



National Outreach and Communications Program Assessment Report

of Recreational Boating and Fishing
Foundation Implementation

2016-2021

Contents

05 Report Summary and Findings

27 2016-2021 Assessment

- 28 Introduction: Overview of RBFF mission and history
- 31 RBFF mission and governance
- 32 RBFF strategic plans and expenses by program area
- 33 Assessment responsibility and prior assessments

35 2021 Assessment Methodology

49 2021 Assessment Results

- 50 Question 1: Have RBFF activities had a positive impact on recruitment and retention of boaters and anglers?
- 73 Question 2: Have stakeholders found added value in the adoption of RBFF products?
- 88 Question 3: Has RBFF increased the public's knowledge of boating and fishing techniques and its awareness of boating and fishing opportunities?
- 98 Question 4: How has RBFF enhanced the public's understanding of aquatic resources?
- 105 Question 5: Have RBFF products and activities increased conservation and responsible use of aquatic resources by boaters and anglers?

113 Appendices

- 114 Appendix A. National Memorandum of Understanding
- 120 Appendix B. 2017 RBFF Consensus Measures
- 129 Appendix C. RBFF Response to 2013-2015 Assessment Report
- 133 Appendix D. RBFF FY 2024-2026 Strategic Plan
- 138 Appendix E. Recommended Metrics



Report Summary and Findings

In response to declines in recreational boating and fishing participation, Congress passed the 1998 Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act. The Act requires the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior to implement a National Outreach and Communications Program (NOCP) to address recreational boating and fishing participation and promote conservation and responsible use of the nation’s aquatic resources. In response, the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (SFBPC) developed a strategic plan for the program, and the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) was established in October 1998 expressly to carry out that plan.

RBFF is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to increase participation in recreational fishing and boating and thereby increase public awareness and appreciation of the need for protecting, conserving and restoring America’s aquatic natural resources.

RBFF has received funding to implement the NOCP from a Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) and Boating Trust Fund discretionary grant, which is awarded through a competitive process. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is responsible for administering the discretionary grant and provides a detailed accounting of the RBFF program and its activities to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. For the period 2000-2021, RBFF received \$240,365,366 in SFR funding. For the time period of 2016-2021, RBFF received a total of \$73,492,272.

The Act directs the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior to conduct periodic reviews of the NOCP. Responsibility for the assessment was delegated to SFBPC, on behalf of the Secretary, through a 1999 memorandum of understanding (MOU) and subsequent renewals of this MOU (Appendix A). This memorandum states SFBPC “will monitor the implementation of the program, will evaluate effectiveness of the program by communicating regularly with its stakeholders, and will regularly report findings to the Secretary and the signatories of this agreement.”

Previous Assessments

SFBPC previously undertook reviews of RBFF in 2002, 2006, 2009, 2012 and 2015. This assessment is the sixth review of RBFF and its implementation of the NOCP. In October 2022, the USFWS and SFBPC hired Spitfire Strategies LLC to facilitate the 2021 assessment. Spitfire evaluated RBFF's efforts relative to five questions directly derived from the legislative mandate for the NOCP:

2021 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1 Have RBFF activities had a positive impact on recruitment and retention of boaters and anglers?
- 2 Have stakeholders found added value in the adoption of RBFF products?
- 3 Has RBFF increased the public's knowledge of boating and fishing techniques and its awareness of boating and fishing opportunities?
- 4 How has RBFF enhanced the public's understanding of aquatic resources?
- 5 Have RBFF products and activities increased conservation and responsible use of aquatic resources by boaters and anglers?

Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-2021 Assessment

In late 2022, USFWS seated a five-person Assessment Team, supported by USFWS staff, to partner with Spitfire to undertake an independent, impartial and constructive programmatic assessment of RBFF for the period 2016-2021. Collectively, the team comprises experience and expertise in recreational boating, fishing, marketing, program analysis, economic development and familiarity with the conduct and impact of RBFF's programs.

Current assessment findings and recommendations

This assessment (conducted for the time period of 2016-2021) is different from the last assessment (conducted for the time period of 2013-2015) in several ways important to consider. First, the assessment period spans five years, rather than two, meaning the 2021 assessment includes much more data and has a higher capacity to relay trends. Second, SFBPC, AFWA, FWS and RBFF collaborated to revise the consensus metrics in 2017. The SFBPC drove the process to not only revise the metrics but to make them more outcome based. Thus, this is the first assessment report to evaluate RBFF's efforts based on this set of metrics. The data from 2016 is often the baseline for the following years unless otherwise noted. It also means that there is not a direct correlation between the last assessment and this one, because the metrics have shifted.

The assessment period also includes an unprecedented external event — the COVID-19 pandemic — that drastically impacted RBFF's work as well as the rest of the world. Because medical experts described the safety associated with outdoor, socially distanced activities, people recognized fishing and boating as potentially safer activities during the pandemic. RBFF and its partners saw an increase in participation in these activities and people wanting to learn more about angling and boating. Although 2022 data technically falls outside of the assessment period, Spitfire notes some data from 2022 to identify whether pandemic trends continued or not — an important consideration, given the extraordinary impact the pandemic had on human behavior and these activities.

Last, the assessment period also represents a unique moment in U.S. history as a country. Demographics are shifting in rural and urban areas. Traditionally, recreational angling and boating has been dominated by white men. The data shows that is starting to shift, and if RBFF and its partners want to continue to grow the number of new anglers and boaters, they will need to successfully engage new and more diverse audiences. According to Spitfire's review of RBFF's materials, it is clear that the Foundation has

identified this as a priority. RBFF has taken important steps to reach new audiences through its national awareness campaigns like Vamos a Pescar and Making Waves. It has also supported state partners to prioritize new audiences by sharing marketing research, best practices and image assets to engage diverse audience groups. Spitfire believes these efforts reflect important progress and that additional efforts are needed to make these efforts as effective as possible.



1

QUESTION 1

Have RBFF activities had a positive impact on recruitment and retention of anglers and boaters?

METRICS MET



RBFF met 4 out of 9 consensus metrics related to this question.

SEE PAGE 50 FOR A FULL DISCUSSION OF QUESTION 1.

Filled dots represent the number of metrics achieved, while empty dots represent the number of metrics not achieved during the assessment period.

- According to the annual “Special Report on Fishing” (RBFF/Outdoor Foundation), during the assessment time period, there was an increase in first-time participants in fishing, exceeding the baseline of 2.5 million. The assessment period also saw a smaller increase in the number of people of color participating in boating and fishing over the last five years, according to the same report (p. 52).
- RBFF noted an increase in youth participation (ages 6-17 as measured by the “Special Report on Fishing”) in fishing between 2018 and 2021, with a high of 13.5 million youth fishing in 2021 (p. 56).
- RBFF reported a net increase of 10 million Hispanic people who participated in fishing between 2017-2021 (p. 57).
- RBFF saw an increase in overall fishing participation in the three-year period between 2016-2018, with an increase of 3.4 million. RBFF also saw an increase over the three-year period between 2019-2021, with an increase of 5.6 million (p. 59).
- The data was not available to demonstrate a trend of increased boating participation over three-year periods as reported by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) U.S. Recreational Boating Participants Survey using total participation as documented by the first NMMA study (2017) as the baseline (p. 59).

- The data was not available to demonstrate a three-year trend because the most recent USFWS National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation is from 2016 (p. 60).
- The collective groups, led by the SFBPC, set a baseline variance of 86% of target audiences exposed to its campaigns to maintain a favorable intent to fish. RBFF did not meet this variance during the assessment period (p. 61).
- RBFF did not maintain or grow awareness consistently among target audiences during the assessment period, as measured by annual campaign effectiveness studies (p 63).
- Organic traffic to TakeMeFishing.org fluctuated throughout the assessment period. Overall, RBFF only exceeded the 2017 organic traffic baseline of 2.4 million once during the assessment period in 2021 (p. 64).

2

QUESTION 2

Have stakeholders found added value in the adoption of RBFF products?

METRICS MET



RBFF met 7 out of 8 consensus metrics related to assessing the answer to this question.

SEE PAGE 73 FOR A FULL DISCUSSION OF QUESTION 2.

- RBFF met its consensus metric, with 26 states adopting a recruitment, retention and reactivation model (R3) program (p. 74).
- RBFF maintained a state agency satisfaction rate of at least 74% or greater and exceeded that rate between 2019-2021, with the highest satisfaction rate in 2021 (83%) (p. 76).
- RBFF successfully maintained an industry satisfaction rate of 72% or higher for a portion of the assessment period (FY 2019-FY 2021) but did not for a portion of the assessment period (FY 2017-2018) (p. 79).
- RBFF successfully achieved an annual increase in referrals from Take Me Fishing (TMF) digital assets to state fishing license purchase pages throughout the assessment period (p. 80).
- RBFF successfully achieved an annual increase in referrals from TMF digital assets to state boating registration pages throughout the assessment period, with a huge boom in 2021 (p. 80).
- RBFF successfully achieved an annual increase in the referrals from TMF digital assets to DiscoverBoating.com (p. 81).



- RBFF successfully raised non-federal dollars and in-kind contributions (not including value added in purchased media buys) that equal 25% of federal dollars received (p. 82).
- RBFF did not consistently maintain an increase in boat registrations sold through the RBFF Boat Registration Marketing program. (p. 81).

3

QUESTION 3

Has RBFF increased the public's knowledge of boating and fishing techniques and its awareness of boating and fishing opportunities?

METRICS MET



RBFF successfully met 3 out of 6 consensus metrics used to assess the answer to this question.

SEE PAGE 88 FOR A FULL DISCUSSION OF QUESTION 3.

- RBFF successfully achieved an annual increase in referrals from TMF digital assets to state fishing license purchase pages throughout the assessment period (p. 93).
- RBFF successfully achieved an annual increase in referrals from TMF digital assets to state boating registration pages throughout the assessment period, with a huge boom in 2021 (p. 93).
- RBFF successfully achieved an annual increase in the referrals from TMF digital assets to DiscoverBoating.com (p. 94).
- RBFF set a baseline variance of 86% of target audiences exposed to its campaigns to maintain a favorable intent to fish. RBFF did not meet this variance during the assessment period (p. 89).
- RBFF did not maintain or grow awareness consistently among target audiences during the assessment period, as measured by annual campaign effectiveness studies (p. 90).
- Organic traffic to TakeMeFishing.org fluctuated throughout the assessment period. Overall, RBFF only exceeded the 2017 organic traffic baseline of 2.4 million once during the assessment period in 2021 (p. 92).

4

QUESTION 4

Has RBFF increased the public's knowledge of boating and fishing techniques and its awareness of boating and fishing opportunities?

SEE PAGE 98 FOR A FULL DISCUSSION OF QUESTION 4.

Although RBFF has created specific consensus metrics to consistently track the impact of its products and initiatives on conservation efforts, the Foundation has not identified an explicit way to measure its impact on the public's understanding of aquatic resources. This was noted in the previous assessment as well.

In an attempt to answer this question, Spitfire reviewed several of RBFF's campaigns that aim to educate audiences about aquatic resources, including the Vamos a Pescar program, the Making Waves Initiative and the First Catch Centers (FCC). Overall, Spitfire found that these efforts saw high engagement and influence rates among viewers and participants. While it is not possible to prove causation, it is likely that these efforts have supported an increase in the number of anglers and boaters among priority audiences (Latino/a/e/s and women). Qualitative insights also reveal that, in addition to its national campaign efforts, RBFF performs well on the local level, when efforts fit within local priorities and resources for implementation, and campaigns authentically meet audiences where they are to help overcome barriers to fishing and boating. Spitfire notes this as an area for growth.

5

QUESTION 5

Have RBFF products and activities increased conservation and responsible use of aquatic resources by boaters and anglers?

METRICS MET



RBFF met all three of the consensus metrics used to assess the answer to this question.

SEE PAGE 105 FOR A FULL DISCUSSION OF QUESTION 5.

- The only available data during the assessment period is from the 2018 study, which showed conservation awareness is at approximately the same level (from 75% to 76%) in the last time period measured (p. 106).
- RBFF has successfully achieved an increase in aggregate unique page views to TakeMeFishing.org pages featuring prominent conservation messaging. Between 2017-2019, page views saw a steady increase, growing from around 1.5 million to nearly 2 million in 2019. The most drastic increase came between 2020-2021 with unique page views increasing to 2.6 million in 2020 and 4.9 million in 2021 (p. 108).
- RBFF saw a steady increase in unique page views to fishing safety and boating safety sections of TakeMeFishing.org, exceeding the 2017 baseline (1.5 million) year over year. However, the increase of unique page views was incremental and did not see a large influx during the pandemic despite a large influx of views on other pages on the TakeMeFishing.org website (p. 109).

Spitfire also found that while RBFF's conservation efforts have increased during the assessment period, stakeholders believe more progress is necessary. Stakeholders named that the linkage between conservation and fishing and boating is still unclear for many anglers, and additional work is needed to connect the dots successfully and significantly increase the benefits to the natural environment that the sport can have.

Recommendations

Spitfire reviewed RBFF materials, stakeholder interview feedback and insights from the full NOCP Assessment Team. The group offers the following recommendations related to the 2016-2021 assessment questions and activities. Considering these recommendations for activities and evaluation, RBFF can continue to improve communication and outreach efforts. Note: In Appendix E Spitfire provides a broader set of recommendations and metrics to inform future RBFF efforts.





RECOMMENDATION 1

RBFF should consider how to help its state partners reengage audiences who started fishing during the pandemic but did not continue after stay-at-home orders were lifted. RBFF may begin by encouraging its state partners to collect more detailed information about participants who attend events and to prioritize outreach to these individuals. Also, where possible, RBFF can encourage state partners to outreach to individuals who purchased fishing licenses (to invite them to local events, for example) as such outreach may reach individuals who intended to fish but never acted on that intent.



RECOMMENDATION 2

RBFF should continue supporting partners with marketing materials and research (that they can use within their organizations) that will engage young people of color or girls, because fishing as a child is one of most effective predictors that a person will continue to fish long into adulthood. Regularly scheduled (monthly or quarterly) videoconferences/webinars could guide partners on how to use marketing research to make the case for state/local efforts prioritizing these audiences, provide coaching on how to effectively use messages/images to engage these audiences, and share case studies on how partners are effectively using marketing research and tools to encourage audience engagement (behavior vs. awareness). Here, the outcomes are better-prepared state and local staff who can prioritize programming for specific audiences, assess what works and course-correct along the way. RBFF can measure these outcomes via pre- and post-session surveys and follow-up to gather examples of how state and local outreach partners are implementing what they learn.



RECOMMENDATION 3

RBFF should identify ways to support efforts that make outdoor spaces safer and more welcoming to people of color and women. This could include RBFF supporting state partners to add bilingual signs at popular boating and fishing locations, among other efforts.

RECOMMENDATION 4

RBFF should continue to focus and tailor its marketing campaigns and tactics to engage people of color and women. Compared to the last assessment period, RBFF has made great strides in prioritizing audiences that fall outside the “traditional angler” audience group, most notably Latino/a/e/s and women, in its national awareness campaigns. It has also provided useful resources to state agencies to help them do the same. Spitfire recognizes this is an important and notable shift and that additional growth is possible. Currently, RBFF only tracks one metric specifically related to communities of color (the number of Hispanic people who have participated in fishing). RBFF needs to identify additional metrics to track progress in reaching and recruiting nontraditional audiences. Stakeholders also shared that beyond marketing, direct equipment support is even more supportive and impactful to their work and access, especially among communities where resources may be limited. Before launching its next new campaign, RBFF can conduct pre- and post-surveys in pilot communities to determine if and how it can engage audiences beyond its traditional groups. The refinements RBFF makes following pilot campaigns will enable it to more effectively prepare national campaigns with these audiences in mind.



RECOMMENDATION 5

RBFF should include metrics to directly track the progress of equity, inclusion and diversity efforts in all of its work. Although there has been progress toward the engagement of Latino/a/e/s communities, there is still a lack of effort to specifically reach other communities of color, specifically Black communities. Spitfire advises RBFF to prioritize organizations that are led by people of color for grants through Vamos a Pescar or other programs. State agencies can help RBFF identify the right partners at the community level. Spitfire also recommends that RBFF integrate equity, inclusion and diversity trainings, led by experts in the field, into its annual marketing workshops to support growth in this area among state partners.





RECOMMENDATION 6

RBFF should invest in forging meaningful and long-term partnerships with diverse communities to play leadership roles and produce materials and campaigns, host events and address strategic outreach.

This effort can include building a more diverse board, identifying effective outreach managed by leaders of color to amplify or learn from their efforts and ensuring that diverse communities are authentically part of materials and events — including images of diverse communities and event/outreach leaders from the communities RBFF must reach to increase the number of anglers and boaters.

Recommendations included for Question 1 apply here.



RECOMMENDATION 7

RBFF should increase its direct investment in local activities to remove barriers for first-time anglers and boaters from diverse communities.

