



STATES' PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOLKIT

***A Resource for State Agencies to Use for Promoting
Direct Mail Marketing to Internal/External Audiences***

MARCH 2008



March 19, 2008

Dear State Partner:

As you know, this is a critical time for the boating and fishing recreation community. With participation declining over the past several years, it is generating less money for local conservation efforts.

A healthy boating and fishing recreation community translates to a healthy conservation community, and we believe our efforts this year through direct mail, advertising and public relations will effectively turn the tide and significantly increase the participation of lapsed anglers.

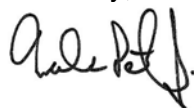
On behalf of RBFF, we want to thank you and your agency for your participation in RBFF's direct mail program and share with you this comprehensive resource that will greatly enhance the effectiveness of your program. This public relations toolkit will help ensure that all states are communicating and reaching consumers with the same consistent messages.

All of the communication elements, both RBFF's and your agency's—direct mail, media relations, advertising and community relations—will work together to raise awareness of our messages and motivate people to take action.

The direct mail will target lapsed anglers and by using this PR toolkit, your agency's public relations efforts will dramatically help extend the direct mail's reach and effectiveness. Everything from reaching out to reporters, to the articles in your agency publications, to the content on your Web site and the presentations you give to community groups—all of it works together to create "top of mind" awareness for the consumer.

We hope you enjoy this resource and thank you for all you do to raise awareness of the importance of boating and fishing.

Sincerely,



Frank Peterson
President and CEO
Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation



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**This section is included in a separate PowerPoint file, not in this document.*

SECTION 1: EDUCATING COLLEAGUES ABOUT YOUR AGENCY'S PARTICIPATION IN RBFF'S DIRECT MAIL PROGRAM

INTERNAL TALKING POINTS

- Recruitment and retention of fishing license holders are critical to the success of our agency. In our state, for example, fishing license sales _____. (Use attached spreadsheet to track your "Resident License Sales.")
- The USFWS reports a 12% decline in participation nationwide in 2006 compared to 2001, and according to a study by Southwick Associates, only 15% of anglers renew their license every year over a five-year period.
- Marketing to lapsed anglers contributes to the long-term sustainability of our agency and natural resources in three critical ways:
 - **Economic.** Funding is essential to our agency's ability to produce results—and increasing license sales delivers increased revenue. In addition, since license sales are used to calculate our state's portion of federal aid from the Sport Fish Restoration Fund, license sales can generate revenue for our agency beyond the sale itself.
 - **Awareness.** Communicating fishing opportunities and benefits raises the visibility of our agency and its programs. And generating awareness is step-one to increasing participation—which, in turn, drives our sources of funding.
 - **Political.** More people participating in more programs mean more constituents who have a vested interest in supporting the resource and supporting our agency's programs. This personal stake makes them more likely to be active, vocal advocates—and to convey that support to the government officials they elect.
- RBFF has released a nationwide direct mail program that virtually all states can use. As a part of our participation in the campaign, RBFF will also send us a PR toolkit that will help us to communicate and to reach consumers with the same consistent messages from multiple sources.
 - Here is an example of what will happen ...First, a consumer will receive a postcard in the mail, which will get him thinking about boating and fishing and remember how much fun it is. A short time later, he'll read an article about boating and fishing, how fun it is, and its stress reduction benefits.
 - In the car on the way to work, he will hear a radio advertisement about "Take Me Fishing." Later that week, the guest speaker at his local Rotary or chamber of commerce meeting is from a state agency and talks about the importance of boating and fishing.
 - Any one element by itself could be missed or forgotten, but working together, they intensify the reach, persuasiveness and effectiveness of our program.

SECTION 2: MEDIA RELATIONS

This section includes tips and tools to help you effectively earn placements in your local media.

- **Tips and Tools:** How to effectively pitch the media
- **Pitch Topics:** A list of story ideas you can use to target the media
- **Survey Results:** A list of facts, based on research commissioned by RBFF, for you to reference and include when you are working with the media
- **Press Release Template/Pitch Story:**
 - “Boating and Fishing Are Big Contributors to State’s Economy, Studies Show”
- **Media Tracking Report:** An overview of why tracking is important and a great tool to help you keep track of what journalists you’ve talked to, when and about which topics
**The media tracking report template is included in a separate Microsoft Excel file, not in this document.*

TIPS AND TOOLS: SIX TIME-TESTED TIPS FOR PITCHING THE MEDIA:

