

Water works wonders™

for the Arizona Game and Fish Department



A Mixture of Marketing Techniques

Facing environmental challenges, Arizona's Game and Fish

Department shows how a state agency can use RBFF materials in a variety of ways to help keep residents' interest in fishing and boating high.



Introduction

The Arizona Game and Fish Department has been a partner with RBFF since its inception. Having participated in the foundation's strategic planning process in 1998, Arizona was familiar with the valuable materials being designed to help state agencies eager to increase the number of boaters and anglers. With this in mind, Arizona proceeded with a number of its own marketing efforts that would be flexible enough to incorporate materials later produced by the **Water Works Wonders™** campaign. Supported by a leadership that encouraged marketing and provided the budget to back up those intentions, Arizona provides a unique case study.

With so many factors affecting angler participation, Arizona was ready to put to work a heavy dose of sound marketing tactics designed to halt the decline of participation and reverse its course.

Factors Affecting the Decrease in Anglers and Boaters

Since 1999, Arizona has suffered a "low water" cycle each year. With lakes at such low levels, boaters and anglers found it difficult to launch and were not able to get out and enjoy themselves on the water.

The Game and Fish Department was concerned about the effect of the 2001 fishing license fee increase. After ten years without a fee increase, the department increased the state's license fees by 30 percent.

Further adding to this situation were the wildfires of 2002 that virtually shut down fishing opportunities during the popular summer months. The two-and-a-half month closure of prime fishing areas, in particular those with trout, caused a 26 percent decline in the number of trout stamps and a 17 percent decline in fishing licenses sold that year.

The Demographics of Maricopa County

Maricopa County is the fourth most populous county and the fourteenth largest county in the United States. With approximately 3.2 million residents, more than half the state's population resides in Maricopa County, which includes the cities of Mesa, Phoenix, Scottsdale, Glendale and others.



The Arizona Game and Fish Department focused its marketing efforts mainly on Maricopa County because it mirrored the state's demographics, which includes rural and urban communities, Whites, Hispanics, and African Americans, and a wide income distribution. About 8 percent of the Maricopa County population buys a fishing license each year. Most importantly, Maricopa County represented a 35 percent churn rate for lapsed and infrequent anglers. This churn rate was similar to the entire state's turnover in anglers from year to year.

Media buys were planned primarily in Maricopa County, though some products, such as bumper stickers and state regulation booklets, would be distributed statewide. Post marketing surveys would be sent to residents of Maricopa County after each annual campaign to measure awareness.

Arizona's Past Marketing Efforts



"Catch a Memory" and "Fish Arizona" campaigns – 1999

Arizona's Game and Fish Department began targeting lapsed and infrequent anglers with a campaign that focused on family fun. With a budget of \$50,000 the campaign was promoted through billboards, radio and public events. It was also promoted at fishing clinics, on fishing regulation booklets, on posters, etc..

The department was pleased to find that fishing license sales increased 2.6 percent that year. This was significant because typically a decline of 6 to 8 percent had been experienced during past low-water years.

"Bite This" and "Fish Arizona" campaigns – 2000

Arizona's marketing efforts took on an interesting twist during the 2000 campaign. Targeting teens and those in their early 20s, the slogan **"Bite This"** was introduced through retail stores, billboards and bumper stickers. More than 120,000 bumper stickers were distributed. Recognition

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of the campaign by young adults was extremely high. But, not surprisingly, the “over-40” crowd was not very receptive to the slogan. The “**Fish Arizona**” campaign was less edgy and appealed better to adults.

Both campaigns were promoted at fishing clinics, retail stores, public events, and on billboards. Despite these efforts, there was a 6.4 percent decline in fishing license sales that year as the low-water period began to worsen—a more typical statistic seen in past low-water years.

Water Works Wonders™ – “Take Me Fishing” is introduced to Arizona Anglers

In 2001, Arizona began using the RBFF marketing messages and imagery in their own outreach efforts. “**Take Me Fishing**” ads were broadcast on KTVK Channel 3, the independent local television network, on ABC, NBC, local outdoor cable channels and on ESPN and ESPN2. Billboards using the **Water Work Wonders™** imagery were placed at



strategic sites. Arizona promoted the RBFF messages and imagery at fishing clinics and other events. The department also used the imagery on the state’s fishing regulation handbook. About 60,000 “**Fish Arizona**” bumper stickers were distributed statewide.

As a result of their strong advertising effort on television, the department developed solid relationships with the media which further helped in their news coverage. This also led to significant savings for television advertising the department purchased the following year.

Water Works Wonders for Arizona

The 2001 campaign successfully slowed the downward trend in license sales with only a 4 percent decline from the previous year’s 6.4 percent drop. Taking into consideration the 30 percent increase in license fees that year, which historically had adversely affected fishing participation, Water Works Wonders proved to be a tremendous asset to Arizona’s marketing efforts.

Survey results yielded even more encouraging information. More than 42 percent recalled seeing the campaign over the course of the year and almost 18 percent

recalled seeing it over the past 30 days. **Water Works Wonders™** television advertisements were remembered by nearly 7 percent of those surveyed and more than 10 percent recalled seeing the “**Fish Arizona**” bumper stickers. By consistently blending the WWW messages and imagery into their marketing efforts, Arizona was able to slow the downward cycle.

Averting a Disaster with Strong Marketing

In 2002 devastating wildfires ripped through Arizona, virtually shutting down the state’s prime fishing season. The combination of the fires and another low-water year caused a huge 26 percent decline in fishing license sales by the summer’s end. The department was determined to reverse the decline with a heavy dose of marketing and they put **Water Works Wonders™** to work once again from March to October.

This time the department focused on families and lapsed anglers through a strong TV ad campaign of “**Take Me Fishing**”. The 2002 fishing regulation book also used the campaign materials.

By the end of the year, the steep downturn began to slow with a 17 percent decline, but most notably, targeted TV markets yielded a very high awareness from the state’s residents. More than 46 percent of those surveyed remembered seeing the promotional campaign that year – a 4 percent increase from the previous year. Twenty-three percent, 5 percent more than in 2001, of those surveyed recalled seeing the campaign within the past 30 days. Nineteen percent remembered the “Take Me Fishing” television ads.



Arizona’s Anglers Are Ready to Fish Again

Considering the incredible obstacles the department faced in 2002, Arizona expects 2003 to be a much better year. Environmental factors have improved considerably as the low-water cycle appears to be coming to an end. Arizona’s anglers’ pent-up desire to go boating and fishing is expected to lure people back to the water. With improving environmental conditions, the department plans to continue using the **Water Works Wonders™** “Take Me Fishing” campaign to reinforce the message that time spent on the water connects families and friends.



Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation



For more information on the success of the Arizona Marketing program, contact **Marty Macurak** at 607-789-3100 at the **Arizona Game and Fish Department**, or **Kirk Gillis** at 703-519-0013 at the **Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation**.