This type of investment can look like equipment loan programs or utilizing RBFF influence to partner with states and industry to encourage investment in more ramps and fishing piers. For example, RBFF can identify 10 communities committed to better reaching young families in the Black community and allocate resources for equipment, transportation and infrastructure in those communities. After evaluating those efforts, RBFF may choose to continue and expand the approach, and RBFF can share analysis of this approach with local partners who need to make the case for spending dollars in this way — or to secure funding for such projects.

RECOMMENDATION 8



RBFF should provide additional time for stakeholders to implement its products. This could include updating grant cycles to cover a two-year period (aligning with state and local government fiscal years) and conducting more regular follow-up to support state agencies with implementation of RBFF's marketing research and materials. Spitfire recommends allowing a two-year period, at a minimum, for marketing campaigns or funding for Vamos a Pescar, R3 or FCC programs. This will allow time for engagement with state/local leadership required to kick off the campaign, implementation by education/outreach leaders at the local level, shared insights at the halfway mark, RBFF recommendations for course-corrections at the halfway mark and implementation benefiting from the course-corrections identified. RBFF can evaluate outcomes from this work by reviewing adjustments made, noting implementation changes from one year to the next, and securing feedback from education/outreach leaders about their ability to effectively implement the campaign and gather audience outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 9



RBFF should provide its state partners with tips on how to make the most of their existing marketing budgets based on the Foundation's research. State agencies are eager for guidance on how to maximize their existing resources and shared they often have limited budget for education and outreach and want to spend it in the way that's most likely to be effective. RBFF can provide guidance on recommended booster activities to reach specific audiences with specific budgets and evaluate how partners have implemented those boosters to more effectively reach and engage audiences.



RECOMMENDATION 10

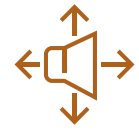
RBFF should develop an improved method of collection and analysis of available local data to track outcomes of its outreach efforts in local communities. During the assessment period, metrics for measuring RBFF’s performance became more focused on outcomes vs. outputs (e.g., R3 program implementation vs. number of fishing licenses purchased). Spitfire sees additional opportunity for RBFF to track outcomes via more intentional partnerships with local entities, especially nonprofits. While national data does not reflect the “end user,” local data can. RBFF should prioritize more effectively and efficiently collecting data from its local partners on a regular basis. Data collected by states through the first-catch mobile trailers is a good place to start, which is already underway. As part of this effort, RBFF could increase its direct local support via pilot programs like the FCC that not only support recruitment efforts but also generate meaningful outcomes data. Adding these local efforts will enable RBFF and its partners to better measure behavior and fill in the gaps in data that is gathered from national campaigns.



RECOMMENDATION 11

RBFF should partner with industry to improve communications and data collection at the point-of-sale. Many individuals in priority audience groups seek information as consumers at places where they purchase fishing and boating gear. Individuals in these settings are prepared to engage in behaviors RBFF encourages (boating and fishing). Communications in/around the point of sale can reinforce these decisions and encourage responsibility associated with these behaviors. That connection point is where RBFF and its industry partners can create clear, meaningful connections between boating/fishing and conservation. And those physical or virtual points of sale are places where RBFF may be able to work with industry partners to launch short surveys capturing behavioral data that provides greater insight into outcomes. Spitfire recommends identifying at least one industry partner where RBFF can focus on improved point-of-sale communications detailing specific behaviors, connecting content to conservation and communicating in both English and Spanish.

RECOMMENDATION 12



RBFF should bring back and update past public service announcements to support partners' outreach efforts. Customizable PSAs provide valuable information, and state and local partners are better able to use them if they can connect their agencies' names and details to the content. Spitfire recommends this type of customization for all future campaigns, and ones that RBFF is updating, to increase usage of these campaigns and better connect them to local efforts.

RECOMMENDATION 13



RBFF can exercise its capacity-building expertise by training and coaching local partners on the basics of communication and marketing strategy. Partners benefit from RBFF's ability to establish effective strategies and national campaigns for the partners to implement at state and local levels. RBFF should clearly share plans and templates that partners can use to locally implement national efforts — and to integrate their local priorities into these strategic efforts. Spitfire recommends including and expanding this capacity building at RBFF's national marketing workshops.

RECOMMENDATION 14



RBFF, AFWA, USFWS, and SFBPC should work together to establish specific goals and objectives and a process for rigorously evaluating and reporting on RBFF's effectiveness at enhancing the public's understanding of aquatic resources and sustained participation in boating and angling. (For example, how will RBFF evaluate the effectiveness of the Disney and Latino/a/e/s-specific campaigns and measure success against this objective?)



RECOMMENDATION 15

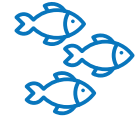
RBFF should invest more in conservation resources, plans and campaigns. This includes but is not limited to top-line messaging and guidance for how people should or should not engage with endangered and invasive species, clean water protection, boat ramp locations and safe waste disposal. Spitfire recommends surveying partners to see which of these needs is greatest over the next several years to focus on a central message and potentially lead to the development of a conservation campaign focused on behaviors and on one of these sites/topics.



RECOMMENDATION 16

RBFF should prioritize messages that validate audience actions to effectively keep them engaged on an issue. Many individuals in RBFF's priority audience groups have taken action by purchasing a fishing license or registering a boat, and fees from those actions contribute to local conservation efforts. Messages — in a broad campaign or in a social media toolkit — can validate audience behaviors, encourage their ongoing engagement and better connect their actions to conservation by clearly connecting license and registration fees to conservation efforts and outcomes that people can see where they live, work and play. Spitfire recommends providing updated materials, especially highly visual website and social media materials, that partners can use to reinvigorate these initial audience behaviors and effectively be welcoming — by better demonstrating connections with women, people of color and Spanish-language audiences.

RECOMMENDATION 17



Conservation is a broad topic and RBFF can create smaller entry points into conservation by focusing on specific habitats or species — and guiding partners to do the same. Campaigns and content can allow for customization (local partners inserting the name of a fish, other animal, lake or other environment) to make a deeper connection between the audience member and a conservation effort. RBFF can create template materials for local partners to complete and convey “Funds from your fishing license are protecting [insert species or habitat]!” Template materials ease production burdens for partners, and perhaps more importantly, the approach models an effective communication strategy. Spitfire recommends creating a small suite of template materials that partners can download for social media posts, website content and signage.



2016-2021 Assessment

Introduction: Overview of RBFF mission and history

In September 1998, a group of individuals dedicated to angling and boating formed the initial board of directors for a new nonprofit entity known as the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF or Foundation).

The group formed RBFF to recruit and retain recreational boating and fishing participants while encouraging a conservation ethic and respect for aquatic resources. RBFF's founding mission was "to implement an informed, consensus-based national outreach strategy that will increase participation in recreational angling and boating and thereby increase public awareness and appreciation of the need to protect, conserve, and restore this nation's aquatic natural resources." RBFF was to achieve this ambitious mission through the pursuit of progress on five objectives:

RBFF OBJECTIVES

- 1 Create a top-of-mind recreational boating and fishing campaign to develop awareness, trial and continued participation.
- 2 Educate people how and where to boat and fish.
- 3 Target market segments and create messages that address each segment's specific needs.
- 4 Educate stakeholders on marketing, outreach and implementation of national strategies to targeted user groups.
- 5 Make availability of and access to boating and fishing locations easy and simple.



RBFF’s official role in this work was the direct result of the Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act of 1998, which directed the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior to “develop and implement, in cooperation and consultation with the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (SFBPC or Council), a national plan for outreach and communications” directed at addressing the decline in recreational fishing and boating. The national plan was drafted with input from more than 400 individuals who participated in 11 national stakeholder meetings that the Council hosted. The Council drafted a Strategic Plan for the National Outreach and Communications Program (NOCP or Program), which the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior Bruce Babbitt approved in February 1999.

Recognizing the need for a nonprofit organization to spearhead implementation of the strategic plan, RBFF was formed. In March 1999, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and RBFF signed a cooperative agreement to provide financial support to RBFF for professional marketing expertise needed to implement the NOCP. In July 1999, an RBFF chief executive officer was hired and began the process of hiring permanent staff

and establishing an office in Alexandria, Virginia. In September 1999, USFWS, SFBPC, and the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies — now the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) — entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with RBFF to establish the framework for a “collaborative effort to implement the National Outreach and Communications Program.” The MOU states that SFBPC “will monitor the implementation of the Program, will evaluate effectiveness of the program by communicating regularly with its stakeholders and will regularly report findings to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior and the signatories of this agreement.” The original MOU was in force, as amended, through 2018, when a new MOU was executed (Appendix A).

The Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund provides funding for the NOCP. RBFF has been the sole recipient of these funds to date, with the exception of some grants distributed outside RBFF. Between 2000 and 2024, the Foundation received \$282,373,257 in federal appropriations from the Sport Fish Restoration account (Table 1).

Under the Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act, USFWS serves as the liaison between RBFF, SFBPC, AFWA and other stakeholders. USFWS is also responsible for administering the discretionary grant and provides a detailed accounting of the program and its activities to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

**TABLE 1: RBFF:
APPROPRIATION HISTORY**

Fiscal Year (FY)*	Federal Appropriation
2000	\$5,000,000
2001	\$6,000,000
2002	\$7,000,000
2003	\$8,000,000
2004	\$10,000,000
2005	\$9,790,000
2006	\$9,790,000
2007	\$10,773,941
2008	\$12,305,981
2009	\$13,758,009
2010	\$13,716,383
2011	\$12,850,523
2012	\$12,514,238
2013	\$12,027,783
2014	\$12,213,605
2015	\$11,133,231
2016	\$12,032,633
2017	\$12,247,851
2018	\$12,150,266
2019	\$12,052,355
2020	\$12,415,685
2021	\$12,592,882
2022**	\$14,169,446
2023**	\$13,606,660
2024**	\$14,231,785
Total	\$282,373,257

*Funding by RBFF FY (April 1-March 31); federal appropriations are previous federal FY (Oct. 1-Sept. 30)— e.g., RBFF FY 2013 funded with federal FY 2012.

** 2022-2024 are not within the current assessment period but are included in the table to reflect the most up-to-date information available.

RBFF mission and governance

RBFF is incorporated in the commonwealth of Virginia and operates as an educational organization in accordance with Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

The Foundation’s mission is “to increase participation in recreational angling and boating and thereby increase public awareness and appreciation of the need to protect, conserve and restore this nation’s aquatic natural resources.” A volunteer board of directors, serving three-year terms, governs RBFF. The board of directors consists of one nonvoting representative and no fewer than four and no more than 24 directors appointed as follows:

RBFF BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMPOSITION

- A. Twenty-two of the directors and one nonvoting representative shall be appointed by the organizations listed below and in accordance with the following:
 - a. USFWS (one nonvoting representative).
 - i. USFWS director or designee.
 - b. AFWA (seven seats).
 - i. Executive director of AFWA or designee.
 - ii. State agency representative (six seats at-large, with due representation from angling and boating interests).
 - c. National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA, five seats).
 - i. NMMA president or designee.
 - ii. Boating industry representative (four seats).
 - d. American Sport Fishing Association (five seats).
 - i. American Sport Fishing Association president or designee.
 - ii. Sport Fishing industry representative (four seats).
 - e. SFBPC (five seats).
 - i. Grassroots conservation/advocacy organizations (two seats).
 - ii. At-large (three seats).
- B. The directors then in office may appoint up to two at-large directors.

RBFF strategic plans and expenses by program area

RBFF has consistently worked to describe its programmatic objectives in a series of strategic plans. The organization's core focus is evident in its most recent FY 2024-2026 Strategic Plan (Appendix D), which focuses on:



CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

Increase participation in recreational boating and fishing by engaging in recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) efforts to grow the activities (emphasis on recruitment). This will be done by building awareness, trial and interest through national marketing campaigns including advertising, public relations, social media, and digital and web content.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Sustain/bolster participation in recreational boating and fishing by collaborating with industry, state and federal agencies to develop, implement and evaluate programs and resources to support R3 (emphasis on retention and reactivation). This will be done by engaging industry, state and federal agencies in partnerships, research, grants, training, toolkits, events and more to be activated at the local level.

The previous assessment used an expenditures table based on RBFF's yearly federal appropriations with broad categories, which are no longer valid. The data from these expenditures will almost never match the yearly actual spending from the annual federal financial reports (FFRs) that RBFF files with USFWS. The FFRs show actual cumulative spending against the current cooperative agreement. Spitfire has used the appropriations history and the end-of-year financial reports as measures for success throughout this report.

Assessment responsibility and prior assessments

The Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act of 1998 requires the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior to undertake a review of the plan “periodically, but not less frequently than once every 3 years.” This responsibility was delegated to SFBPC via the 1999 and 2016 MOUs, which stated SFBPC “will monitor the implementation of the program, will evaluate effectiveness of the program by communicating regularly with its stakeholders and will regularly report findings to the Secretary and the signatories of this agreement.”

In 2002, SFBPC undertook the first review, resulting in the report “Implementation of the Strategic Plan for the National Outreach and Communications Program, a Progress Report to the Secretary of the Interior.” The 2002 review provided a foundation for a comprehensive assessment conducted in 2006.

The “Programmatic Assessment of the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, FY 2003-2006” (2006 assessment) evaluated RBFF’s efforts relative to five questions that are tied directly to the Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act and the NOCP. The 2006 assessment presented a set of findings and recommendations to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior and RBFF board of directors in early 2007. The assessment was intentionally designed to be replicated in subsequent years. The 2009 assessment examined RBFF activities from April 1, 2006, through March 31, 2009 (RBFF FY 2007-2009). The 2012 assessment examined RBFF activities from April 1, 2009, through March 31, 2012 (RBFF FY 2010-2012). The 2015 assessment examined RBFF activities from April 1, 2013, through March 31, 2015 (RBFF FY 2013-2015).



2021 Assessment Methodology

2021 ASSESSMENT TEAM

Barb Gigar

Communication, Outreach & Marketing Bureau
Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Scott Kovarovics

Executive Director
Izaak Walton League of America

Candice Price

CEO and Co-Founder
Urban American Outdoor

Suzanne Stone

Program Support Section Manager
Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Amanda Stroud

Director for Office of Media and Outreach
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

USFWS STAFF

Gwendolyn Bausmith

Outreach and Communications Specialist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Gina Jones

Visual Information Specialist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Tom McCann

Designated Federal Officer, SFBPC
Branch Chief, Communications and Partnership
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Ashley Reimann

Staff Support, SFBPC
Outreach and Communications Specialist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Holly Richards

Outreach and Communications Specialist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

In October 2022, USFWS and SFBPC hired Spitfire to facilitate the 2021 assessment. By the end of 2022, USFWS and SFBPC had approved a draft methodology and named the 2021 Assessment Team (members listed on p. 36).

Spitfire relied on a wide range of information and data to inform its analysis, including the following:

Data from RBFF staff

Spitfire met with RBFF to obtain information and insights. Throughout the assessment process, RBFF provided additional information including the following:

- Annual stakeholder reports from 2018 through 2022.
- Annual end-of-year reports from 2016 through 2022.
- Previous RBFF assessments.
- Campaign effectiveness reports from 2019 through 2022.
- Strategic plans for 2020 through 2022 and 2024 through 2026.
- Stakeholder satisfaction surveys from 2018 through 2022.
- Previous outreach efforts planning and results documents:
 - State-based engagement results.
 - Funding appropriation history.
 - 2016 and 2019 conservation studies.
 - Additional strategic plans, agreements, law and progress reports.

Stakeholder interviews

To supplement the review of RBFF's materials, Spitfire sought qualitative insights from RBFF stakeholders to bring the data to life. We conducted 22 interviews with stakeholders who represented five groups: state agencies, industry partners, federal agencies, community organizations and campaign partners. Spitfire was most interested in stakeholders' experience using and/or tailoring RBFF materials and resources for their work and their reflections on how effective they believe RBFF has been. Spitfire sought to over-sample stakeholders who do not represent the dominant identities of RBFF's historic audience, white men, to give additional context that otherwise is unavailable in the data.

The stakeholders interviewed have boating and fishing sector experience ranging between approximately five to 30 years. Most stakeholders were very familiar and had long-term relationships with RBFF, including several who have been part of the Council or board. Most stakeholders' initial connection with RBFF was through grants, marketing campaigns and previous employment.

Stakeholders representing other groups — most notably tribal and community organizations — were more difficult to identify and reach for interviews. That may reflect lack of connection or deep engagement between RBFF and community organizations and leaders who identify as people of color.

The majority of the assessment is based on the quantitative data provided by RBFF to Spitfire. However, where data did not exist or when additional context was needed, Spitfire relied on qualitative information gathered from these stakeholders to tell a richer story. Spitfire only noted insights from the stakeholder interviews that were shared by multiple people. While the qualitative data was gathered from a small group of individuals, Spitfire believes it reveals important themes for RBFF to consider as it moves forward.