- 1) **Know your stuff:** Familiarize yourself with the reporter/journalist you’re contacting. Do they cover outdoors, fishing, boating, recreation, environment or sports? The way you pitch them and with what topic may be different depending on what they cover. Read a couple of their stories to get a sense of what they’re interested in. This is particularly important for columnists and bloggers.
- 2) **Have a few story angles up your sleeve:** This kit provides you with several different story ideas and press releases, and it’s always a good idea to have a couple of angles up your sleeve so that you can come right back with a different approach if a reporter doesn’t “bite” on your first story idea.
- 3) **Make it relevant/timely:** You know what’s going on in your community better than anyone, so use your inside knowledge to strengthen your pitch. Any pitch that is tied into a current issue in your community, or that can tie into a national trend or current issue, will be stronger than one that doesn’t. It will also create a sense of urgency for the reporter to run your story *now*, while it’s still timely, rather than pushing it off until later.
- 4) **Keep it short:** The media is always on deadline, and they are getting hundreds of pitches everyday. Keep your pitch—via phone or e-mail—short and to the point. You can always end by saying “I’m happy to get you more information.”
- 5) **Communicate:** With so many ways to communicate nowadays, find out how each media contact prefers to be contacted, i.e., by phone or e-mail. Most reporters still prefer e-mail, but find out and stick with that. They’ll appreciate that you’re being considerate!
- 6) **Build relationships:** You no doubt have great relationships with your statewide media, and you constantly want to strengthen those. Whether you have a relationship or not, meet them for lunch, send them a note. Form personal relationships with those you don’t know, and nurture relationships with those that you do know. When it comes down to pitching and placing stories—*nothing* is better than an established relationship.

PITCH TOPICS

Below are several different story angle possibilities to aid you in your pitching efforts. Please note that a date has been specified only if the angle is time-sensitive.

*** The core message that should come through in all of these stories is the importance of local participation in boating and fishing. Buy your fishing license, invite someone you love, and get out on the water. ***

- 1) **Triple-A Baseball:** (to hit in spring—see details and press release template enclosed)
- 2) **National Fishing and Boating Week:** (to hit in June—more details to come closer to the date)
- 3) **State Resources:** Give specific examples of how participation in boating/fishing and the purchase of fishing licenses has generated dollars that have been put into your state to further improve its natural surroundings and give back.
- 4) **Fishing Pro Profiles:** Profile stories on a local fishing pro; ideal for TV or print.
- 5) **Expert Opinion:** Offer expert opinions to all of your local media from one of RBFF's many expert resources or your state director and/or staff. *An expert sheet will be provided in the new RBFF press kit, which you will receive a sample copy of in late April/May 2008.*
- 6) **Local Stats:** The National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation is conducted by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service once every five years; the [most recent](#) one was released in late 2007. The census bureau breaks it down by [state](#). Some are more recent than others; more to come this year. The reports show how many people fished, how much they spent, etc. These resources could be offered to journalists, along with sources who can talk about topics like:
 - How fishing affects the local economy
 - Why fishing is important to conservation
 - Why local participation in fishing is important
 - How many fish are in your sea
 - How local anglers help your community as a whole
 - Why people choose to fish in the area and how others can tap into the sport
- 7) **Student Teams:** High school and college fishing/boating teams—any competitions, demonstrations, day-in-the-life stories, etc.
- 8) **Local Angler Stories:** Any profile stories on interesting local anglers. Perhaps a chef who catches his own dinner, a young boy who fishes everyday after school, a local protégé, an extreme sport fly-fisher, an old fisherman who has been around forever, etc.
- 9) **Environment:** (Facts from RBFF survey included below.)
- 10) **Stress-Reduction:** Several people have stories of how fishing and boating has reduced their stress. In some cases, it has even been doctor recommended. Pursue any of these stories locally, by speaking with residents and perhaps doctors as well.

- 11) Holiday Gift Guides:** To hit in November/December: Pitch the idea of boating/fishing equipment as holiday gifts (i.e. fishing pole as the simple gift that will last generations; kid-designed fishing poles instead of video games, etc.).
- 12) Nostalgia:** Fishing and boating in cinematic history – Tom Hanks in “Forrest Gump,” Brad Pitt in “A River Runs Through It,” Jane Fonda/Henry Fonda in “On Golden Pond,” Andy Griffith and Ron Howard in the opening credits of “The Andy Griffith Show,” Albert Finney in “Big Fish,” Danny Glover/Joe Pesci in “Gone Fishing,” Jack Lemmon/Walter Matthau in “Grumpy Old Men,” Hugh Grant/Renee Zellweger in “Bridget Jones’ Diary,” Sandra Bullock/Harry Connick Jr. in “Hope Floats,” Ariel/Eric in “The Little Mermaid,” “Stand By Me,” etc. A great pitch for a TV reporter or a film or pop culture writer.
- 13) Passing the Legacy:** The responsibility of passing America’s greatest pastime to the next generation—their children and children’s children. Pitching the details of Anglers’ Legacy. Perhaps get a local writer, reporter or blogger to take the Anglers’ Legacy Pledge and report on the experience of taking a first-timer fishing.
- 14) Local Spots:** The greatest fishing spots in your state: link back to TakeMeFishing.org, which gives a virtual tour of the waterways and allows your residents to post their own stories about fishing holes in your area. You may even break this down to the best family fishing hotspots, the best spots for couples, etc.
- 15) Local “Celebrities”:** Do any news anchors, radio DJs, mayors, athletes or other prominent people in your state boat and fish? Utilize their power of “celebrity!” Secure an excursion with them and a media outlet. Have them give their top fishing/boating tips. Have them recount their most embarrassing or outrageous fishing/boating story. The options are endless!
- 16) Local Initiatives:** Details on any programs or state initiatives.
- 17) Time-Constraints:** Quick, simple tips of how you can “do it in a day”... or, preferably, a few hours. How boating and fishing can fit into the modern lifestyle.
- 18) “Fishing Saved My Life” and Other Human Interest Stories:** If any local fishing pros or residents have touching stories, these always go a long way.
- 19) Popularities in Boating/Fishing:** If appropriate for your area, pitch the story of different fishing and boating popularities (i.e. saltwater fishing vs. freshwater, ice fishing, etc.)

