber of Commerce, local manufacturers, professionals, and luncheon clubs. If you mail to a large list, have the envelopes sorted by zip code and mailed using bulk-rate (third class). This will save you money.
- Your package may include a cover letter on chapter stationery, a brochure describing the League and local chapter, an application to join, and a return envelope. Optional testimonial letters should be on business or personal letterhead and signed by a chapter member in the community whose name is known and whose recommendation will instill confidence.
- Do not try to recruit student and youth memberships through direct mail. The small dues rates make it unlikely that you will recover your expenses.

Although there is no guarantee that a direct-mail membership campaign will cover its own expenses the first time around, over time it is likely to pay off.

Events. Link membership recruitment with other activities and events your chapter is organizing and hosting. For example, if your conservation committee is hosting an Earth Day event or fishing clinic, make sure that it includes a short talk on the League and opportunities to join. If your education committee is organizing a speakers' bureau for local civic groups, be sure that they bring membership materials to their speaking engagements.

In addition, open some of your regular business meetings to the public. To attract members of the public, invite a speaker whom people in your community would like to hear; a local naturalist, noted sportsman, or a

representative from a state fish and wildlife or conservation agency. Engage in an outdoor recreation activity or show a video related to the speaker's area of expertise to help draw more people.

In short, make membership recruitment a part of everything your chapter does, whether it involves conservation, outdoor recreation, education, or promotional activities.

Finally, spend the time to make sure that these public events and activities are well publicized. In addition to posting information on your Web site and in your chapter newsletter, post signs in the community and try to interest your local newspaper, radio, or TV stations in announcing and covering the event.

Promotions. Recruitment challenges or contests can help to involve your members with the recruitment process. Here are few ideas to try:

Fall Promotions. Take advantage of the ongoing offer from the National Office and launch a fall new member promotion: "Join for next year now — (October, November, December) — and get the rest of this year free." This promotion does well when promoted heavily during an early fall event at the chapter where the public is welcomed. Events such as an open house, a hunter's sight-in day, or a National Hunting and Fishing Day work well for many chapters.

Contests. Motivate your volunteers to recruit new members using incentives. Volunteers may be more inclined to convince a co-worker or neighbor to join if there something in it for them. Incentives can include prizes or a chance for a special drawing. For example, for each new member recruited, a person earns a chance to win a quality raffle prize.

You can also offer volunteers the incentive to receive a free chapter membership renewal for the following year in exchange for a designated number of new members that he or she brings to the chapter. For example, recruit three new members and get next year's chapter membership free (the chapter pays the member's national and division dues). Several chapters have had success with this technique.

Family Memberships. We encourage chapters to offer all four classes of membership — individual, family, student, and youth — to new and renewing members. Providing these options can boost membership and revenue. To encourage families, students, and youths to join, add a special promotion to your fall campaign that reaches out to current and new members who might be interested in these membership classes.



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Other Suggestions

To be successful, your chapter membership committee needs to be organized, persistent, creative, and not rely on just one approach. Always remember to provide a variety of ways for volunteers to get involved in this effort and to recognize those who do good work. In addition, consider adding one or more of these suggestions to your chapter's annual calendar of activities and management practices:

New Member Orientation — There is no better way to inform new members about the League's work than a new member orientation meeting. This meeting can serve as a simple presentation that explains the League's conservation mission and the chapter's and division's work. It can also orient new members on chapter rules and regulations, or familiarize them with chapter grounds and facilities. Some chapters have made custom video or slide presentations about their projects and accomplishments; others provide new members with a recent copy of *Outdoor America*. An orientation meeting is also a great time to offer volunteer opportunities and recruit new project and activity help. Remember to keep the event informative and entertaining.

Recruiter/Volunteer Recognition — Go beyond current incentives for your recruiters and other active volunteers. Consider highlighting their efforts during chapter meetings, through your Web site, or in your newsletter. In addition, consider creating a chapter-level membership recruitment award. Nominate your top recruiters for the League's Tobin Award, which recognizes each chapter's top volunteer annually. To those who sign up 54 or more members annually, the League offers the 54 Roundtable award pins presented at the national convention each year.

Communications — Contact your state division membership chair or your chapter's national director to see how they can help. Also maintain a dialogue with other chapters in your area, state, or region to exchange ideas and techniques. Maintaining communication with other chapters can provide your chapter and others many good ideas.

Consider asking local radio or TV stations to run a public service announcement (PSA) promoting your chapter. Check with smaller public stations first, since they are more likely to air membership spots. Brainstorm with your committee about other places to post announcements that will give you exposure to appropriate audiences. For instance, does a local college offer environmental and conservation-related courses or have a community service requirement? If so, consider postings on bulletin boards or in newsletters there. Does your community have a "welcome wagon" group that would let you insert a brochure, or are there real estate offices that will mention your group to new residents?

Maintaining Involved and Informed Members for Retention —

Keeping current members involved is just as important as signing up new ones or organizing new chapters. In general, you won't find members voluntarily dropping out of an organization that is working hard and constructively, has strong leadership, and is giving its members ample opportunity to participate in a meaningful and challenging way in fun and rewarding activities. When members don't renew or stop participating, consider calling them to find out why. This information will help you diagnose the problem and make changes so that your chapter continues to grow. The important thing is to keep your members active and excited about continuing the mission of the League and growing the chapter.

Some other ways to stay in touch with your members include:

- Have door greeters at every meeting
- Start a peer mentoring program
- Thank people in public
- Make phone calls to new members
- Make personal introductions
- Engage in outreach to members experiencing personal difficulties or loss (such as losing their jobs or loved ones)
- Offer congratulations when appropriate
- Profile new/old members in newsletters
- Send new members an anniversary note on their join date and solicit feedback about their experiences with the group so far
- Contact members who haven't been to a meeting in two years
- Send "miss you" notes to people missing two meetings
- Post recent photos of activities on your Web site
- Hold social events
- Encourage more board member/officer interaction with members at meetings and events — ask officers to introduce themselves to people they don't know
- Hold activities/events for families
- Hold member surveys and roundtable discussions to encourage member input and feedback
- Celebrate birthdays
- Have a "member of the month"
- Invite special guests and speakers to meetings (often your members know people who can speak to the group on an appropriate topic)

Keeping current members involved is just as important as signing up new ones or organizing new chapters.