2022 STAKEHOLDERS

Mike Beauchene

Fisheries Biologist
Connecticut Department of Energy and
Environmental Protection

Ellen Bradley

Chief Brand Officer and Senior Vice President of
Marketing and Communications
National Marine Manufacturers Association

Kevin Brannon

Founder and President
Reel Guppy Outdoors

Dave Chanda

CEO
Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation

Tom Damrich

Former President
National Marine Manufacturers Association

Barb Gigar

Communication, Outreach and Marketing
Bureau
Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Ken Hammond

Board Member
Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation

Glenn Hughes

President
American Sportfishing Association

Scott Kovarovics

Executive Director
Izaak Walton League of America

Karen Marks

Aquatic Education Manager
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Dr. Mamie Parker

Former Head of Fisheries
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Larry Pape

Aquatic Education Coordinator
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Alix Pedraza

Community Engagement Manager
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Christy Plumer

Chief Conservation Officer
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Candice Price

CEO and Co-Founder
Urban American Outdoors

Ron Reagan

Executive Director
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Teresa Rodriguez

Wildlife Management Branch Chief
Department of Energy and Environment, District
of Columbia

David Stoughton

Visitor Services Manager
John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Suzanne Stone

Program Support Manager
Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Amanda Stroud

Director of Office of Media and Outreach
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Dr. Ben Tuggle

Former Assistant Director for Science
Applications
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Stephanie Vatalaro

Director of Communications
Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation

Assessment methodology

The 2021 assessment used the same basic evaluation framework developed for the 2006, 2009, 2012 and 2015 assessments. The assessment evaluates RBFF's efforts relative to five questions directly derived from the legislative mandate for the NOCP:

1. Have RBFF activities had a positive impact on recruitment and retention of boaters and anglers?
2. Have stakeholders found added value in the adoption of RBFF products?
3. Has RBFF increased the public's knowledge of boating and fishing techniques and its awareness of boating and fishing opportunities?
4. How has RBFF enhanced the public's understanding of aquatic resources?
5. Have RBFF products and activities increased conservation and responsible use of aquatic resources by boaters and anglers?

Goals and associated metrics by question

In 2017, in response to the recommendations from 2010-2012 SFBPC assessment of RBFF, a team consisting of representatives from SFBPC, RBFF, AFWA and USFWS met, developed and finalized recommended performance metrics for each of RBFF's consensus measures to ensure they remain up to date and relevant (See Appendix B). SFBPC developed and approved 20 metrics. This is the first assessment following the development of these measures.

1

QUESTION 1

Have RBFF activities had a positive impact on recruitment and retention of anglers and boaters?

OBJECTIVE 1, GOAL 1

Communicate with anglers, boaters and the general public to increase awareness of angling and boating opportunities, boating and fishing techniques, and the availability of and access to boating and fishing locations, thereby reducing barriers to participation in angling and boating.

METRICS

1.1.1 Demonstrate annual increase of new recruits to fishing (first-time participants) from 2015 baseline of 2.5 million as measured by the Outdoor Foundation’s “Special Report on Fishing.”

1.1.2 Demonstrate an annual increase in youth participation in fishing from the 2015 baseline of 10.7 million as measured by the Outdoor Foundation’s “Special Report on Fishing.”

1.1.3 Demonstrate an annual increase in Hispanic participation in fishing from the 2015 baseline of 3.4 million as measured by the Outdoor Foundation’s “Special Report on Fishing.”

1.1.4 Demonstrate a trend of increased boating participation over three-year periods as reported by the NMMA U.S. Recreational Boating Participants Survey using total participation as documented by the first NMMA study (2017) as the baseline.

1.1.5 Demonstrate a trend of increased fishing participation over a three-year period beginning in calendar year 2015, and in each successive three-year period, as reported by the Outdoor Foundation’s “Special Report on Fishing.”

1.1.6 Demonstrate a trend of increased fishing participation as reported in the USFWS National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

1.1.7 Maintain a favorable variance in fishing and boating intentions among target audiences exposed vs. those not exposed to RBFF campaigns and who are not currently engaged in these activities, as measured by annual campaign effectiveness studies.

1.1.8 Maintain or grow awareness of RBFF campaigns among target audiences, as measured by annual campaign effectiveness studies.

1.1.9 Achieve an annual increase in aggregate organic traffic (i.e., nonpaid traffic from search engines), as defined and measured by Google Analytics, to TakeMeFishing.org using RBFF fiscal year 2017 as the baseline.

2

QUESTION 2

Have stakeholders found added value in the adoption of RBFF products?

OBJECTIVE 1, GOAL 2

Collaborate and engage state agencies, industries and stakeholders in developing and implementing marketing and outreach strategies to recruit, retain and reactivate boaters and anglers as described in the NOCP.

METRICS

1.2.1 At least 25 states adopt a new or additional RBFF R3 model program over the three-year period beginning in RBFF fiscal year 2017 and in each successive three-year period.

1.2.2 Maintain a state agency satisfaction rate of at least 74% or greater of state agencies using two or more RBFF products or resources as measured annually by a consistent customer satisfaction survey conducted by an independent third party.

1.2.3 Maintain or achieve an industry (fishing and boating) satisfaction rate of 72% or greater as measured annually by a consistent industry satisfaction survey conducted by an independent third party.

1.2.4 For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in referrals from TMF digital assets to state fishing license purchase pages from the FY 2016 baseline of 746,781. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

1.2.5 For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in referrals from TMF digital assets to state boat registration pages from the FY 2016 baseline of 90,938. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

1.2.6 For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in the referrals from TMF digital assets to DiscoverBoating.com from the FY 2016 baseline of 119,570. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

1.2.7 For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in total boat registrations sold through the RBFF Boat Registration Marketing Program from the FY 2016 baseline of 43,057. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

**OBJECTIVE 1,
GOAL 3**

Develop and implement strategies to ensure that RBFF has sufficient funding to achieve its objectives.

METRIC

1.3.1 Annually raise nonfederal dollars and in-kind contributions (not including value added in purchased media buys) to equal 25% of federal dollars received.

3

QUESTION 3

Has RBFF increased the public’s knowledge of boating and fishing techniques, and its awareness of boating and fishing opportunities?

OBJECTIVE 1,
GOAL 1

Communicate with anglers, boaters and the general public to increase awareness of angling and boating opportunities, boating and fishing techniques, and the availability of and access to boating and fishing locations, thereby reducing barriers to participation in angling and boating.

METRICS

- 1.1.7** Maintain a favorable variance in fishing and boating intentions among target audiences exposed vs. those not exposed to RBFF campaigns and who are not currently engaged in these activities, as measured by annual campaign effectiveness studies.
- 1.1.8** Maintain or grow awareness of RBFF campaigns among target audiences, as measured by annual campaign effectiveness studies.
- 1.1.9** Achieve an annual increase in aggregate organic traffic (i.e., nonpaid traffic from search engines), as defined and measured by Google Analytics, to TakeMeFishing.org using RBFF fiscal year 2017 as the baseline.

OBJECTIVE 2,
GOAL 2

Collaborate and engage state agencies, industry and stakeholders in development and implementing marketing and outreach strategies to recruit, retain and reactivate boaters and anglers as described in the NOCP.

METRICS

- 1.2.4** For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in referrals from TMF digital assets to state fishing license purchase pages from the FY 2016 baseline of 746,781. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year’s actual results.

1.2.5 For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in referrals from TMF digital assets to state boat registration pages from the FY 2016 baseline of 90,938. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

1.2.6 For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in the referrals from TMF digital assets to DiscoverBoating.com from the FY 2016 baseline of 119,570. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

4

QUESTION 4

How has RBFF enhanced the public's understanding of aquatic resources?

As noted in the last assessment report, while Objective 2, Goal 3 (RBFF's communications will improve the public's understanding of the contribution of recreational angling and boating to the conservation of aquatic resources) addresses this issue, there currently is no metric that specifically measures the public's understanding of aquatic resources. RBFF did not directly address the recommendation to create a specific measure related to this question in its response to the 2013-2015 assessment report.

5

QUESTION 5

Have RBFF products and activities increased conservation and responsible use of aquatic resources by boaters and anglers?

**OBJECTIVE 2
GOAL 1**

Increase public awareness of sound fishing, boating and conservation practices.

METRICS

2.1.1 Maintain awareness of the connection between licensing and local conservation by anglers and boaters, as established every three years by the Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports and RBFF Conservation Study using the 2015 study as the baseline awareness level (75%).

2.1.2 Achieve an annual increase in aggregate unique page views to the TakeMeFishing.org pages featuring prominent conservation messaging, using RBFF FY 2017 as the baseline. (Prominent conservation messaging pages include Get a License and Register a Boat and each state-specific license and registration page.)

**OBJECTIVE 2,
GOAL 2**

Promote safe fishing and boating practices.

METRIC

2.2.1 Achieve an annual increase in aggregate unique page views to the Fishing Safety and Boating Safety sections of TakeMeFishing.org using RBFF FY 2017 as the baseline.





2021 Assessment Results

1

QUESTION 1

Have RBFF activities had a positive impact on recruitment and retention of anglers and boaters?

Background

Recreational fishing and boating continue to be two of America's most popular outdoor activities as seen in the "[2022 Special Report on Fishing](#)." Between 2019-2021, fishing saw the highest participation rates in over a decade with an estimated 52.4 million Americans ages 6 and over fishing at least once in 2021.¹ This was due in large part to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a study by the National Institute of Health, "nearly a third of anglers reported changing their motivation for fishing during the pandemic, with stress relief being more popular during the pandemic than before."

During the assessment period, RBFF kicked off several new initiatives to boost participation in recreational fishing and boating. In 2018, RBFF set out to increase participation in recreational fishing by launching the [60 in 60 initiative](#), which stands for 60 million anglers in 60 months (end date of 2021). To support this effort, RBFF also launched the R3 program (examined in more detail on page 69). RBFF urged states and industry partners to create their own R3 plan to help achieve the 60 in 60 goal and maintain a "robust customer base." As outlined below, while these efforts had a positive impact on the number of new and returning participants to the sport, RBFF fell short of its 60 in 60 goal by 5 million anglers in 2021.

Recreational boating saw a similar increase during the pandemic. U.S. expenditures on new boats, engines, aftermarket accessories and related costs totaled \$56.7 billion in 2021, up 12.7% as compared to 2020. An estimated 1.1 million pre-owned boats (powerboats, personal watercraft and sailboats) were sold in 2021, a significant increase of 9.2% compared to 2020.

¹ "Special Report on Fishing Reports 2019-2021"; The Outdoor Foundation and RBFF.

Assessment

In previous assessments, RBFF tracked its progress on Question 1 by two consensus metrics: fishing license sales and boat registrations. Although these metrics, as described in the last assessment report, “provide an outcome based objective to work towards,” it is not sufficient to measure RBFF’s impact on recruitment and retention for a few different reasons.

For example, many anglers — such as those under age 16 and veterans — are not required to purchase a fishing license in some states. Thus, the number of people who buy a license is not equal to the number of people who fish in any given year. Also, the number of fishing license sales is a “moment in time” metric, meaning it does not reflect the number of people who actually fish vs continue to fish after purchasing a license. RBFF does not have access to individual consumer contact information to determine who continued fishing after purchasing a license.

Stakeholders interviewed for this assessment shared similar concerns about this metric and said boating and fishing licensing data doesn’t tell a full story. They shared that some stakeholders don’t have direct access to data on license sales or boating registrations. “We make them buy licenses so they can fish, so it’s something people have to do, and yes, it can be a trend measure, but a lot of times our success is [measured] by how many licenses we sell when we know that actually getting people fishing is about lifecycle participation,” one stakeholder said.

The last Assessment Team recommended that “SFBPC, AFWA and USFWS should work with RBFF to identify surrogates for certified license sales data and boat registration data that would allow RBFF to more quickly respond to changing market conditions and modify its recruitment and retention programs.” RBFF responded by working with stakeholder partners to support the development of real-time data dashboards to provide R3 practitioners with daily, weekly and annual updates regarding the number of license sales sold. According to RBFF, “these dashboards can compare results to the previous year to generate valuable trend insights regarding participation, effects of weather and other events on license sales.”

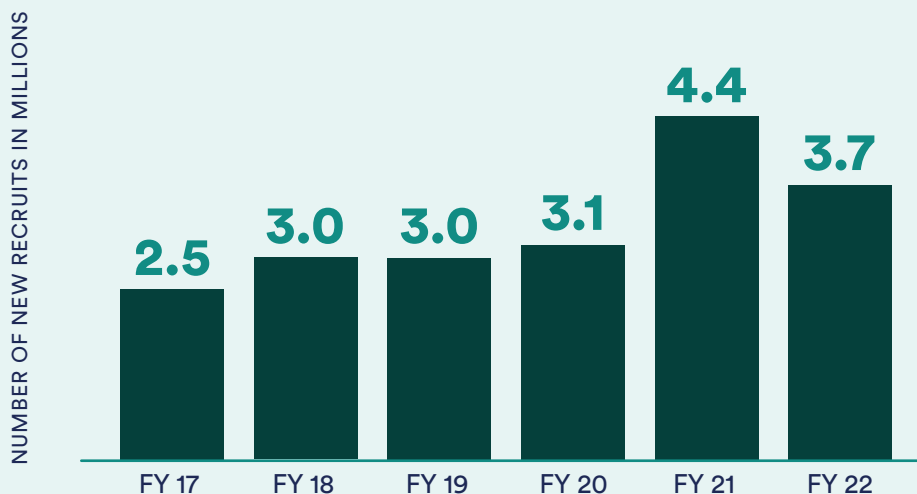
Additionally, as the previous Assessment Team recommended, RBFF and SFBPC “developed a new list of consensus measures and metrics on which to base future assessments of RBFF’s effectiveness.” Starting in 2017, there are now nine performance metrics that RBFF tracks to measure progress on Question 1, as detailed in the assessment below.

METRIC

Demonstrate annual increase of new recruits to fishing (first-time participants) from 2015 baseline of 2.5 million as measured by the Outdoor Foundation’s “Special Report on Fishing.”

According to the annual “Special Report on Fishing” (RBFF/Outdoor Foundation), during the assessment time period, there was an increase in first-time participants in fishing, exceeding the baseline of 2.5 million. The year with the highest increase in new recruits was 2021 (4.4 million), an increase of nearly 2 million new participants compared to 2017 (2.5 million). Fishing, like other outdoor recreational activities, saw an influx of new participants during the pandemic as people flocked outside to recreate and prevent transmission of COVID-19.

NEW RECRUITS TO FISHING

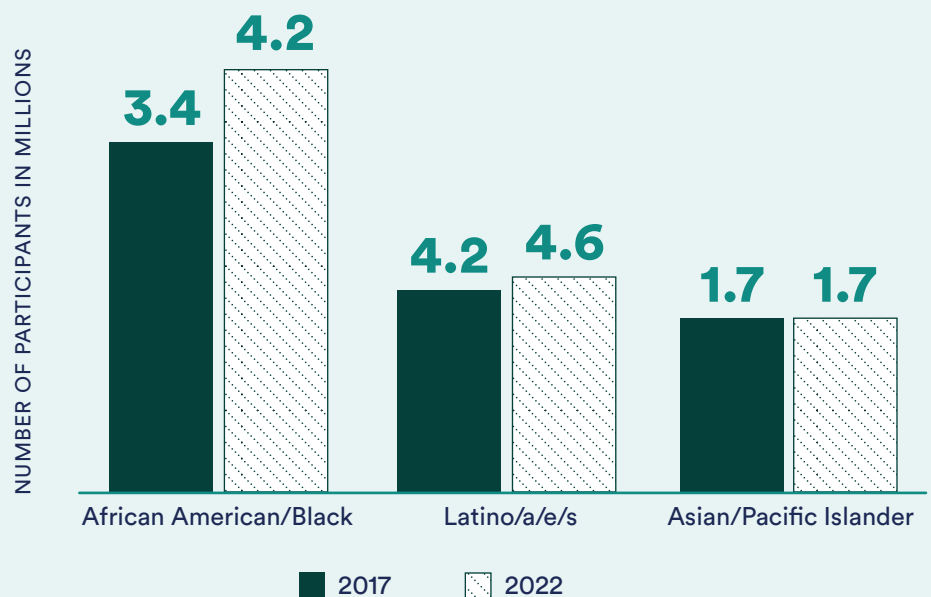


*New recruits to fishing (FY 2017-FY 2022); “The Special Report on Fishing 2017-2022” by Outdoor Foundation and RBFF.

The assessment period also saw a smaller increase in the number of people of color participating in boating and fishing over the last five years, according to the same report. This includes an increase in the total number of African American participants from 3.4 million to 4.2 million and an increase in the total number of Hispanic participants from 4.2 million to 4.6 million during the same time period. The total number of Asian/Pacific Islander participants remained steady at 1.7 million. It is worth noting that fishing participation by Native Americans is not currently tracked in the “Special Report on Fishing.” The total number of female participants has increased from 15 million to 19.4 million over the last 10 years.

It is worth noting that some of the terms RBFF uses to identify racial groups are dated. For example, the terms “Hispanic” and “African American” are not the preferred terminology for many communities. Spitfire encourages RBFF to consider shifting to “Latino/a/e/s” instead of “Hispanic” and “Black” instead of “African American.” Both of these terms follow AP Style and are more culturally competent and inclusive. Spitfire uses this terminology throughout the report.

ANGLING PARTICIPATION RATES FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR



*Angling Participation Rates for People of Color (FY 2017-FY 2022); “The Special Report on Fishing 2017-2022” by Outdoor Foundation and RBFF.