RBFF SURVEY RESULTS: JUST THE FACTS

Source: RBFF online survey conducted December 2007 among 3,000 men, ages 25–54, who had participated in boating and/or fishing within the past three years. Statistical testing was done at a 95% confidence level.

Environment

- Boaters and anglers are more likely to recycle, compost trash, use Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs (CFLs), carpool and donate money to an environmental organization than non-boaters and anglers.
- Boaters and anglers are significantly more conscious of, and actively try to reduce, their carbon footprint.
- Boaters and anglers are significantly more likely to vote than non-boaters and anglers.

Success

- Boaters and anglers report that fishing has had a positive impact on their career.
- More boaters and anglers consider themselves a leader at work than non-boaters and anglers.
- Boaters and anglers perceive themselves as more successful than non-boaters and anglers perceive themselves.
- Boaters and anglers report that their best ideas come to them while they are fishing.

Relationships

- Boaters and anglers are significantly more satisfied with their marriages, relationships and friendships than non-boaters and anglers.
- Boaters and anglers are significantly more satisfied with their mental health than non-boaters and anglers.
- Boaters and anglers are more likely to have a close relationship with their children than non-boaters and anglers.

The benefits of boating and fishing (perceived by both boaters and anglers and non-boaters and anglers) last for a few days! You can't say that about a massage, a good meal, a long walk, etc.!

SAMPLE RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Month xx, 2008

BOATING AND FISHING ARE BIG CONTRIBUTORS TO STATE'S ECONOMY, STUDIES SHOW

CITY, STATE INITIALS – Recreational boaters and anglers are major powers when it comes to the strength of the economy, recent studies show.

In 2006, fishing-related expenditures pumped \$42.2 billion dollars into the national economy, according to the latest data available from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Boaters, meanwhile, generate about \$570 million a year in fuel taxes alone for the Federal Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, which supports coastal wetlands and fisheries conservation.

In **(insert state name)**, boating and fishing produce **\$(insert amount)** in funds that help support conservation activities.

"These recreational sports are tremendously important to the strength of our state's economy," said **(insert State representative name and title)**. "The funds generated by boating and fishing are crucial to keeping **(insert state name)**'s waterways and lands in good condition."

Fishing, according to a recent report from the National Shooting Sports Foundation, outranks football, baseball and tennis as one of America's favorite outdoor pastimes. In one year, anglers spent nearly \$19 billion on bait, boat rentals, and other equipment, \$18 billion on food and lodging during fishing trips and \$5.5 billion on licenses, memberships and other resources.

Together, the boating and fishing industries support more than a million jobs and add millions of dollars to state tax revenues, providing significant support to the nation's overall economy through recessions as well as booms, according to recent reports from several sources including the American Sportfishing Association and Southwick Associates.

"It's a well-known fact that boaters and anglers are passionate about the outdoors," said RBFF President and CEO Frank Peterson. "In fact, their continuing participation in these sports and the financial contributions they produce is essential to preserving this country's natural beauty."

About RBFF

RBFF is a nonprofit organization established in 1998 to increase participation in recreational angling and boating. RBFF helps people discover, share and protect the legacy of boating and fishing through national outreach programs including the [Take Me Fishing](#) campaign and [Anglers' Legacy](#).

###

Media Contact:

Name
Company
Phone
E-mail



MEDIA TRACKING

Please note – the media tracking report template is included in a separate Microsoft Excel file and is not included in this document.

As you and your team reach out to media more often and begin to secure stories in publications or coverage on shows, it is important to track your progress and show the amazing results that are achieved from everyone's hard work. Keeping a media tracking report is similar to keeping a score sheet.

Included in this kit is a template to provide you and your team a solid foundation on which to build. In addition to the standard information included on the template, more complicated media tracking sheets often record a publication's number of readers, the number of visitors to a Web site, or a television or radio show's audience to calculate the reach of the placement of a particular piece; it provides a rough estimate of how many people have viewed your message. As you can imagine, this helps attach a dollar value to the efforts of media relations.

