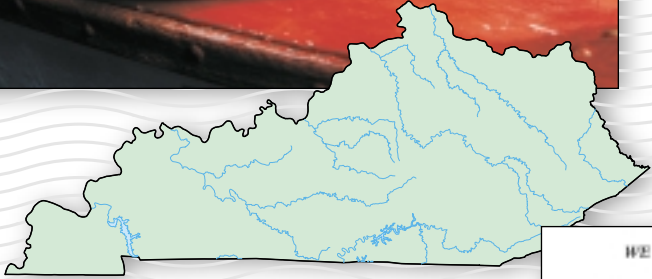


# Water works wonders™

## for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources



percent — this same group buys most of Kentucky's fishing licenses.

Another aspect of Kentucky's angler profile is that 52 percent of them buy their fishing licenses at Wal-Mart stores.

### The Scenario

Kentucky residents are very familiar with their Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, and in fact, according to a poll conducted by the University of Kentucky Research Group, the department enjoys a 94 percent customer satisfaction rate. Fishing opportunities are widely available across the state, however, fishing license sales dropped from 520,000 in 1992 to 440,000 in 2002.

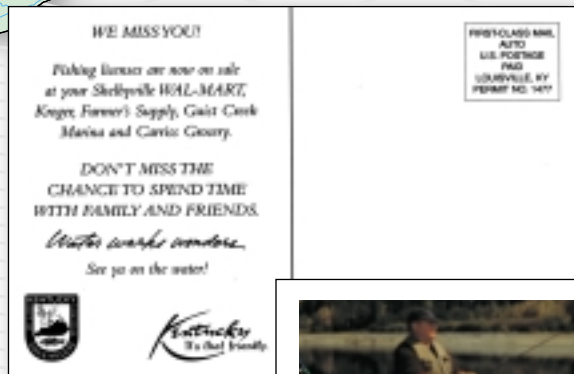
### Kentucky Reels in Retailers

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources cooperative marketing program was the first partnership of a state fish and wildlife agency, a local retailer, and the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation all working together to utilize the **Water Works Wonders™** imagery and messages. Partnering with their local Wal-Mart stores and other vendors to promote license sales to lapsed anglers during the 2002-2003 fishing season, the department focused on increasing license renewals and in-store advertising. Uniformed fisheries biologists brought an added community relations benefit by visiting the Wal-Mart stores on the weekends during National Fishing and Boating Week to increase the department's visibility.

### Kentucky's Anglers

More than 23 percent of Kentucky's 4.1 million residents fish. But as in many other states, the angling churn rate averages 43 percent. In other words, less than half of those who bought a fishing license in the previous year, did not renew their license in the next year.

Sixty-two percent of Kentucky's total anglers are men and 38 percent of the total anglers are women. Within these groups, however, 53 percent of the men and 24 percent of the women are lapsed anglers. Although lapsed anglers between the ages of 25 and 44 have the highest churn rate — 50



### A Marketing Strategy is Developed

Targeting lapsed anglers in two counties and an additional 5,000 lapsed anglers statewide, the department joined forces with the **Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation** and began a cooperative marketing partnership that would incorporate the tried and true messages and imagery of the **Water Works Wonders** campaign.

With a small budget of less than \$40,000, the objectives of the Kentucky marketing plan were to reach out to lapsed anglers statewide and target lapsed anglers in two particular counties for a unique experiment. In Shelby and Clark counties, a cooperative marketing program with local fishing tackle retailers was implemented. Both counties were selected because their populations were similar and they both had a high percentage of lapsed anglers from 2000 to 2001. Each county had only one Wal-Mart store

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and those stores were equipped with “point of sale” fishing license capabilities.

Marketing materials were developed to incorporate the *Water Works Wonders* imagery and messages into the marketing plan’s objectives. Two postcards were designed—one invited lapsed anglers to visit one of their local stores where fishing licenses were sold and another reminded anglers statewide to buy licenses and go fishing. The postcards were prepared for a mailing in late May. Banners, posters and countertop displays were produced for in-store promotions placed in early June during National Fishing and Boating Week. A second reminder postcard mailing was sent to lapsed anglers statewide by the end of June.

### Approaching the Store Managers with a Win-Win Pitch

Through the nationwide efforts of the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, Wal-Mart stores nationwide were encouraged to participate in National Fishing and Boating Week. In an effort to piggy-back on this promotion, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources met with the store managers in Shelby and Clark counties. Both store managers were excited to be part of a plan that could bring them new customers. The Shelby Wal-Mart store manager was quick to note that his established customers visit his store 6.2 times a month. Clearly, any new additional customers would have tremendous benefits to the store’s revenues.