Although the number of new anglers increased during the assessment period, this trend did not continue in 2022. The number of first time participants in FY22 (3.7 million) was less than during the pandemic (4.4 million in FY 21), but remained higher than pre-pandemic (3.1 million in FY 20). Shifting demographics in the U.S. mean that if RBFF and others in the industry do not shift to engage new audiences of anglers and boaters, this downward trend will continue.

Spitfire spoke with stakeholders who noted that more direct investment in local activities is needed to remove barriers for first-time anglers and boaters from diverse communities as well as to keep them engaged. This type of investment can look like RBFF supporting pilot equipment loan programs or utilizing RBFF influence to partner with states and industry to encourage investment in more ramps and fishing piers.

The “traditional” angler or boater is getting older, and younger people are not fishing or boating as much as their predecessors, according to the “Special Report on Fishing.” Projections of demographic trends in the U.S. indicate that the number of people who boat and fish will continue to decline unless individuals from groups who traditionally have been less involved with fishing and boating engage in greater numbers.

Given these trends, RBFF conducted a market segmentation study in 2019 to identify groups with the greatest growth potential for recreational anglers and boaters. From the six distinct consumer segments identified, RBFF chose “active social families” as its primary audience target. This group is defined as diverse, young families (18-34) who skew Latino/a/e/s, live in urban metro areas, enjoy the outdoors with their kids and promote that enjoyment on social media.

The study found that this group includes 12.7 million potential new anglers aged 18-34, 9.6 million kids under age 18, 16.2 million potential new boaters aged 18-34 and over 12.3 million kids under age 18. It also found that the motivations to leverage members of this broad audience group include enjoying the outdoors while being active, making



memories with friends and family, building their personal “brand” via photo opportunities, and teaching/letting kids experience a new activity. RBFF shared this research with stakeholders, including state agencies and industry partners, to support them to better engage this audience to prevent a further decline in new participants.

Spitfire took into consideration RBFF’s newer focus on “active social families” and emphasis on engaging new demographics of anglers and boaters as reviewers determined whether RBFF activities had a positive impact on recruitment and retention of boaters and anglers during the assessment period. Spitfire’s conclusions related to these efforts are outlined in the following sections.

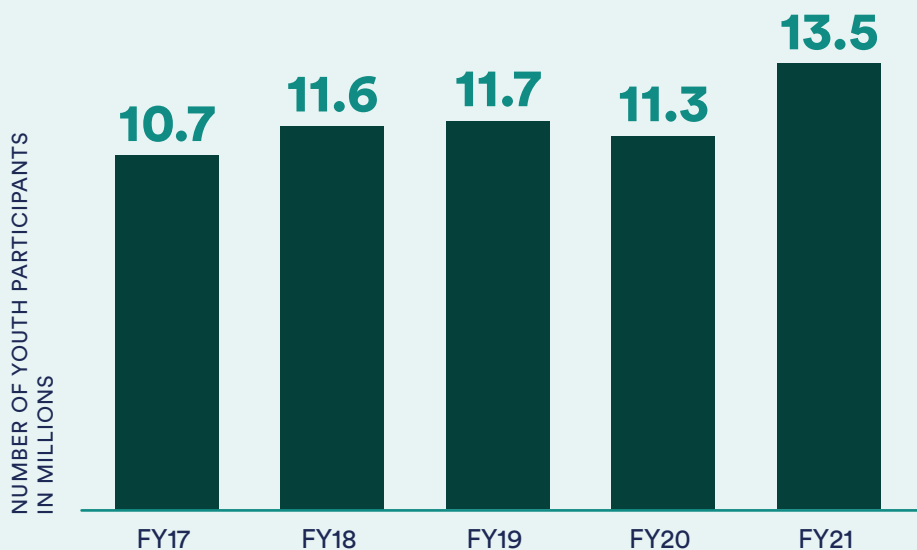
METRIC

Demonstrate an annual increase in youth (ages 6-17) participation in fishing from the 2015 baseline of 10.7 million as measured by the Outdoor Foundation’s “Special Report on Fishing.”

RBF noted an increase in youth participation in fishing between 2018 and 2021, with a high of 13.5 million youth fishing in 2021. Although 2022 is not technically in the assessment period, it is worth noting that the number of youth participants dipped by about 1 million that year (12.7 million) following the pandemic’s engagement boom.

According to RBF’s annual campaign effectiveness reports, “fished as a child” is the top characteristic for predicting those who are “very likely” to fish in the next 12 months. This means that engaging young people is key to growing the angler community long term. It is worth noting that according to RBF’s Campaign Effectiveness Reports, women and Latino/a/e/s audiences are less likely to have fished as children than the general population. This indicates the continuing need to engage these audiences at an early age to create lifelong anglers.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN FISHING



*Youth participation in fishing (FY 2017- FY 2021); “The Special Report on Fishing 2017-2021” by Outdoors Foundation and RBF.

METRIC

Demonstrate an annual increase in Hispanic participation in fishing from the 2015 baseline of 3.4 million as measured by the Outdoor Foundation’s “Special Report on Fishing.”

Between 2017 and 2021, the number of Latino/a/e/s people who participated in fishing grew by 10 million according to the “Special Report on Fishing.” Although 2022 is not in the assessment period, it is worth noting that while numbers were slightly lower in 2022 than in 2021, dipping from 4.8 million to 4.7 million.

In addition to the Outdoor Foundation’s report, Spitfire reviewed RBFF’s Campaign Effectiveness Reports between 2018-2021 to evaluate RBFF’s impact on the increase in Latino/a/e/s participation. While the data doesn’t prove causation, it provides additional context for RBFF’s potential impact.

LATINO/A/E/S PARTICIPATION IN FISHING



*Latino/a/e/s participation in fishing (FY 2017-FY 2021); “The Special Report on Fishing 2017-2021” by Outdoors Foundation and RBFF.

As part of its Vamos a Pescar campaign (further detailed on page 99), in 2018 and 2019 RBFF launched national ad campaigns in Spanish for Latino/a/e/s audiences. The campaigns included TV and digital banner ads. In both years, the ads saw highly positive influence scores, with half or more of Latino/a/e/s who saw the ads reporting they are much more or somewhat more likely to fish in the next 12 months as a result.

In 2020 and 2021, there was no renewed Vamos a Pescar campaign, so effectiveness among Latino/a/e/s audiences was evaluated through the Take Me Fishing campaign. However, according to the Campaign Effectiveness Reports, Latino/a/e/s awareness/recall of the brand/slogan, logos and visitation to TMF/Vamos a Pescar websites remained strong and stable. Most encountered the brand in multiple places, and nearly all who recall it are likely to fish in the next 24 months. This data reflects important progress in reaching new audiences during the assessment period.





METRIC

Demonstrate a trend of increased boating participation over three-year periods as reported by the NMMA U.S. Recreational Boating Participants Survey using total participation as documented by the first NMMA study (2017) as the baseline.

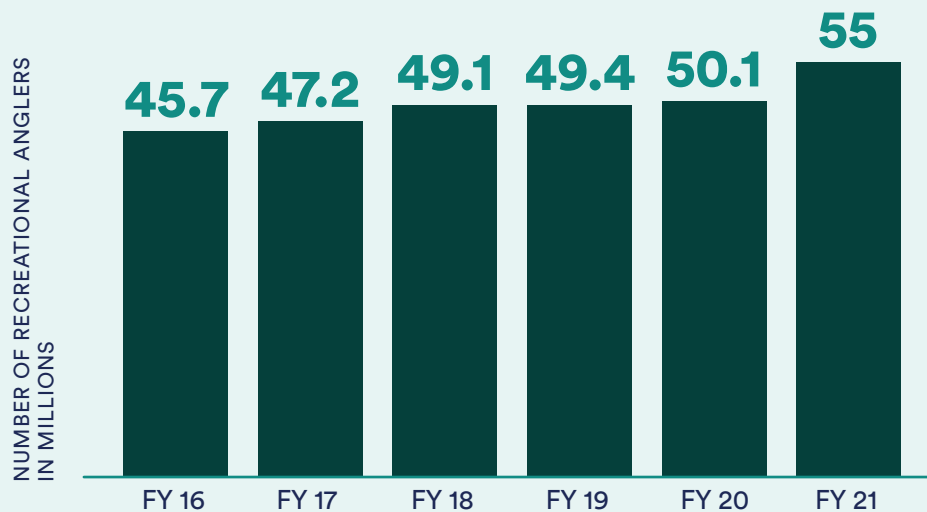
The National Recreational Boating Survey, published by the U.S. Coast Guard — detailing boating participation, boat ownership, use and safety — was completed in 2018 and found 85 million people participated in boating activities. That study is the only data available for the assessment period.

METRIC

Demonstrate a trend of increased fishing participation over a three-year period beginning in calendar year 2015, and in each successive three-year period, as reported by the Outdoor Foundation's "Special Report on Fishing."

As noted earlier, RBFF saw an increase in overall fishing participation in the three-year period between 2016-2018, with an increase of 3.4 million. RBFF also saw an increase over the three-year period between 2019-2021, with an increase of 5.6 million. Although it is not in the assessment period, it is worth noting that fishing participation in 2022 dipped slightly from 55 million participants in 2021 to 52.4 million participants in 2022.

OVERALL PARTICIPATION IN FISHING



*Overall participation in fishing (FY 2016-FY 2021); "The Special Report on Fishing 2016-2021" by Outdoor Foundation and RBFF.

METRIC

Demonstrate a trend of increased fishing participation as reported in USFWS National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

The most recent USFWS National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation is from 2016. Total anglers in 2016 was 35.8 million, up from 33.1 million in 2011 among U.S. residents 16 years and older, and these numbers demonstrate a trend in increased fishing participation.

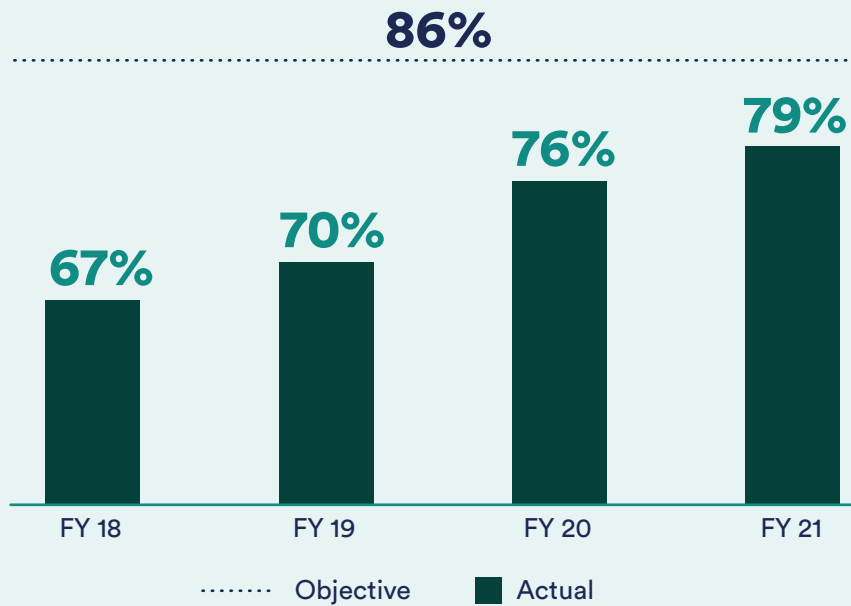
METRIC

Maintain a favorable variance in fishing and boating intentions among target audiences exposed vs. those not exposed to RBFF campaigns and who are not currently engaged in these activities, as measured by annual campaign effectiveness studies.

Prior to 2017, RBFF did not include this metric in its end-of-year reports. As such, 2018 is the first year when data for this specific metric is available. Spitfire reviewed RBFF's campaign effectiveness studies from 2018-2022 to answer this question. The Campaign Effectiveness Study reviews RBFF's TMF campaign to determine its effectiveness and impact based on influence rate, brand awareness, recall and public perceptions of boating and fishing. The intention to fish is consistently high among those exposed to TMF campaign assets, including TV ads, social media posts and hashtags, mobile app and promotional content.

RBFF set a baseline variance of 86% of target audiences exposed to its campaigns to maintain a favorable intent to fish. Fishing and boating intentions did not reach or exceed the baseline variance during the assessment period.

INTENT TO FISH VARIANCE



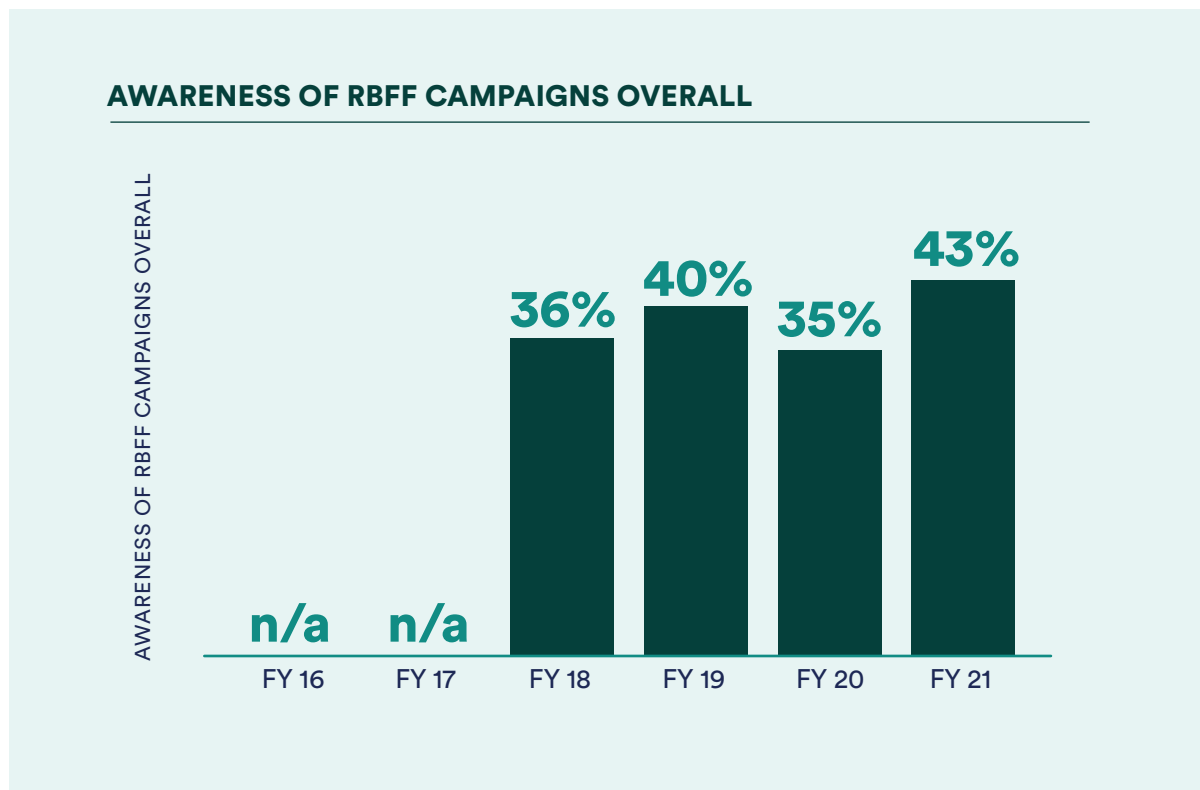
In its end-of-year reports during the assessment period, RBF reported that brand awareness and intent to fish from a boat did not meet the baseline due to changes in creative development, shifts in sample audience and shifts in media mix (e.g., eliminating print advertising in 2018).

Due to discrepancies in data for fishing and boating intentions across RBF materials, data tracking for these figures has proven difficult. This stems from differences in data collection questions and tracked metrics such as asking intentions to fish from overall respondents vs. intentions to fish from respondents aware of the TFM campaign. While both data sets are useful tools, there needs to be better consistency in data presentation across materials to accurately capture change over time.

METRIC

Maintain or grow awareness of RBFF campaigns among target audiences, as measured by annual campaign effectiveness studies.

Prior to 2017, RBFF tracked TMF brand influence rather than awareness of RBFF campaigns among target audiences. As such, 2018 is the first year when data for this specific consensus metric is available. With this in mind, RBFF saw the highest level of awareness for its annual campaigns in 2021, with 43% of priority audiences being aware of the TMF or Vamos a Pescar campaign. Although 2022 is not technically included in the assessment period, awareness of RBFF campaigns increased again, from 43% in 2021 to 50% in 2022.