However, we've kept this template simple and easy to manage and maintain—there are just a few important categories for you and your team to track.

How to Maintain a Media Tracking Report

You will notice the "TOTALS" section at the top of the spreadsheet; this serves to provide the reader of the report with a quick snapshot of the results. Simply tally your number of placements per media outlet category (print, online, television and radio) and update this section whenever you add an additional placement.

Below the "TOTALS" section begins the individual categories for you to input where each placement was secured. This template is set up to track the following information:

- **Name of Publication/Web site/Show** – Outlet in which the piece ran or aired
- **Date** – Date the piece ran, aired or was posted
- **Headline/Title of Piece** – Title of the story
- **Author/Newscaster/On-Air Personality** – Name of person who was responsible for telling the story
- **Key Messages of Piece** – Brief summary of key messages addressed in the story

The template currently has one row underneath each media category; just add as many rows as needed to record all the stories that are secured.

It is important to record as much of this information as available for each story that is secured. This simply allows you and others to keep a record of the results and quantify you and your team's pitching efforts. You can also evaluate your planned key messages against those in the stories for a more qualitative review.

SECTION 3: TRIPLE-A BASEBALL PROMOTION MATERIALS

For the second year in a row, RBFF is partnering with Triple-A Baseball teams in more than two dozen states. Below is a graphic that shows which states will be a part of this exciting promotion. It proved to be very successful last year, and we want to make it even better this year. RBFF has made the arrangements and put the ball in play—now the power to leverage it is yours.

Why are we doing the Triple-A Baseball promotion?

The goal of the promotion is to generate participation in boating and fishing among a baseball audience, who are apt to boat and fish more often.

What is the Triple-A Baseball promotion?

The promotion will kick off at your season opener in April and will take place during every weekend game, running for twelve weeks and ending in June. A national sweepstakes, in which participants from all participating states will be registered at the games, will award a boat and trailer to the grand prize winner. In addition to the grand prize sweepstakes, features at the games will include humorous fishing and boating videos, between-inning games including an ongoing “Fish or No Fish” game, and other prizes such as a fishing trip with local team players, free giveaways, etc.

How can I best leverage the Triple-A Baseball promotion?

Contact the following Triple-A Baseball PR representative to find out what they have planned and how you can best help:

Pete Thuresson

The Professional Sports Network of Triple-A & Double-A Baseball

1334 Park View Ave., Ste. 200

Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

760-519-7680 – cell

310-546-8447 – fax

What will be involved?

Several base components will be provided to each state. They are focused on the two giveaways: a national boat and trailer sweepstakes, and a grand prize in each state of a fishing trip with local team players. These base components include:

- **Kiosk** – A booth located in a high-traffic area will be staffed by one or two people to register attendees for the sweepstakes. Signage will be supplied by RBFF for each kiosk.
- **Video** – A video will be played either right before the game or early in the game showcasing last year’s winner as a way to drive fans to the kiosk. The video will also highlight that there will be another chance to enter and win great prizes later with a special “Fish or No Fish” game.
- **Announcements** – These will be made on the loud speaker, after which sweepstakes forms will be distributed by ushers to fans who want to enter.

(Triple-A Baseball Promotion Materials, Page 1 of 2)

- **Games** – A “Fish or No Fish” video promotion will be played between innings. After watching a video, three participants for each game will be asked to choose from humorous multiple choice answers. Participants who answer correctly will be entered to win the team fishing trip and boat sweepstakes, and the announcer will encourage other fans to visit the kiosk for entry forms.

Suggested PR ideas include:

- **Media Relations:** Spread the word to your local media!
 - A press release template detailing the promotion is enclosed for you to distribute to aid in your pitching efforts.
 - Work with the Triple-A Baseball rep to coordinate a local sports anchor to participate in one of the between-inning games.
 - Coordinate an ongoing contest with a local radio or TV station to get locals entering to win an opportunity to be featured in one of the videos and/or games.
- **Photo opportunities:** If production money is available, create a cut-out photo display where attendees can stick their heads through and appear to be standing on a boat wearing their local Triple-A Baseball shirt, holding up a giant fish in one hand.
- **Fishing Licenses:** You may consider having an official from your agency at the baseball events to sell fishing licenses.

These are just a few ideas of how to leverage the much anticipated Triple-A Baseball promotion. As the promotion is kicking off in April, you’ll want to contact the Triple-A Baseball PR rep as soon as possible to discuss PR opportunities that will make your promotion a homerun!