### Visiting with the Guy in the Uniform

As part of the arrangement with Wal-Mart and KDFWR, a fisheries biologist was stationed in each store during the first weekend in June, which coincided with National Fishing and Boating Week. Because human dimensions research has shown that agency representatives in uniform are the most credible spokespersons regarding fish and wildlife issues, the biologists

wore their uniforms while in the stores and were stationed in the fishing departments of the stores. These agency representatives met and spoke with more than 30 customers, who, in turn, expressed their appreciation for the guidance they received from the agency biologists.

### The Bottom Line

After the promotion ended in June, a number of surveys were conducted to measure awareness and renewal sales. It was found that there was substantial recall of the postcards by lapsed anglers. In fact, recall for some groups was as high as 70 percent.

There were mixed results relating to license sales from the postcards. In Shelby County, those who recalled seeing the postcard were three times as likely to purchase a fishing license. Unfortunately, although postcard recall in the statewide sample of lapsed anglers was high, it did not appear to affect license purchases.

In-store advertising for fishing license availability appears to have been lost among the preponderance of product advertising inside the Wal-Mart store. This resulted in low recognition and recall of the Ashley image that was used in the in-store promotions. However, in-store promotions are still considered a viable opportunity for reaching lapsed anglers in Kentucky since 90 percent of the lapsed anglers visited their local Wal-Mart during June.

### Some Lessons Learned

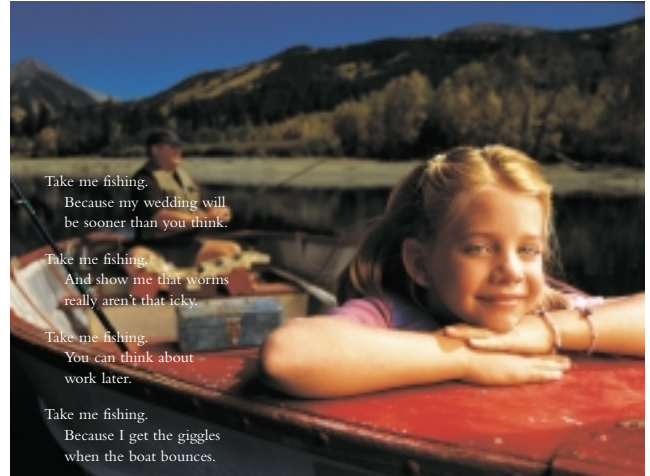
The Kentucky experience proved that working with a retail partner can bring positive results. After a thorough evaluation of this pilot state effort, there was no question that the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources had developed and implemented a very thoughtful and innovative marketing effort. The retailer partnership was an enormous first step in reaching their mutual customers. In fact, the lapsed anglers who renewed their licenses at Wal-Mart spent nearly \$120 in fishing-related and other goods during that visit to the store.

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Looking ahead, more contact with lapsed anglers is needed. In addition to the postcard mailing, the agency is already preparing for a new campaign. A poster will be designed to give lapsed anglers information about where to fish, where to buy a license, types of fish, best places and times to fish, and even the best types of bait to use. The agency is developing the idea of asking retailers to add incentives to their marketing plans that would offer a retailer-provided discount off of the purchase of equipment once a fishing license is bought.

An important lesson learned in this case study is that there is a difference in marketing to achieve awareness and marketing to achieve license sales. While awareness can lead to license sales, it does not necessarily do so. Reminder postcards do create awareness and have some license buying impacts on those recalling receiving one. However, it appears that additional contact and information is necessary to activate fishing and license buying. Clearly, fishing guides and other useful information which facilitates trip planning and enhances the possibility of a successful trip builds on the impact of postcards. These types of materials were part of the marketing mix in both the Ohio and Oklahoma cooperative marketing efforts.

A second important fact learned from the Kentucky case study is that if lapsed anglers are going to purchase a license it will likely be at the beginning of the fishing season like most other active anglers. The vast majority of Kentucky lapsed anglers who bought a license did so by the end of May. Marketing activities after that point will generally yield very low returns. So, it is



Take me fishing.  
Because my wedding will  
be sooner than you think.

Take me fishing.  
And show me that worms  
really aren't that icky.

Take me fishing.  
You can think about  
work later.

Take me fishing.  
Because I get the giggles  
when the boat bounces.

Take me fishing.  
Because my wedding will  
be sooner than you think.

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FOR FISHING, BOATING, AND  
THE ENVIRONMENT

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incumbent upon fisheries management agencies and others marketing fishing and fishing licenses to be cognizant of when licenses are normally purchased and build on the information.

The Kentucky experience proved that working with a retail partner can bring positive results and added awareness with the help of the **Water Works Wonders** campaign. Considering the addition of multiple touches in the marketing mix combined with an earlier launch can only add to the success.



Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation



Visit [www.rbff.org](http://www.rbff.org) to join the campaign using **Water Works Wonders**™ collateral materials. For more information on Kentucky's marketing efforts, contact **Ted Crowell** at 502-564-7109 at the **Kentucky Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Resources**, or **Stephanie Hussey** at 703-519-0013 at the **Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation**.