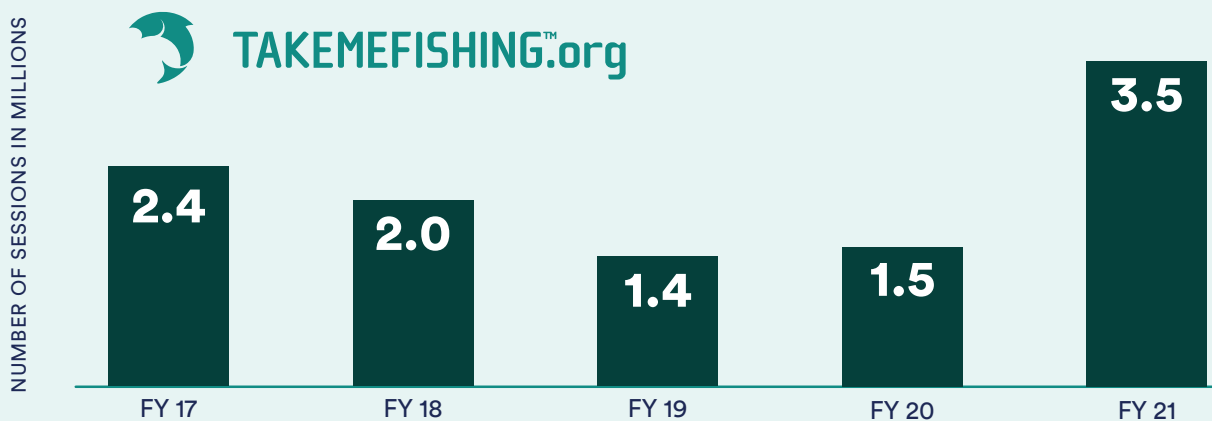


METRIC

Achieve an annual increase in aggregate organic traffic (i.e., nonpaid traffic from search engines), as defined and measured by Google Analytics, to TakeMeFishing.org using RBF FY 2017 as the baseline.

Organic traffic to TakeMeFishing.org fluctuated throughout the assessment period. The FY 2017 baseline for organic traffic is 2.4 million sessions. Overall, RBF only exceeded the FY 2017 organic traffic baseline of 2.4 million once during the assessment period in FY 2021. RBF reports that 2017 was a standout year for organic traffic driven by the launch of a brand new TakeMeFishing.org, which Google rewarded with a huge increase in organic traffic. Organic traffic fell in FY 2018, with just over 2 million sessions. This downward trend continued in FY 2019, with 1.4 million sessions. RBF reports this was due to a cyberattack on TakeMeFishing.org that increased negative backlinks and lowered the property's organic ranking and overall authority. In FY 2020, organic traffic saw a slight uptick with 1.5 million sessions but did not exceed the FY 2017 baseline. Organic traffic saw a big boom in FY 2021, with 3.5 million sessions, which well exceeded the FY 2017 baseline. While FY 2022 is not in the assessment period, it is worth noting that while organic traffic dipped slightly (down to 3.2 million), RBF was able to maintain a significant portion of the traffic that came during the pandemic boom.

ORGANIC TRAFFIC TO TAKEMEFISHING.ORG



Findings and observations

Overall, first-time fishing participants and anglers and boaters metrics have increased over the last five years, including a momentary large spike in 2020 and during the pandemic. Although people who are exposed to RBFF’s campaigns report they are more likely to fish than those who aren’t exposed, fishing and boating intentions did not reach or exceed the baseline that RBFF set during the assessment period. Organic traffic to TakeMeFishing.org fluctuated throughout much of the assessment period but saw a boost that started in 2021 and has continued.

RBFF’s achievements during this period, especially work to provide online outreach during the pandemic, are notable. RBFF must focus on efforts to reengage audiences who started fishing during the pandemic but did not continue after stay-at-home orders were lifted — and continue focused efforts to reach individuals in audience groups that haven’t fished or boated.



The “Special Report on Fishing” conducted annually by the Outdoor Foundation reported an overall increase in the number of people of color participating in boating and fishing in the past five years. While it is not possible to prove causation, it is likely that RBFF’s campaigns prioritizing Latino/a/e/s audiences supported this increase.

Despite this noted increase, the assessment revealed the need for focused, ongoing efforts to engage diverse communities. Community leaders and people of color interviewed for this assessment shared that beyond the national campaign efforts to engage Latino/a/e/s communities, there is minimal direct investment in communities of color and at times RBFF has been a barrier for Black-led organizations’ work and efforts.

“I never got the feeling that there was a semi-aggressive attempt to have relationships at the local level to have an impact, particularly with inner-city programs or programs focused on people of color to increase the participation in angling and boating,” one stakeholder said.

Also, stakeholders (both who identify as people of color and who identify as white) named that RBFF’s efforts to engage more racially diverse communities can’t just show up in marketing materials and guidance but should also be reflected in who is at the table when those materials are developed. Marketing research can tell a great deal about how to effectively message to specific demographics, but it is not enough on its own. Diverse leadership is important for planning, decision-making and resource allocation both at RBFF as it plans its national campaigns and at state agencies as they implement RBFF’s marketing guidance. Diverse leadership also matters for audience engagement: If someone attends a local fishing event and no one looks like them, they may be turned off or feel like an outsider, even if the marketing materials have inclusive imagery and in-language messaging. RBFF could include specific guidance for including representation as part of its marketing resources for state agencies.

Spitfire also heard from stakeholders that RBFF could support local partners more generally to promote safe and welcoming public outdoors spaces for communities of color and women. Stakeholders reported feeling unsafe or unwelcome in some outdoor spaces because they are met with hostility or distrust from white anglers and boaters. Spitfire acknowledges that some of these challenges are beyond what one organization can address, but RBFF and its partners are leaders in the field and can help shift perspectives and behaviors through strategic campaigns, partnerships and training.



Recommendations to increase reach and impact



RECOMMENDATION 1

RBFF should consider how to help its state partners reengage audiences who started fishing during the pandemic but did not continue after stay-at-home orders were lifted. RBFF may begin by noting where organizations have participation lists from events and prioritizing outreach to reengage these individuals, given that Spitfire knows these individuals acted on the intent to fish by participating in these events. Outreach to individuals who purchased fishing licenses (to invite them to local events, for example) also may be useful, but such outreach may reach individuals who intended to fish but never acted on that intent. RBFF may be able to provide assistance including:

Data analysis: State and local organizations have noted RBFF’s marketing expertise, and RBFF may be able to provide assistance at its annual marketing workshop to guide partners on how to identify important changes from fishing license sales from one year to the next — most notably from 2020 to 2021 or 2022. That insight will help individuals tailor local programming to individuals who sustained interest in fishing post-pandemic and focus their efforts and resources. And that approach will guide state and local partners on how to track not only outputs (license sales) but also outcomes of individuals who continue their engagement over multiple years — recognizing the purchase of a fishing license for more than one year as a proxy indicator for likely behavior.

Strategic focus: Marketing guidance at the workshop or via coaching will help partners identify which education and outreach efforts, reaching specific audience groups, are most important in their area. For example, a review of individuals who purchased fishing licenses or attended programs and shared their identities may reveal increased interest from the Latino/a/e/s population in a specific state or community. That insight may provide a local outreach leader with the information they need to secure resources for translating materials into Spanish or hiring bilingual staff to support local education and outreach. Focused efforts on specific communities enable state and

local partners to more effectively measure both outputs and outcomes via a combination of simple surveys (offered at the time of license purchase or at a program) and stakeholder interviews via engagement at events.

Engaging content: RBFF can boost state and local partners' efforts by providing high-quality resources in the form of social media toolkits with content, especially strong visual content, that its partners can use to encourage reengagement. Having this content available in multiple languages, at least English and Spanish, may help local partners more effectively reach and engage these audiences online or at events. RBFF and its partners can measure outputs with this content online (views and clicks), and they can measure outcomes by identifying how/if individuals are sharing the content. Online engagement also provides opportunities for short surveys or polls that assess users' perceptions of the content and gather insights about how, if or when they boat and fish.



RECOMMENDATION 2

RBFF should continue supporting partners with marketing materials and research (that they can use within their agencies) that will engage young people of color and girls, because fishing as a child is one of most effective predictors that a person will continue to fish long into adulthood. Regularly scheduled (monthly or quarterly) videoconferences/webinars could guide partners on how to use marketing research to make the case for state/local efforts prioritizing these audiences, provide coaching on how to effectively use messages/images to engage these audiences, and share case studies on how partners are effectively using marketing research and tools to encourage audience engagement (behavior vs. awareness). Here, the outcomes are better-prepared state and local staff who can prioritize programming for specific audiences, assess what works and course-correct along the way. RBFF can measure these outcomes via pre- and post-session surveys and a follow-up gathering of examples of how state and local outreach partners are implementing what they learn.



RECOMMENDATION 3

RBFF should identify ways to support efforts that make outdoor spaces more safe and welcoming to people of color and women. This could include:

Boards, staff and volunteers: When individuals meet others with apparently similar markers of identity, their potential for shared lived experiences create a sense of welcome and trust. To engage more diverse communities in fishing and boating, the sector must have more diverse staff — at organizations like RBFF, USFWS, state and local agencies, and in the industry. RBFF cannot control recruitment, hiring and retention for other organizations, but it can model and promote best practices. RBFF has already been a leader when it comes to hiring and retaining women in leadership positions, with 11 women on staff (the majority), many of whom are in senior leadership positions. And because partners trust RBFF’s research, RBFF is uniquely positioned to evaluate and share how staffing changes are effective in engaging and retaining boaters and anglers from communities beyond those they’ve traditionally reached. Spitfire recommends RBFF conduct a baseline analysis of its staff and partners engaged in its annual marketing workshop to map the dominant identity (likely cisgender, white males) nationally and regionally. RBFF and other national organizations can compare that identity to that of populations they seek to better engage and share recommendations for itself and its partners to work from when hiring staff and recruiting volunteers. RBFF can evaluate outcomes from this work by surveying its partners to learn which organizations acted on this research, focused on recruitment/hiring practices, and effectively engaged more diverse individuals on staff or as volunteers.

Industry collaboration: RBFF can share the previously described research with industry partners to demonstrate its commitment to welcoming women and people of color and invite conversation about if and how industry partners are doing the same. RBFF can evaluate outcomes from this work by noting how many and which partners will meet to consider this approach and how/if they change recruitment and hiring practices.



Images: Images on RBFF materials must show people of color and women to help individuals see themselves as anglers and boaters. RBFF has diversified images in its library, and this work must continue and expand. RBFF may be able to accomplish this by creating a contest that local partners can implement to invite anglers and boaters to submit photos of themselves and agree to the local partner and RBFF using the photos in materials — to help reach this goal and build the photo library with authentic images.

Language: Materials ranging from website copy and brochures to signage around fishing and boating areas must increasingly be bilingual. In general, signage in both English and Spanish will be effective, and other languages will be important in select communities. RBFF can help local partners who may not have funds for translation by creating materials in multiple languages for partners to use online or download and print. RBFF can evaluate this work by measuring downloads of these resources and gathering insights via short surveys capturing how partners have used this information and what feedback they have received on it.



RECOMMENDATION 4

RBFF should continue to focus and tailor its marketing campaigns and tactics to engage people of color and women. Compared to the last assessment period, RBFF has made great strides in prioritizing audiences that fall outside the “traditional angler” audience group, most notably Latino/a/e/s and women, in its national awareness campaigns. It has also provided useful resources to state agencies to help them do the same. Spitfire recognizes this is an important and notable shift, and that additional growth is possible. Currently, RBFF only tracks one metric specifically related to communities of color (the number of Latino/a/e/s people who have participated in fishing). RBFF needs to identify additional metrics to track progress in reaching and recruiting nontraditional audiences. Stakeholders also shared that beyond marketing, direct equipment support is even more supportive and impactful to their work and access, especially among communities where resources may be limited. Before launching its next new campaign, RBFF can conduct pre- and post-surveys in pilot communities to determine if and how it can engage audiences beyond its traditional groups. The refinements RBFF makes following pilot campaigns will enable it to more effectively prepare national campaigns with these audiences in mind.



RECOMMENDATION 5

RBFF should include metrics to directly track the progress of equity, inclusion and diversity efforts in all of their work. Although there has been progress toward the engagement of Latino/a/e/s communities, there is still a lack of effort to specifically reach other communities of color, specifically Black communities. Spitfire advises RBFF to prioritize organizations that are led by people of color for grants through Vamos a Pescar or other programs. State agencies can help RBFF identify the right partners at the community level. Spitfire also recommends that RBFF integrate equity, inclusion and diversity trainings, led by experts in the field, into its annual marketing workshops to support growth in this area among state partners.

2

QUESTION 2

Have stakeholders found added value in the adoption of RBFF products?

Background

RBFF partners with myriad stakeholders to create and implement a national outreach strategy to increase participation in recreational angling and boating and thereby increasing public awareness and appreciation to protect, conserve and restore America's aquatic natural resources. The Foundation offers a variety of tools to stakeholders to help them more strategically and effectively recruit, retain and reactivate boaters and anglers in their state. Thus, as noted in the previous assessment, "the success of its program should be, in part, assessed by the degree to which its stakeholders adopt, utilize and find value in its services, tools and programs."

As noted in the previous assessment, RBFF's stakeholders include state and federal natural resource agencies; boating and fishing industries; and nongovernmental organizations and associations with conservation, fishing and/or boating missions. Members of RBFF's board of directors represent these primary stakeholder groups, and RBFF involves stakeholders, both formally and informally, in the design and implementation of its programs and tools.

Assessment

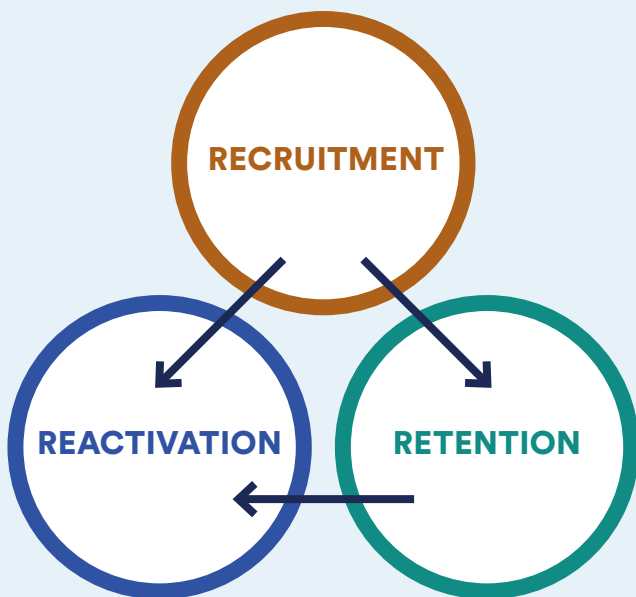
In previous assessments, RBFF measured whether stakeholders found added value from adopting its products by three consensus metrics: 1) engaging all 50 states in an annual marketing improvement enhancement effort, 2) demonstrating stakeholder satisfaction rates in annual surveys, and 3) annually raising nonfederal dollars and in-kind contributions to equal 25% of federal dollars received.

In 2017, SFBPC identified new consensus metrics to measure progress toward this goal. Now, RBFF has eight consensus metrics to assess whether stakeholders found value in its products.

METRIC

At least 25 states adopt a new or additional RBFF R3 model program over the three-year period beginning in RBFF FY 2017 and in each successive three-year period.

R3 EFFORTS



Recruitment: Reaching those individuals who have never been fishing or boating but have expressed an interest in it.

Retention: Keeping anglers and boaters who participate coming back year after year.

Reactivation: Bringing back anglers and boaters whose participation has been interrupted for more than a year.

Although R3 efforts have always been a part of state agencies' efforts in one way or another, in 2015 RBFF and the Aquatic Resources Education Association partnered on a project to develop explicit recommendations and strategic tools to increase the effectiveness of angler R3 efforts

nationally. The emphasis on R3 efforts grew out of participation trends showing younger, more diverse audiences are reluctant to take up fishing and boating, while older white males are aging out of the sport. In addition to releasing the “[Recommendations and Strategic Tools for Effective Angler Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation \(R3\) Efforts](#)” report, RBFF encouraged state agencies to develop a strategic plan for their angler R3 efforts and consider hiring an R3 coordinator.

“RBFF was really good about facilitating us and putting together an overall agency R3 plan that looked at different areas of the agency, not just who’s speaking the loudest so that there’s equal attention given to all areas and there’s now more assets available to us.”

Beginning in 2017, RBFF tracked states’ progress toward adopting an R3 model program through a State Angler R3 scorecard. In the first year, four states adopted an R3 model program. The number of states adopting a model program grew significantly over the next few years. In 2021, RBFF met its consensus metric, with 26 states adopting an R3 model program. By the end of 2021, the fourth year of this effort:

36 states and Washington, D.C., now have angler R3 plans.

31 states have R3 coordinators.

39 states have full-time marketing managers/directors and/or marketing teams.

5+ states have scored over 90 out of 100 in Year 4, based on 20 R3 criteria that are scored on a scale of 1-5.



RBFF identified that the largest growth areas for the program are 1) reallocating agency resources to ensure R3 success and 2) developing customer relationship management systems to support the work.

METRIC

Maintain a state agency satisfaction rate of at least 74% or greater of state agencies using two or more RBFF products or resources as measured annually by a consistent customer satisfaction survey conducted by an independent third party.

State agencies are important stakeholders for RBFF's work because they have a big influence on participation in angling and boating across the country. State agency satisfaction rates have steadily increased since 2018, exceeding a rate of 74% between 2019-2021, with the highest satisfaction rate in 2021 (83%). Although outside of the assessment period, this trend continued in 2022 with a satisfaction rate of 93%.