(Triple-A Baseball Promotion Materials, Page 2 of 2)

SAMPLES – Successful Triple-A Baseball Promotions in Three States

When it comes to generating buzz for fishing, several states have found clever ways to make the most of their Triple-A Baseball promotion. Here's how:

The [Utah Division of Wildlife Resources \(UDWR\)](#) got local [media](#) to cover their fishing season opener when the [Salt Lake Bees](#) mascot, Bumble, helped stock the pond. The morning after the fishing season opener, Karpowitz and Bumble appeared in a series of live television interviews at their local FOX affiliate, where they gave away baseball tickets and talked about the [Take Me Fishing promotion](#).

The [Colorado Division of Wildlife](#) also works with their Triple-A Baseball team, holding an annual fishing day at the [Colorado Springs Sky Sox](#) park where kids can receive a fishing goody bag and take part in a casting clinic. For the promotion, both a PA announcer and stadium staff helped direct the kids to the outfield grass, where casting instructors stationed every 10 to 15 feet provide rods and give lessons. The event helped create awareness of fishing and locations that are good for children.

The [North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission](#) is teaming up with corporate partners to offer a creative incentive for people to purchase fishing licenses. During the promotion, every Durham Bulls Baseball Club fan who shows a fishing license and a paid ticket will be offered the chance to bring one guest for free. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission hopes the two-for-one deal will generate a lot of interest and drive fans to a license sales kiosk.

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SAMPLE RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Month xx, 2008**TRIPLE-A BASEBALL TEAMS UP WITH (INSERT STATE AGENCY) TO
BRING AMERICA'S FAVORITE PASTIMES TOGETHER***Special Promotion Funded by RBFF to Bring Baseball Fans' Affinity for Boating
and Fishing to the Field*

CITY, STATE INITIALS – April will kick off a twelve-week long partnership between (insert state)'s Triple-A Baseball team, the (insert baseball team), and (insert state agency). The (insert baseball team)'s season opener on April (insert date) will launch the beginning of the promotion, which will feature a sweepstakes to win a boat and trailer, fun prizes and other game-time contests.

Funded by the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF), the promotion will take place during weekend games, running for twelve weeks and ending in July. In addition to the grand prize sweepstakes of a boat, features will include humorous fishing and boating videos, between-inning games, an ongoing "Fish or No Fish" game, and other prizes such as a fishing trip with a pro and free giveaways.

"Our baseball players and all of our local fans have a natural love for boating and fishing, so this is the perfect partnership," said (insert Triple-A representative name and title). "Who doesn't want to come watch great baseball, play some fun games, and possibly win a boat?"

The promotion, which will be embraced by more than 30 states' Triple-A Baseball teams this summer, is an effort by RBFF to help increase participation in boating and fishing nationwide.

"Last year's promotion was a huge success and we're making it even bigger and better this year," said (insert State representative name and title). "With the strong tie between baseball and boating/fishing, we're thrilled to be working with the (insert baseball team)'s in bringing America's greatest pastimes together."

For more information or to purchase tickets, please call (insert local Triple-A Baseball ticket line) or visit (insert local Triple-A Baseball Web site).

About RBFF

[RBFF](#) is a nonprofit organization established in 1998 to increase participation in recreational angling and boating. RBFF helps people discover, share and protect the legacy of boating and fishing through national outreach programs including the [Take Me Fishing](#) campaign and [Anglers' Legacy](#).

#

Media Contacts:

Name
Company
Phone
E-mail



SECTION 4: MATTE/EVERGREEN STORIES

In this PR toolkit, you'll find several matte or "evergreen" stories that can be used to spread the word about the benefits of boating and fishing, rules and safety, and other topics that are important to your state. Here are a few tips on what they are and how to use them effectively.

In several states, we have great stories you can use to demonstrate how Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) funds are being used for specific conservation activities. Believe it or not, many people have no idea that the tax monies generated when they buy fishing tackle and motorboat fuel goes to conservation projects that directly benefit them. A sample story from North Carolina is included in this kit. Similar stories will be sent to the states of Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin. More stories are in the works.

How to use matte/evergreen stories:

- Post the stories on your Web site with a note saying they can be used by journalists and news media outlets at no cost, as long as proper contribution is given to your organization.
- Include them in your organization's newsletters.
- Send each story individually to editors at local newspapers at various times throughout the year.
- When relevant, make it known that you have images available to go with the story. You can even send one with the story or have it posted on your Web site for immediate download.

The matte/evergreen stories included in this kit (which can be used as/is or customized for your state) are:

- State specific stories – North Carolina sample included
- "Fishing & Boating on the Internet: A New Way to Look At Classic Pastimes"
- "Reduce Stress: Go Fishing"
- "Fishing & Boating: Bringing Families Together"
- "The Importance of Boating and Fishing Safety – Ensuring a Fun Outing for Everyone"

SAMPLE SPORT FISH RESTORATION STORY

Fishing in the Community: A North Carolina Solution

“Sure I want to take my kids fishing, but where can we go?”

“I’d love to start fishing again – I just don’t know how to go about it.”

“Well, fishing’s great recreation, but who has the time to go all the way out in the country?”