RBFF MADE MULTIPLE UPDATES TO ITS PHOTO LIBRARY DURING THE ASSESSMENT PERIOD



FY 2017

Women's Campaign photoshoot



FY 2020

Off the Hook professional photography of urban fishing from New York; Washington, D.C.; and Minneapolis



FY 2021

Photoshoot in Minneapolis and surrounding areas that included families from diverse backgrounds

“We use the heck out of the photo library because we don’t have that diversity of fishing images available.”

“The fact that they have done really good research is of great value to our work. It is incredibly important. This is research that has never been done before, especially in human dimensions cases.”

According to the 2022 survey, the majority of state agencies and industry partners say the biggest reason they engage with RBFF is to stay informed (50%), followed by accessing industry reports (40%). As part of the survey, RBFF asks stakeholders for their suggestions and implements those that are strategic and help support its overall mission to continue to make its work useful to state agency partners.

RBFF also hosts an annual State Marketing Workshop and quarterly webinars for its state agency stakeholders, where RBFF trains participants on various R3 strategies and tactics. The results from those efforts show sustained growth and progress in this area.

Spitfire heard similar feedback from the stakeholders the reviewers interviewed. When asked what RBFF products and tools are most helpful to their work, state agency stakeholders most commonly noted appreciation for how-to videos, photography and marketing research, because they have limited local budgets or expertise for these assets and research. RBFF reported that it made multiple updates to its photo library during the assessment period.

Along with expressions of appreciation, stakeholders noted the need for attention to detail in resources. Several reported that fish species represented only several specific environments or that backgrounds featured trees or other natural scenes unlike those in their states. They seek greater variety in video and photo assets, and that also includes a focus on more diverse individuals being represented in assets: younger people, women, and/or more individuals from racially and ethnically diverse communities.

Although every stakeholder Spitfire interviewed noted that engaging racially diverse communities in angling and boating is important, the stakeholders who represent RBFF's historic audience (white and male) tended to find RBFF's materials more useful than the stakeholders who represent the newer segment of priority audiences (people of color and women). White, male stakeholders indicated that the marketing research and materials that RBFF shared to engage more diverse communities are very helpful because they do not have that expertise or experience in-house. The stakeholders representing more racially diverse communities reported different reactions and indicated a lack of effort on RBFF's part to forge meaningful and long-term partnerships with diverse communities to produce campaigns, host events and address strategic outreach.

“They may pick one or two (people of color) because they have to get a token here or there instead of making it intentional and reality-based that we're all working on this together,” a stakeholder said.

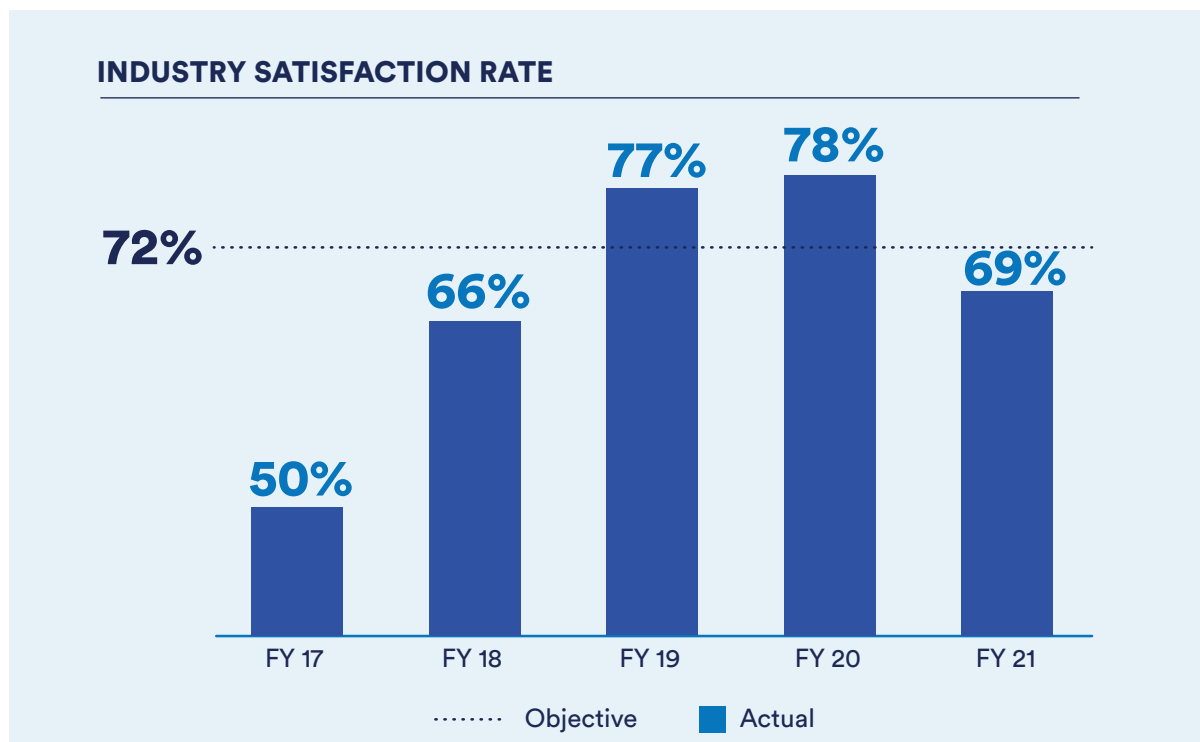
“Equitable access starts before you are on the water.”

Last and importantly, stakeholders noted that RBFF tends to pivot from project to project too quickly. It takes time for state agencies to implement the recommendations RBFF provides. While marketing research and resources are helpful, state agencies seldom have enough time or staff to meaningfully implement insights or campaigns before RBFF moves onto the next thing. This repeated point relates to how stakeholders make the most of RBFF's guidance and materials as well as their state and local resources.

METRIC

Maintain or achieve an industry (fishing and boating) satisfaction rate of 72% or greater as measured annually by a consistent industry satisfaction survey conducted by an independent third party.

The boating and fishing industries are important stakeholders for RBFF because of their direct connections to consumers. Thus, RBFF set a goal of maintaining a satisfaction rate of 72% or greater as measured by the annual industry satisfaction survey. Throughout the assessment period, satisfaction rates for industry partners have lagged behind those of state agencies. RBFF reported the lowest industry satisfaction rates in FY 2017 (50%) and FY 2018 (66%). Rates increased in FY 2019 (77%) and FY 2020 (78%), exceeding the baseline. However, the rate then dropped to 69% in FY 2021. Although 2022 was not technically in the assessment period, the downward trend continued, with a rate of 67% satisfaction. In its “2022 End of Year Report,” RBFF noted that it conducted extensive research to better understand the industry stakeholder audience and will use the findings to improve programs and communication.



METRIC

For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in referrals from TMF digital assets to state fishing license purchase pages from the FY 2016 baseline of 746,781. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

TMF is RBFF's flagship consumer brand. The campaign's goal is to inspire new interest in fishing and boating while equipping consumers with the practical information needed to get on the water. In 2017, TMF referrals to state fishing license pages exceeded the 2016 baseline, with 768,560 referrals. With the exception of 2019, referrals grew steadily between 2018-2021, reaching a high of 2 million referrals in 2021. Although 2022 is outside of the assessment period, this upward trend continued, with referrals reaching 2.3 million.

METRIC

For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in referrals from TMF digital assets to state boat registration pages from the FY 2016 baseline of 90,938. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

RBFF has seen a steady increase in referrals from TMF digital assets to boat registration pages. In 2017, referrals exceeded the 2016 baseline, with 98,938 referrals. While referrals slightly increased between 2018-2020, they boomed in 2021 with 303,030 referrals compared to 136,378 in 2020. This reflects the large influx of boaters during the pandemic. While referrals did not increase, RBFF was able to retain some referrals post-pandemic, with 214,745 in 2022.

METRIC:

For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in the referrals from TMF digital assets to DiscoverBoating.com from the FY 2016 baseline of 119,570. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

The NMMA manages the Discover Boating brand, which aims to help people get started in boating by sharing information on the benefits of boating, tips and advice on how to choose and buy a boat, information on boating activities and guidance on where to go boating. In 2017, referrals exceeded the 2016 baseline, with 123,030 referrals. Referrals grew steadily since then, with the highest rate of referrals in 2021 (220,347). Although 2022 is not in the assessment period, this upward trend continued, with 236,534 referrals after the pandemic boom.

METRIC

For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in total boat registrations sold through the RBFF Boat Registration Marketing Program from the FY 2016 baseline of 43,057. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

In 2017, boat registrations sold through the RBFF Boat Registration Marketing Program exceeded the 2016 baseline, with 51,379 registrations. Registrations dipped slightly in 2018 to 49,867 but increased slightly between 2019-2020. In 2021, registrations drastically fell to 30,000 despite a huge influx in people participation in boating during the pandemic. While registrations increased slightly to 39,278 in 2022, registrations remain below the 2016 baseline of 43,057.



METRIC

Annually raise nonfederal dollars and in-kind contributions (not including value added in purchased media buy) to equal 25% of federal dollars received.

RBFF successfully raised nonfederal dollars and in-kind contributions to equal well over 25% of federal dollars received each year during the assessment period. Below is the amount of nonfederal in-kind contributions that RBFF raised during the assessment period. While 2019 results exceeded the baseline, Spitfire noted the significant decrease from the previous year. In its “2019 End of Year Report,” RBFF noted that this is because the foundation introduced a new public service announcement in 2018, which saw high usage in the first year but then tapered off. RBFF noted that this is typical when it introduces a new creative execution to media.

Nonfederal dollars and in-kind contributions

FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
\$18,613,706	\$18,613,706	\$7,851,750	\$7,963,422	\$7,051,799

Findings and observations

Overall, satisfaction from RBFF’s primary stakeholders (state agencies and industry partners) has remained high — a strong indicator for success given the importance of these two audiences to RBFF’s mission. RBFF’s annual State Marketing Workshop and quarterly webinars for its state agency stakeholders remain crucial to information sharing and partnership development. RBFF surpassed its goal in state adoption of the R3 model, although state stakeholders report that some individuals serving as R3 coordinators are inexperienced and not working in the same state agencies where staff manage fishing, boating and conservation outreach. By 2022, 36 states and Washington, D.C., now have angler R3 plans. However, engagement of industry partners has been on the decline since 2020.

“[RBFF should] continue to get the word out through their state marketing workshops, webinars, email blasts. They’re pretty good at communicating this. When I see something that’s relevant to me, I can instantly grab onto it and I know who to reach out to if I need more information.”

Stakeholders seek a more substantial effort from RBFF to create materials and support outreach to effectively engage diverse communities, especially women and people of color. Stakeholders appreciate marketing research that helps them make the case (with leaders in state and local agencies) for a focus on specific segments of the population. They named the need for marketing materials that portray people of color and campaign efforts to reach Latino/a/e/s communities, such as *Vamos a Pescar*. While the data and some stakeholders noted the value of RBFF's existing efforts to engage Latino/a/e/s audiences and women, some stakeholders felt it was less meaningful. Stakeholders who represent communities of color noted that the investment in engaging their communities has not been substantial, especially in Black communities.

Stakeholder feedback on how quickly RBFF pivots from project to project marks the need for a new approach. Stakeholders require more time to act on RBFF research, implement RBFF campaigns and learn from grant-funded work. State and local partners also need more time to track outcomes, not just outputs. They note that tracking outcomes requires gathering on-the-ground anecdotal summaries at events and in-person programming, and this effort requires substantial staff time and capacity.

Also, stakeholders noted that additional guidance from RBFF about how to implement marketing research and campaigns at different capacity levels would be helpful. "Let's say I didn't receive a grant, but I have \$5,000 in my budget that could be used to engage female anglers. It would be helpful to know what the best use of those funds would be based on RBFF's expertise," explained one stakeholder. Overall, stakeholders are interested in more guidance on how to maximize the resources that RBFF already provides.

Recommendations



RECOMMENDATION 6

RBFF should invest in forging meaningful and long-term partnerships with racially diverse communities to play leadership roles and produce materials and campaigns, host events and address strategic outreach. This effort can include building a more racially diverse board, identifying effective outreach managed by leaders of color to amplify or learn from their efforts, and ensuring that diverse communities are authentically part of materials and events — including images of diverse communities and event/outreach leaders from the communities RBFF must reach to increase the number of anglers and boaters. Recommendations included for Question 1 apply here.



RECOMMENDATION 7

RBFF should increase its direct investment in local activities to remove barriers for first-time anglers and boaters from diverse communities. This type of investment can look like equipment loan programs or utilizing RBFF influence to partner with states and industry to encourage investment in more ramps and fishing piers. For example, RBFF can identify 10 communities committed to better reaching young families in the Black community and create pilot programs to allocate resources (similar to the First Catch Centers) for equipment, transportation and infrastructure in those communities. After evaluating those efforts, RBFF may choose to continue and expand the approach, and RBFF can share analysis of this approach with local partners who need to make the case for spending dollars in this way — or to secure funding for such projects.



RECOMMENDATION 8

RBFF should provide additional time for stakeholders to implement its products. This could include updating grant cycles to last two years (aligning with state and local government fiscal years) and conducting more regular follow-up to support state agencies with implementation of RBFF’s marketing research and materials. Spitfire recommends allowing a two-year period, at a minimum, for local implementation of any campaign. This will allow time for engagement with state/local leadership required to kick off the campaign, implementation by education/outreach leaders at the local level, shared insights at the halfway mark, RBFF recommendations for course-corrections at the halfway mark and implementation benefiting from the course-corrections identified. RBFF can evaluate outcomes from this work by reviewing adjustments made, noting implementation changes from one year to the next, and securing feedback from education/outreach leaders about their ability to effectively implement the campaign and gather audience outcomes.



RECOMMENDATION 9

RBFF should provide its state partners with tips on how to make the most of their existing marketing budget based on the Foundation’s research. State agencies are eager for guidance on how to maximize their existing resources and shared that they often have limited budget for education and outreach and want to spend it in the way that’s most likely to be effective. RBFF can provide guidance on recommended booster activities to reach specific audiences with specific budgets and evaluate how partners have implemented those boosters to more effectively reach and engage audiences.



RECOMMENDATION 10

RBFF should develop an improved method of collection and analysis of available local data to track outcomes of its outreach efforts in local communities. During the assessment period, metrics for measuring RBFF’s performance became more focused on outcomes vs. outputs (e.g., R3 program implementation vs. number of fishing licenses purchased). Spitfire

sees additional opportunity for RBFF to track outcomes via more intentional partnerships with local entities, especially nonprofits. While national data does not reflect the “end user,” local data can. RBFF should prioritize more effectively and efficiently collecting data from its local partners on a regular basis. Data collected by states through the first-catch mobile trailers is a good place to start, which is already underway.

As part of this effort, RBFF could increase its direct local support via pilot programs like FCC that not only support recruitment efforts but also generate meaningful outcomes data. Adding these local efforts will enable RBFF and its partners to better measure behavior and fill in the gaps in data that is gathered from national campaigns.



3

QUESTION 3

Has RBFF increased the public's knowledge of boating and fishing techniques and its awareness of boating and fishing opportunities?

Background

TakeMeFishing.org and VamosAPescar.org are the two main channels that RBFF uses to increase the public's knowledge of boating and fishing techniques and its awareness of boating and fishing opportunities. RBFF hopes these two properties become the go-to-source for anglers to learn, plan and equip themselves for a day on the water.

Assessment

RBFF reports that the original metrics to respond to this question focused on measuring outputs tied to the TakeMeFishing.org website and RBFF's other digital assets (social media, YouTube channel, etc.). However, in 2017, the Council recommended that RBFF consider more outcome-based metrics, which led the Foundation to eliminate most of the website and digital metrics outlined in the previous assessment. Because TakeMeFishing.org remains a central portal to information that facilitates participation and educates anglers and boaters about fishing techniques and fishing and boating opportunities, RBFF (as approved by SFBPC in the 2017) decided it was important to continue to measure visits to TakeMeFishing.org but focus on organic traffic. Given this, RBFF now uses six consensus metrics to track whether it successfully increased the public's knowledge of boating and fishing techniques and its awareness of boating and fishing opportunities.

METRIC

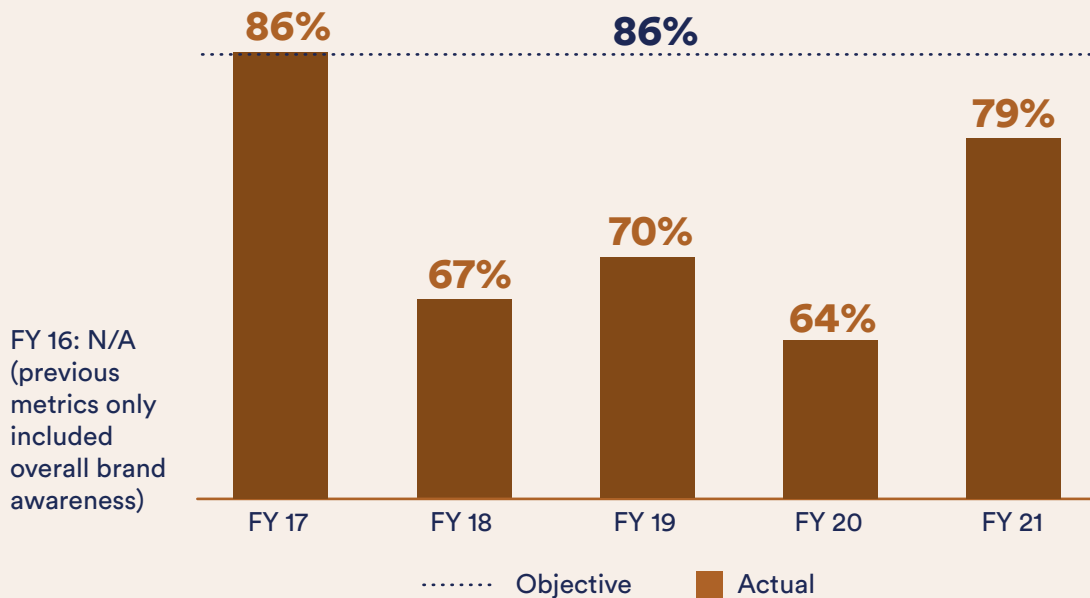
Maintain a favorable variance in fishing and boating intentions among target audiences exposed vs. those not exposed to RBFF campaigns and who are not currently engaged in these activities, as measured by annual campaign effectiveness studies.

As noted, this metric was adapted from the previous assessment to focus on measuring RBFF's performance based on activities in which it exercises direct control or influence. The metric focuses specifically on the audience's intention to participate in fishing or boating. RBFF reports that this is a commonly used and accepted metric among marketing professionals as a measure to assess effectiveness of marketing and advertising campaigns. In addition to this metric, RBFF regularly studies the effectiveness of its campaigns more expansively, as outlined in the yearly campaign effectiveness reports, and uses those findings to inform future campaign development and implementation.

RBFF set a baseline variance of 86% of target audiences exposed to its campaigns to maintain a favorable intent to fish. The Foundation set this baseline based on the variance from 2017, when the new metric was outlined. Fishing and boating intentions did not reach or exceed the baseline during the assessment period.



VARIANCE IN FISHING AND BOATING INTENTIONS



In its end-of-year reports during the assessment period, RBFF reported that brand awareness and intent to fish from a boat did not meet the intended baseline. In these end-of-year reports, RBFF share additional factors that likely affected its ability to meet this baseline, such as changes in creative/campaign development and shifts in how they used paid media. These factors complicate the analysis of quantitative data. Acting on recommendations focused on sustaining campaigns/creative over longer time periods and securing additional local data should make this easier to assess in the future.

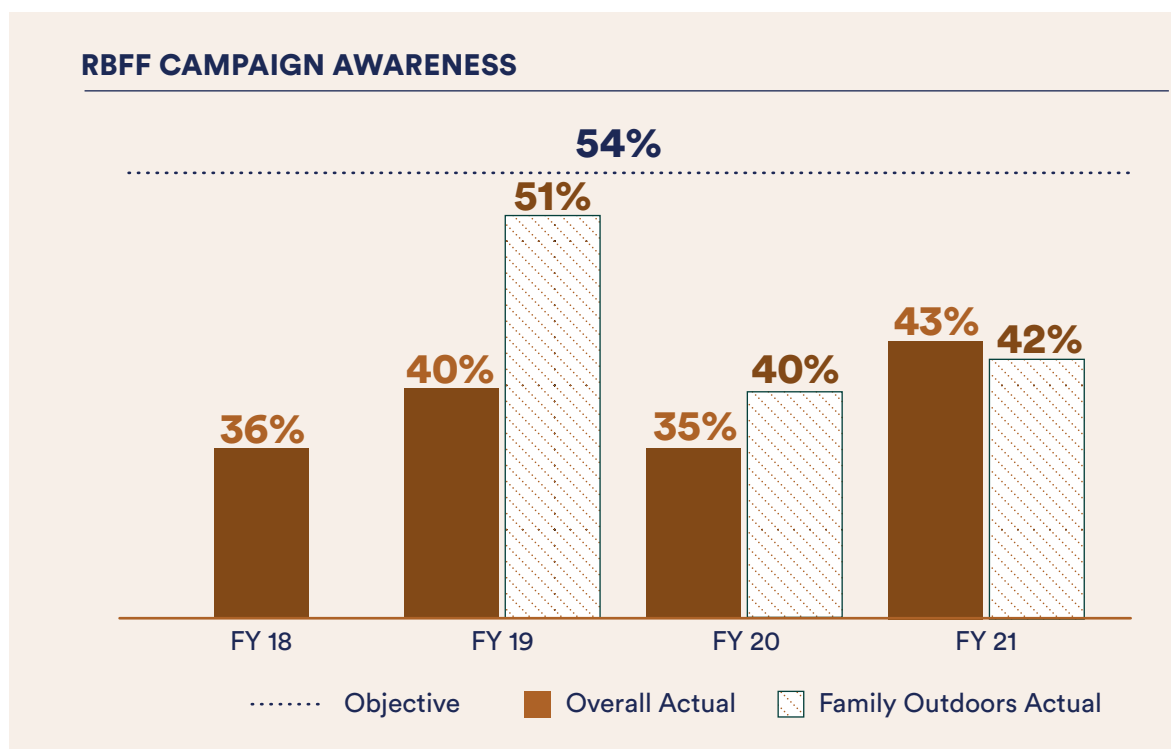
METRIC

Maintain or grow awareness of RBFF campaigns among target audiences, as measured by annual campaign effectiveness studies.

Updated in 2017, this metric is designed to measure overall awareness of RBFF campaigns among target audiences. RBFF notes that measuring awareness of its campaigns at a broad level is important because awareness is a necessary first step toward influencing participation.

RBFF set a baseline of 54% (weighted sample) to measure progress against this consensus metric based on 2016 awareness rates. RBFF did not meet or exceed this baseline during the assessment period for audiences overall.

It is worth noting that while brand recognition was high among Latino/a/e/s audiences during the assessment period, the 2022 campaign effectiveness report noted that only 21% of Latino/a/e/s individuals solely recalled the Vamos a Pescar campaign name compared to the 28% who could recall the TMF campaign name.



RBFF’s priority audience, Family Outdoors, saw a slightly higher awareness rate than audiences overall in FY 2019 and FY 2020 but still did not meet or surpass the baseline.

Similar to the previous metric, RBFF’s end-of-year reports during the assessment period show that brand awareness and intent to fish from a boat did not meet the baseline goal of 54% because of changes in creative development, shifts in sample audience and shifts in the paid media mix (e.g., eliminating print advertising in 2018).



METRIC

Achieve an annual increase in aggregate organic traffic (i.e., nonpaid traffic from search engines), as defined and measured by Google Analytics, to TakeMeFishing.org using RBFF fiscal year 2017 as the baseline.

Organic traffic to TakeMeFishing.org has fluctuated throughout the assessment period. The 2017 baseline for organic traffic is 2.4 million. Overall, RBFF only exceeded the 2017 organic traffic baseline of 2.4 million once during the assessment period in 2021. RBFF reports that 2017 was a standout year for organic traffic driven by the launch of a brand new TakeMeFishing.org, which Google rewarded with a huge increase in organic traffic. Organic traffic fell in 2018, with just over 2 million sessions. This downward trend continued in 2019, with 1.4 million sessions. RBFF reports this was due to a cyberattack on TakeMeFishing.org that increased negative backlinks and lowered the property's organic ranking and overall authority. In 2020, organic traffic saw a slight uptick with 1.5 million sessions but did not exceed the 2017 baseline. Organic traffic saw a big boom in 2021, with 3.5 million sessions and well exceeding the 2017 baseline. While 2022 is not

technically in the assessment period, it is worth noting that while organic traffic dipped slightly (down to 3.2 million), RBFF was able to maintain a significant portion of the traffic that came during the pandemic boom.

METRIC

For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in referrals from TMF digital assets to state fishing license purchase pages from the FY 2016 baseline of 746,781. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

In 2017, TMF referrals to state fishing license pages exceeded the 2016 baseline, with 768,560 referrals. With the exception of 2019, referrals grew steadily between 2018-2021, reaching a high of 2 million referrals in 2021. Although 2022 is outside of the assessment period, this upward trend continued, with referrals reaching 2.3 million.

METRIC

For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in referrals from TMF digital assets to state boat registration pages from the FY 2016 baseline of 90,938. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

RBFF has seen a steady increase in referrals from TMF digital assets to boat registration pages. In 2017, referrals exceeded the 2016 baseline, with 98,938 referrals. While referrals slightly increased between 2018-2020, they boomed in 2021 with 303,030 referrals compared to 136,378 in 2020. This reflects the large influx of boaters during the pandemic. Although 2022 is not in the assessment period, it is worth noting that while referrals did not increase, RBFF was able to retain some referrals post-pandemic, with 214,745 in 2022.

METRIC

For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in the referrals from TMF digital assets to DiscoverBoating.com from the FY 2016 baseline of 119,570. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

As noted above, in 2017, referrals exceeded the 2016 baseline, with 123,030 referrals. Referrals grew steadily since then, with the highest rate of referrals in 2021 (220,347). Although 2022 is not in the assessment period, this upward trend continued, with 236,534 referrals after the pandemic boom.



Findings and observations

Overall, RBFF did not meet or exceed the baseline for many of the consensus metrics used to assess this question. RBFF reports that brand awareness and intent to fish from a boat did not meet the baseline due to changes in creative development, shifts in sample audience, and shifts in media mix (e.g., eliminating print advertising in 2018). However, Spitfire commends RBFF on successfully increasing referrals to both fishing license and boating registration pages. Spitfire notes this reflects that RBFF had a positive effect on fishing and boating.

Organic traffic to TakeMeFishing.org was a highlight. In 2020, RBFF experienced a boom of organic traffic due to the pandemic. RBFF was able to maintain this momentum, and the traffic increased in 2021, with 3.5 million sessions and well exceeding the 2017 baseline.

It is important to note that stakeholders find RBFF's resources to increase the public's knowledge of fishing and boating incredibly useful, especially when those resources match the audiences stakeholders are trying to reach. However, both at the RBFF and stakeholder levels, there is a need to increase staff diversity and cultural competency to effectively implement RBFF's recommendations and materials for reaching diverse communities.

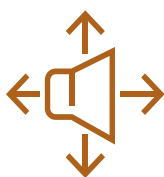
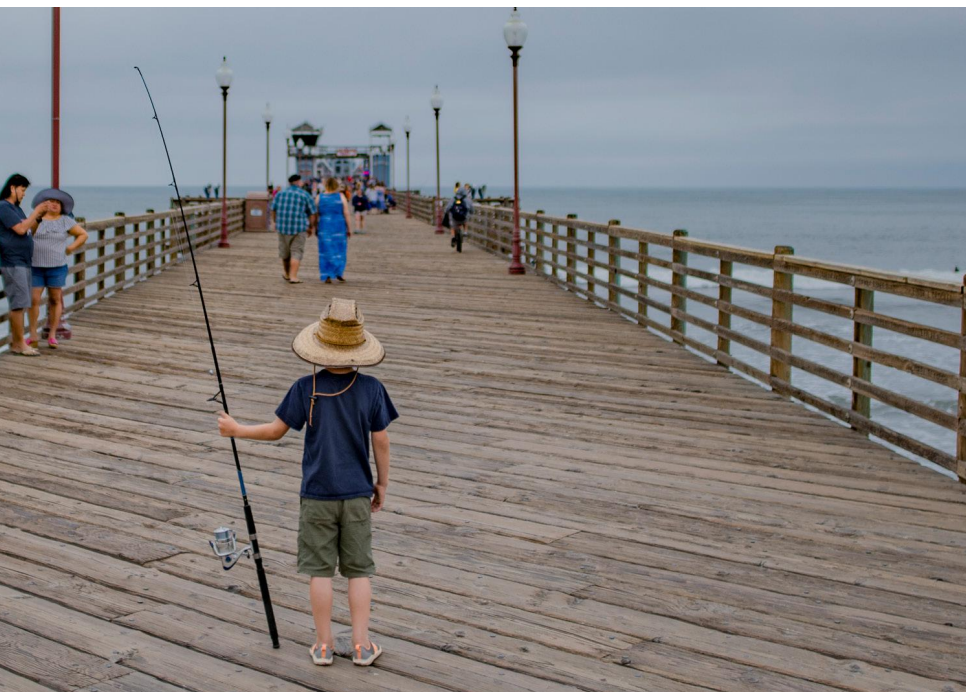


Recommendations



RECOMMENDATION 11

RBFF should partner with industry to improve communications and data collection at the point-of-sale. Many individuals in priority audience groups seek information as consumers at places where they purchase fishing and boating gear. Individuals in these settings are prepared to engage in behaviors RBFF encourages (boating and fishing). Communications in/around the point of sale can reinforce these decisions and encourage responsibility associated with these behaviors. That connection point is where RBFF and its industry partners can create clear, meaningful connections between boating/fishing and conservation. And those physical or virtual points of sale are places where RBFF may be able to work with industry partners to launch short surveys capturing behavioral data that provides greater insight into outcomes. Spitfire recommends identifying at least one industry partner where RBFF can focus on improved point-of-sale communications detailing specific behaviors, connecting content to conservation and communicating in both English and Spanish.



RECOMMENDATION 12

RBFF should bring back and update past public service announcements to support partners' outreach efforts. Customizable PSAs provide valuable information, and state and local partners are better able to use them if they can connect their agencies' names and details to the content. Spitfire recommends this type of customization for all future campaigns, and ones that RBFF is updating, to increase usage of these campaigns and better connect them to local efforts.



RECOMMENDATION 13

RBFF can exercise its capacity-building expertise by training and coaching local partners on the basics of communication and marketing strategy. Partners benefit from RBFF's ability to establish effective strategies and national campaigns for the partners to implement at state and local levels. RBFF should clearly share plans and templates that partners can use to locally implement national efforts — and to integrate their local priorities into these strategic efforts. Spitfire recommends including and expanding this capacity building at RBFF's national marketing workshops.

4

QUESTION 4

How has RBFF enhanced the public's understanding of aquatic resources?

Background

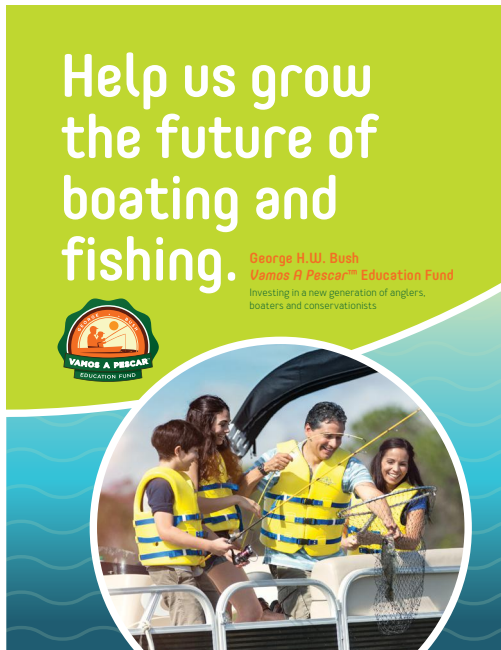
RBFF has many programs and initiatives that aim to educate its priority audiences about recreational fishing and boating and how both connect to conservation efforts. Although the SFBPC created metrics to consistently track the impact of its products and initiatives on conservation efforts (as outlined under Question 5), the Foundation has not identified an explicit way to measure its impact on the public's understanding of aquatic resources. The previous assessment noted this gap and recommended the following:

“RBFF, AFWA, FWS, and SFBPC should work together to establish specific goals and objectives and a process for rigorously evaluating and reporting on RBFF's effectiveness at enhancing the public's understanding of aquatic resources and sustained participation in boating and angling. (For example, how will RBFF evaluate the effectiveness of the Disney and Hispanic campaigns and measure success?)”

During the period covered by this assessment, this recommendation was not implemented. Spitfire recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic and significant periods of time during which Council operations were suspended made it challenging for the four entities identified to implement this recommendation. Spitfire believes this recommendation remains relevant and includes it in recommendations going forward. Spitfire reviewed RBFF's existing educational campaigns and related available metrics in an attempt to answer this question.

Assessment

During the assessment period, RBFF led numerous programs and initiatives to educate consumers about the joys of fishing and boating. Following is a snapshot of the key programs and initiatives that reflect these efforts.



Vamos a Pescar

In 2014, RBFF launched Vamos a Pescar as a pilot program in Texas and Florida to increase participation in recreational fishing and boating among Latino/a/e/s. The campaign included the launch of VamosAPescar.org, a Spanish-language website; digital advertising; search engine marketing; and radio marketing that prioritizes family-oriented outdoor lovers who are seeking new activities to do together outdoors.

In 2015, RBFF announced the formation of the George H.W. Bush Vamos A Pescar Education Fund to “increase awareness and participation in fishing and boating through grassroots programs, classes and on-the-water activities held in high-density Latino communities.”