Heard these sentiments before? So has the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. In fact, queries and comments like these are exactly what prompted the agency’s statewide response to what has been a vexing national phenomenon over the past decade – anglers drifting away from their sport.

In North Carolina, the solution was to bring fishing to the people.

Creating a successful program turned out to be a complex process, but in the end was made possible by funds generated by anglers and boaters themselves.

While the Commission conducts fisheries management and research on a number of reservoirs and lakes, it doesn’t have the fiscal capacity to build new lakes near towns and cities as a way to attract new anglers or draw old ones back. What it does have, however, is access to funds that can help make better use of the resources at hand. In 1992, the Commission partnered with municipalities to establish an innovative program to do just that.

The Community Fishing Program (CFP) now provides angling opportunities to residents of small towns and big cities, from the mountains in the west through the piedmont and down to the coastal plain. More than 40 ponds and lakes – and one stream – have been designated Community Fishing Program sites. These waters are intensively managed to assure good chances for angler success. From April through September, they are stocked monthly with catchable-size catfish.

Many of the sites were enhanced by the addition of fishing piers that provide ready access for anglers with physical disabilities. Sites feature solar-powered fish feeders to keep the fish in a biting mood, and some even have fish attractors to help congregate fish for anglers.

The program is an excellent example of how the Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) fund – derived from special excise tax monies collected on fishing tackle and motorboat fuel – supports “win/win” recreational fishing opportunities. Put simply, such programs give back to the anglers and boaters who contribute to the SFR fund each time they purchase the equipment and fuel that are essential to their outdoor pursuits.

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission cooperates with local governments to operate CFP sites. Seventy-five percent of operating costs are funded by the commission through Sport Fish Restoration money, while local governments provide the remaining 25 percent along with the fishing sites. Because most are conveniently located in city- or county-owned parks, other recreational opportunities are often nearby. These sites are especially appealing to young families seeking enjoyable and economical outdoor recreation.

But what about fishing tackle? This is a need the Commission has also addressed. A companion to the CFP is the state’s popular Fishing Tackle Loaner Program, which encourages first-time and novice anglers to borrow rods and reels free of charge. The program seeks to introduce North Carolinians, particularly children, to fishing. It also encourages novice anglers to continue developing their fishing skills.

The Fishing Tackle Loaner Program operates like a library. Anglers register at participating parks to receive a tackle loaner ID card that allows them to check out a free rod and reel. Another bonus feature of the program? First-time participants under 16 receive a free mini-tackle box, complete with lures, hooks, bobbers, sinkers and a stringer, when they return their loaner rod and reel.

The Fishing Tackle Loaner Program and Community Fishing Program are two imaginative and innovative uses of the Sport Fish Restoration fund – and both are helping recruit a whole new generation of North Carolina anglers.

SAMPLE STORIES**Fishing & Boating on the Internet: A New Way to Look At Classic Pastimes**

The weather forecast is predicting a gorgeous weekend. So what's the easiest way to plan a fun family getaway on the water? A quick Internet search of the Recreational Boating & Fishing (RBFF) Web site, TakeMeFishing.org, can help visitors discover spots to enjoy boating and fishing that are only a short drive from their front door.

The nonprofit group has developed a Web site that is the most comprehensive single source of boating and fishing information on the World Wide Web. According to RBFF, TakeMeFishing.org includes data on thousands of bodies of water across the nation and utilizes partnerships with the state fish and wildlife agencies, including (**insert state agency**) to provide the most accurate, localized information possible.

The non-commercial site is easy to navigate and has plenty of useful information for water lovers. Visitors can drill down to state and even local levels – in fact, right down to a specific body of water – to get information on where and when to go, local access points upon arrival, what to bring, and information on how to be safe in the outdoors.

“We wanted to develop a national resource that helps people quickly find what they're looking for in their own communities, as well as all across the U.S.,” said RBFF President and CEO Frank Peterson. “There's no other single Internet site that captures this kind of information in this much detail.” (**OR insert quote from your state agency**)

TakeMeFishing.org currently has a database of nearly 12,000 boating and fishing locations across the country. A map of the United States provides users the option to select a specific state to reveal the number of fishing locations indexed down to a specific zip code, county or species of fish. Each state also lists locations of marinas, boat ramps, boat rental companies and fishing supply stores.

While the resource is a great tool for long-time anglers, it also reaches out to beginner anglers who would like to expand their knowledge of fishing. A link to (**insert state agency**) provides people with instructions for purchasing a fishing license online.

Despite the name, TakeMeFishing.org doesn't focus solely on fishing; the site also provides tips for boating safety and regulations. Visitors will find links to boating education and information on how to safely operate a watercraft as well as provide access to boating courses that are designed specifically for the waters in a selected area. There is even advice available on how to choose the appropriate boat for any individual's needs.

The Web site can also be used as a tool to find fellow anglers. Whether visitors are looking for someone to fish with or just want to compare notes on the best spots to go after their favorite catch, TakeMeFishing.org can provide a list of local fishing groups as well as more than 40 national organizations available in a specific area to learn more about the sport and enjoy fellowship with other fishermen. Angling Masters International, 4-H Sportfishing Club, American Bass Anglers Inc. and National Association of Charterboat Operators are just a few of the organizations that are available across the country.

By tapping into public service Web sites like TakeMeFishing.org, users are able to reach a wealth of information about fishing and boating in one central location. From recreation and fellowship to safety and fishing utility locations, this site is a great resource for both fishing novices and experienced pros.

Check out these additional resources online to continue to enjoy the outdoors in other ways:

Get outdoors with www.stepoutside.org

Ride a bike with www.trailsfromrails.com

Go boating with www.discoverboating.com

Hike a trail with www.americanhiking.org

Hit the road with www.GoRVing.com

Explore outdoor travel with www.americanoutdoors.org

Get active with www.recreation.gov

SAMPLE STORIES

Reduce Stress: Go Fishing

Robin Babb was working hard in life's fast lane - living in New York and Los Angeles and constantly traveling. Then, in 1996, her doctor recommended she take up fishing to help relieve stress. The pastime was a natural fit for Robin, who grew up fishing on her family's ponds and on Lake Texoma in Oklahoma. By 2005, Robin scored the title of Women's Bass Fishing National Co-Angler of the year – and left her previous life in the dust without a glance back.

Robin isn't the only one who found that fishing and boating relieved her stress – in fact, in a recent survey conducted by the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF), 88 percent of anglers listed “relaxing” as the number one benefit of fishing and 70 percent listed “reduced tension” as the second largest benefit. Whether it's a competitive sport, weekend pastime, or family hobby – chances are if you fish you are helping your body relieve stress.

According to a survey by the Families and Work Institute, stress has reached epidemic proportions, with 26 percent of U.S. workers “often or very often burned out” by work stress. In fact, stress is listed as one of the leading causes of time lost from work. Did we mention that 68% of anglers surveyed by RBFF said fishing takes them away from stresses and thoughts of work?!

So, how does it work? Fishing and boating removes you from your regular stress factors – literally. You get in a boat and out on the water and not only are you physically distanced from your stressors, but mentally, too, as you let go of your routine and connect with your natural surroundings. The noise factor – traffic, ringing cell phones, loud colleagues – is gone. There are no distractions, to-do lists, or meetings...just you, your fishing buddies, and the task at hand – fishing. For many, it doesn't get much better than that.

Reducing stress and tension aren't the only ways that fishing and boating improve your quality of life. Consider this: a higher percentage of anglers said they had good relationships with their children, are happily married, feel fit and healthy, and are satisfied with life in general.

Ready to get started? Visit TakeMeFishing.org to learn about places to boat and fish in (**insert state**), learn why and how to obtain a fishing license from (**insert state agency**), find retailers that sell or rent equipment and get connected to the boating and fishing community in your area.

SAMPLE STORIES**Fishing & Boating: Bringing Families Together**

If family relationships seem to be a challenge these days, it could be that you're looking for love in all the wrong places. A recent survey found that boaters and anglers are more likely to have close relationships with their children than people who don't boat or fish. If that finding sounds suspicious, it may be as simple as it sounds. Could something as uncomplicated as one outdoor activity really impact family togetherness? The Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) – the organization that commissioned the survey – believes it can. In a big way.

“Research shows that people who boat and fish are more likely to be happily married, feel fulfilled with their day-to-day lives and enjoy time with their kids than those who don't,” said RBFF President and CEO Frank Peterson. “And yet many families never experience the joy these activities can bring.” **(OR insert quote from your state agency)**

A 2008 study from the National Academy of Science found that children and parents are communing with their high-tech televisions and the Internet a whole lot more than they are with nature. And, presumably, a whole lot more than they are with each other. The tremendous growth of video games, meanwhile, has coincided with a slew of national issues like childhood obesity and shortening attention spans among students.

In these days when quality time with family is hard to come by, thousands of people are discovering just how easy bonding can be away from land and on water. Teaching children how to fish – or learning with them – gives families an activity they can enjoy together for a lifetime. At the same time, boating and fishing instill a love of nature and an interest in conservation.

For parents looking to bring their families closer through boating and fishing, here are a few tips to help make the experience a great one:

(Fishing: Bringing Families Together, Page 1 of 2)

Go Where the Fish Are

Adult anglers fish mostly for relaxation, while children want action. “Kids need to catch fish to get hooked on the sport,” says Mark Duda, executive director of Responsive Management, a fishing and wildlife research firm. “The best way to ensure they enjoy fishing trips and want to go again is to find locations where they’re most likely to catch something.”

Check with (**insert state agency**) or visit TakeMeFishing.org to find well-stocked fishing ponds, which make excellent first-time destinations.

Put the Children First

Children are thrilled the first time they catch a fish, so make sure helping them is your first priority. Don’t expect to do much fishing yourself when taking your children for the first time. After the first few trips, they’ll probably want to handle most tasks themselves, giving you plenty of opportunity to fish, too. In the meantime, remember to bring a camera along to capture their excitement and first catch.

Take Breaks

Remember to take frequent breaks, especially if your children are under the age of 10. Most young children are unable to sit quietly in a boat or on the dock for hours at a time, but interruptions can be great opportunities for more learning experiences. Encouraging them to use pent-up energy to chase butterflies or catch tadpoles, for instance, will help children appreciate nature and grow up to become responsible lovers of the outdoors.

Give a Safety Lesson

Be sure to take the time to teach your children some basic safety measures. Show them how to put on personal flotation devices (PFDs), or lifejackets, and give them an overview of how the boat works. And find ways to make it fun. If conditions allow and you stay by their side, allowing your son or daughter to drive the boat in open water can be a thrilling experience.

Most importantly, remember that family fishing trips are about fun, wholesome times together. You may not frame a picture of your children playing video games or reminisce about an unforgettable evening spent in front of the television. Setting aside a day to enjoy the outdoors with your children, on the other hand, will give you memories to last a lifetime.

SAMPLE STORIES

The Importance of Boating and Fishing Safety – Ensuring a Fun Outing for Everyone

With more than 69 million Americans taking to our country's countless bodies of water in boats each year, there has never been a more important time to familiarize oneself with the rules of the water. Boating and fishing can be fun for all involved as long as everyone is mindful of the rules and respectful of others. Taking a few basic precautions takes just a few moments, and it's the surest way to be certain everyone will have a great time.

The first thing any new boater can do to ensure his or her (and others') safety is to take a basic boater course. These educational classes are offered across the country and cover everything from boating laws and rules to etiquette and local access points. Even if your state doesn't require you to pass a basic course to receive a boating license or certificate, it's still a great idea to educate yourself.

Many marine dealers offer courses for first time boat buyers. Other courses are offered by the U.S. Power Squadron and Coast Guard Auxiliary, as well as by many state fish and wildlife agencies, including **(insert state agency)**. A searchable database of boating courses is available at TakeMeFishing.org. Exploring the "Boating" section of the Web site for more information.

Another way to improve safety is to make sure everyone on board wears a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD), or lifejacket. And, of course, if alcohol is allowed onboard and is part of the outing, designate at least one experienced driver who will not drink.

Safety concerns and necessary precautions will vary from one body of water to the next, as do regulations from state to state. That's why it's important to research the body of water you'll be using, especially if there are any unfamiliar waters. It may even prove helpful to call a local angler supply store or marina in the area to tap into a local, knowledgeable resource with experience in water that's new to you.

If you plan to cast a line, make sure that you have a license to fish the specific water type in that particular state. Licensing fees are often nominal compared to the fines enforced for fishing without a license.

(Rules and Regulations, Page 1 of 2)

Since the **(insert state agency)** allows anglers to purchase their license online, you can be a licensed angler with a few clicks of the mouse. Visit TakeMeFishing.org to be directed to the **(insert state agency)** licensing information.

Regardless of where you choose to go boating or fishing, familiarizing yourself with the rules and regulations specific to that body of water is imperative to enjoying your outing safely and responsibly and ensuring that others will enjoy the same experience for years to come.

SECTION 5: TIPS FOR BECOMING A GREAT SPOKESPERSON

Preparing for an Interview/Presentation: Step 1 – Know Your Audience

Before doing a media interview or a presentation think about your target audiences and their needs, and let their needs and interests drive your remarks.

- Who is the audience?
- What do they know about me and my organization?
- What do they know about the topics and issues?
- What issues concern them most that I need to address?
- What are their expectations?
- Do they have any misconceptions about my organization or issues?
- What action do I want them to take?

Preparing for an Interview/Presentation: Step 2 – Develop Key Messages

Now that you've thought about your audience and their needs, it's time to craft your remarks. Don't try to give the audience too many messages in one presentation. A "brain dump" kills a presentation or interview. Get all of your thoughts down on paper and then look to see if they group into three or four main conclusions. Key messages are the most important pieces of information – they are your headlines, your key conclusions. If your audience remembers nothing else but your key messages, your interview or presentation will be a success.

Extra Tip: After 48 hours, the average person remembers only 10% of what they tried to remember from a presentation.

When you communicate, have three or four key messages at most. The messages should be clear, concise and easy to identify. Start your remarks each and every time with a conclusion and then back into the supporting details. *Message discipline and repetition is essential to audience retention of information.*

Give human examples. Tell stories throughout the body of the presentation to show how your organization is making an impact on people's lives. You will make a greater impression if you can illustrate your messages with real world stories.