Throughout the assessment period, this campaign continued to be one of the key ways that RBFF engages and educates its priority audience, active social families, which skew Latino/a/e/s. Spitfire reviewed the Vamos A Pescar website and materials in Spanish. Although most of the Vamos a Pescar website is a Spanish-language site, some resources are only available in English, such as the “Find Your Best Self on the Water” section. Imagery on the website portrays people of color, but it is clear that they are stock images rather than photos of authentic and active engagement of people from Latino/a/e/s communities. Similarly, the videos produced for Vamos a Pescar did not include inclusive imagery beyond the main spokesperson. The assessment noted the most effective materials were shared via the campaign’s social media channels, specifically Instagram. However, the campaign’s Instagram account has not been active since June 2022.



Making Waves Initiative

In 2018, RBFF launched Making Waves, an initiative “designed to empower women and girls to cast off labels and rock the boat — with fishing pole in hand.” The initiative seeks to promote women’s empowerment on the water by removing perceived barriers to recreational fishing, increasing representation of women fishing, and introducing a series of fishing workshops specifically designed for women and girls.

Data showed that after seeing any of the #MakingWaves video advertisements, well over half of women indicate that they are “much more” or “somewhat more” likely to fish in the next 12 months. The proportion of women indicating their intention to fish is highest after seeing the “Women Making Waves!” video ad (60% net), with an equal proportion self-reporting they are “much more” (30%) and “somewhat more” likely (30%). The Making Waves campaign video got over 800,000 views on YouTube. Although the rate of women intending to fish in the next year is very similar after seeing both the 15- and 30-second versions of the “Womens Initiative Mantra” video (57% and 56%, respectively), intense motivation to fish is stronger for views of the long version more than the short version (29% vs. 24%, respectively).

First Catch Centers

As noted in the [“Actional Strategies for Angler Recruitment, Retention Reactivation Final Report”](#) in 2019, RBFF recognizes the importance of communicating the relevance of fishing to urban, multicultural audiences. RBFF notes that “urban fishing programs are vital as they bring the fishing experience directly to growing populations of Americans and increase access to fishing opportunities to minorities living in metropolitan areas.” Generally, people of color living in urban areas are far less likely to become anglers given the barriers to getting started. RBFF, in partnership with the USFWS Refuges and Hatcheries, launched a pilot program in 2018 to fill this gap called Take Me Fishing FCC.

The goal of this program is to “provide hands-on opportunities where kids and families can learn basic fishing and boating skills along with conservation ethics.” As noted on the FCC webpage on [TakeMeFishing.org](#), the FCC mobile trailers are equipped with everything needed for fishing, including rods, reels, nets, coolers, rod hacks, hooks, bobbers and more to provide an experiential opportunity for participants to increase their awareness, skill and knowledge about fishing and/or boating. Local partners are expected to conduct a minimum of eight programs annually with an emphasis on urban areas and underserved populations.



FCC operated as a pilot program between 2018-2022, thus there has not been a specific reporting requirement. However, RBFF reports that as of 2023, there are 29 FCC trailers in operation with 25 participating states, plus Washington, D.C. The stakeholders Spitfire spoke to who participated in the campaign spoke highly of it. “Our recent campaign which used the first catch trailer centers was great since this was something tangible over time. It’s a physical product that won’t disappear like a concept marketing scheme. In my opinion these brick and mortar attempts are the most effective.” One stakeholder did note that while they’d love to receive a trailer, they do not have the personnel to be able to adequately staff it.

Disney partnership

Starting in 2013, RBFF launched a partnership with Walt Disney World Resorts and Disney Media Networks to encourage children and families to connect with nature through boating and fishing. The partnership includes in-person fishing opportunities at Walt Disney Resorts as well as media buys and sponsorship placements across Disney Media Networks.

Spitfire reviewed the 2021 Media Delivery and Insights report for insights into this partnership during the assessment period. The Take Me Fishing Campaign in 2021 included linear TV ads, digital video ads and bonus material like public service announcements on Freeform, FX and National Geographic. The most creative integration included a partnership with “Holey Moley,” an American sports reality competition TV series. ABC created a custom themed putting hole for TakeMeFishing.org. The fishing hole was featured visually in seven episodes as well as in key art, and linear promotional content on ABC and Hulu. The Insights report states that the “Holy Moley” integrations drove significant lifts in key brand metrics. Additionally, the Take Me Fishing campaign on linear and digital ads “drove significant lifts in brand awareness, likelihood to recommend as well as key brand attributes.”

The Disney partnership represents an opportunity to raise awareness about fishing and boating among a vast audience; however, it is hard to track outcomes beyond intention via this type of outreach campaign. Spitfire notes that partnerships with Disney are likely most powerful when tailored to reach audiences beyond the “traditional angler,” like young people of color, women and people of color.



Findings and observations

Overall, *Vamos a Pescar*, “*Making Waves*,” FCC and Disney partnerships are positive examples of RBFF’s efforts to enhance the public’s understanding of aquatic resources. While it is not possible to prove causation, it is likely that these efforts have supported an increase in the number of anglers and boaters among priority audiences (Latino/a/e/s and women). Qualitative insights also reveal that, in addition to its national campaign efforts, RBFF performs well on the local level when efforts fit within local priorities and resources for implementation. It also performs well when campaigns authentically meet audiences where they are to help overcome barriers to fishing and boating. Spitfire notes this as an area for growth.

There is a limitation to objective evaluation of significant changes during the assessment period, given that the consensus measures and metrics do not provide specific goals, objectives or criteria for developing, implementing and evaluating these initiatives — including whether they enhanced the public’s understanding of aquatic resources.

As with the last assessment report, this assessment recommends that RBFF develop goals, objectives and criteria and rigorously evaluate current and future initiatives based on specific metrics. This will help future assessment teams, the Council, USFWS and other stakeholders to objectively and fairly evaluate the effectiveness of programs and will assist RBFF in its future decisions regarding major programming changes.

Recommendation



RECOMMENDATION 14

RBFF, AFWA, USFWS and SFBPC should work together to establish specific goals and objectives and a process for rigorously evaluating and reporting on RBFF’s effectiveness at enhancing the public’s understanding of aquatic resources and sustained participation in boating and angling. (For example, how will RBFF evaluate the effectiveness of the Disney and Latino/a/e/s campaigns and measure success against this assessment question?)



5

QUESTION 5

Have RBFF products and activities increased conservation and responsible use of aquatic resources by boaters and anglers?

Background

Promoting conservation of aquatic resources is core to RBFF's mission because it recognizes that there will be no fish or waterways for anglers to enjoy if the public does not protect these resources. RBFF works to help connect these dots for priority audiences between buying a fishing license and keeping a boat clean, among other practices, to conservation. The main ways in which RBFF does this is through conservation messaging on the TakeMeFishing.org and VamosAPescar.org websites. In recent years, it has also conducted marketing research to test the effectiveness of conservation messaging and shared this research with state partners to help inform state efforts and marketing campaigns.

Assessment

As of 2017, RBFF uses three consensus metrics to assess whether its products and activities increase conservation and responsible use of aquatic resources by boaters and anglers.

METRIC

Maintain awareness of the connection between licensing and local conservation by anglers and boaters, as established every three years by the Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports and RBFF Conservation Study using the 2015 study as the baseline awareness level (75%).

RBFF conducts its conservation study every three years. The only available data during the assessment period is from the 2018 study. The study showed conservation awareness is at approximately the same level (from 75% to 76%) in the last time period measured. Three-quarters of respondents were aware of the connection between licensing and conservation. However, conservation is not a clear driver for people fishing. Only 15% of people say they fish because it is a good way to promote conservation.

Most respondents are aware that they need a license to fish and have purchased one in the past, but conservation is not a main driver of licensing purchase. Only 40% of respondents say it's the reason for their purchase.

More experienced, committed anglers respond to conservation messaging and state a desire to have deeper knowledge of conservation. RBFF has the opportunity to deepen connections with these anglers, activate some as peer messengers within their communities and break down conservation content into easy-to-consume bites for beginner/intermediate anglers.

Over the last few years, RBFF has expanded conservation content on its website and conducted marketing research to learn which messages about conservation are most effective, but stakeholders still seek greater, more intentional connections to conservation content in plans and resources. One stakeholder example included sharing more stories about wildlife stewardship and using messages to make clearer connections between fishing and boating fees and local conservation achievements.



An example of an RBFF conservation initiative that has yielded positive results is its Telepathy Public Service Announcement campaign, which delivered messaging on the direct link between fishing license purchases and conservation to hundreds of TV stations across the country, delivering millions of impressions and \$27 million in in-kind media. These output measures demonstrate an opportunity for RBFF to dig deeper into audience attitudes and behaviors.

RBFF will release the next conservation study in 2023.

Stakeholders said that ideally individuals will look at fishing, conservation and waterways as one unit; however, they are often interacting with those who love to fish but don't know much about protecting the environment and vice versa. This presents a challenge due to having two distinctly different target audiences where each requires different goals to achieve the same results.

“Even in the sporting community, there’s a myth that we need to break down. They think fishing fees go into a black hole of the state budget, and not back to the bureau of natural resources. This is totally false. 100% of fees go back into natural resources.”

METRIC

Achieve an annual increase in aggregate unique page views to the TakeMeFishing.org pages featuring prominent conservation messaging, using RBFF FY 2017 as the baseline. (Prominent conservation messaging pages include “Get a License” and “Register a Boat” and each state-specific license and registration page.)

Until a website redesign in early 2016, the TakeMeFishing.org website had distinct conservation pages, and the original metrics measured visitation to these pages. RBFF reports that these pages were viewed at dramatically lower rates than other sections of the website. When RBFF redesigned TakeMeFishing.org in 2017, it moved to integrate conservation information and messaging throughout the website. Because conservation content was dispersed through the website, RBFF recommended updating this metric to focus on pages that have more conservation-related content.

RBFF has successfully achieved an increase in aggregate unique page views to TakeMeFishing.org pages featuring prominent conservation messaging. Between 2017-2019, page views saw a steady increase, growing from around 1.5 million to nearly 2 million in 2019. The most drastic increase came between 2020-2021 with unique page views increasing to 2.6 million in 2020 and 4.9 million in 2021. This drastic increase is likely due to the pandemic boom in people interested in fishing and boating as a safe outdoor activity. Despite 2022 not being in the assessment period, there was a sharp increase between 2021-2022, with 6.1 million unique page views to pages featuring prominent conservation messaging. This means RBFF was able to not only retain but significantly grow traffic to these pages following the influx of new audiences during the pandemic. To Spitfire, this shows that RBFF’s decision to integrate conservation messaging across the website instead of on conservation-specific pages paid off.

METRIC

Achieve an annual increase in aggregate unique page views to the fishing safety and boating safety sections of TakeMeFishing.org using RBFF FY 2017 as the baseline.

As part of the TakeMeFishing.org website redesign in 2017, RBFF retained pages devoted to boating safety. Similar to the previous assessment, this metric measures views of these pages, but unlike the previous assessment, it does not measure a specific annual percentage increase in page views.

RBFF saw a steady increase in unique page views to fishing safety and boating safety sections of TakeMeFishing.org, exceeding the 2017 baseline (1.5 million) year over year. However, the increase of unique page views was incremental and did not see a large influx during the pandemic despite a large influx of views on other pages on the TakeMeFishing.org website.

Boating safety unique page views

FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
171,627	203,147	217,802	255,648

This could be because this information exists on boating-specific websites, like DiscoverBoating.com, so RBFF is less likely to be the go-to resource for this information.

Findings and observations

Overall, conservation awareness is at approximately the same level (from 75% to 76%) as the last time period measured. Conservation remains a higher priority for experienced anglers than for first-time fishing audiences. RBFF has the opportunity to increase awareness of this connection by targeting beginner and intermediate anglers and tapping advanced anglers as ambassadors for the brand.

The assessment recognizes the benefit of integrating conservation messaging into overall content, instead of segregating the content to its own page. This shift increased the number of people who see conservation messaging on the website. Stakeholders noted the desire for individuals to look at fishing, conservation and waterways as one unit; however, they are constantly interacting with those who love to fish but are not aware of the environmental components and vice versa. It is important to note the challenge of engaging the same audiences with different goals.

Similarly, boating safety resources yielded positive results with traffic and engagement. It is important to note that even with these changes, the number of visits to safety and conservation pages pales in comparison to the overall number of visitors to TakeMeFishing.org. Audiences visiting RBFF's resources do not primarily visit the websites for safety or conservation messaging, but the website remains an important channel for connecting conservation and fishing and boating safety. Although the current resources are supportive, stakeholders seek more specific, intentional connections to conservation content in RBFF's plans, resources and campaigns.



RECOMMENDATION 15

RBFF should invest more in conservation resources, plans and campaigns.

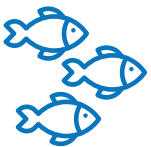
This includes but is not limited to top-line messaging, principles to engage with endangered and invasive species, clean water protection, boat ramp locations and safe waste disposal. Spitfire recommends surveying partners to see which of these needs is greatest over the next several years to focus on a central message and potentially lead to the development of a conservation campaign focused on behaviors and one of these sites/on one of these topics.



RECOMMENDATION 16

RBFF should prioritize messages that validate audience actions to effectively keep them engaged on an issue.

Many individuals in RBFF's priority audience groups have taken an action by purchasing a fishing license or registering a boat, and fees from those actions contribute to local conservation efforts. Messages — in a broad campaign or in a social media toolkit — can validate audience behaviors, encourage their ongoing engagement, and better connect their actions to conservation by clearly connecting license and registration fees to conservation efforts and outcomes that people can see where they live, work and play. Spitfire recommends providing updated materials — especially highly visual website and social media materials — that partners can use to reinvigorate these initial audience behaviors and effectively signal all are welcome by better demonstrating connections with women, people of color and Spanish-language audiences.



RECOMMENDATION 17

Conservation is a broad topic, and RBFF can create smaller entry points into conservation by focusing on specific habitats or species — and guiding partners to do the same.

Campaigns and content can allow for customization (local partners inserting the name of a fish, other animal, lake or other environment) to make a deeper connection between the audience member and a conservation effort. RBFF can create template materials for local partners to complete and convey “Funds from your fishing license are protecting [insert species or habitat]!” Template materials ease production burdens for partners, and perhaps more importantly, the approach models effective communication strategy. Spitfire recommends creating a small suite of template materials that partners can download for social media posts, website content and signage.



Appendices

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
Between the
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
the
Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council
the
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
and the
Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (SFBPC), the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), and the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF).

I. Authorities

The Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act of 1998 (the Act), Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 U.S.C 4601, and the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), 5 U.S.C. App.1.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this MOU is to establish a framework for a collaborative effort to implement the National Outreach and Communications Program (Program), pursuant to the Act and Presidential Order 12962, with the goal of increasing public participation in recreational fishing and boating activities and increasing public awareness for aquatic resource conservation. Under the Act, the Secretary of the Interior is charged with developing and implementing, in cooperation and consultation with the SFBPC, a national plan for outreach and communications. RBFF was established in October 1998 to implement the Program and a Strategic Plan was developed and approved by the Secretary on February 23, 1999. The Program is designed to improve communications with anglers, boaters, and the general public regarding angling and boating opportunities, to reduce barriers to participation in these activities, to advance adoption of sound fishing and boating practices, to promote conservation and the responsible use of the Nation's aquatic resources, and to further safety in fishing and boating.

III. Statement of Principles

The Service and its aforementioned partners mutually benefit from a strong constituency of recreational anglers and boaters.

Citizens who participate in recreational fishing and boating activities tend to place a higher value on aquatic resources. They are also more likely to develop a personal conservation ethic and to support fish and wildlife conservation efforts, including those of state and Federal resource agencies. Because of this increased awareness of the need for conserving aquatic resources, the

Service and State resource agencies are better able to accomplish their missions for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

Recreational anglers and boaters help fund state and Federal conservation efforts benefitting aquatic resources through excise taxes on angling equipment and motorboat fuels. These funds are collected and then apportioned to the states and territories under the Sport Fish Restoration Program. A strong partnership of boaters, anglers, industry, and conservation groups supports the Sport Fish Restoration Program and the state-managed aquatic resource conservation program it funds.

Outreach and communications are tools for maintaining an active constituency investing in these natural resource conservation efforts. The Program is designed to complement ongoing outreach, communication and conservation work by the signatories.

IV. Undertakings of the Agreement Participants

The Service, under the authority of the Act, provides management connectivity between signatories, the various Federal agency programs, and the grant recipient (grantee) selected that are necessary to implement the Program. The Service's Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program manages and coordinates the administration of the discretionary grant, selects processes necessary to determine the grantee, and liaisons with the grantee who implements the Program. In addition, the Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program provides a detailed accounting of the program and its activities to the Secretary for annual publication in the Federal Register; manages and coordinates communication with the signatories, partners, and stakeholders; and continuously seeks opportunities to expand awareness and communications of this program to the American public.

The Program is funded by a discretionary grant awarded through a competitive grant process and in 2013 RBFF was awarded a five-year grant to implement the Program.

RBFF contributes professional expertise and experience necessary to implement the Program. The staff is responsible for daily operations of the Program; financial management/accounting; sub-grant and contract administration; annual work plan development; and annual budgeting. Per the RBFF Board Chairman, the President/CEO of RBFF is the primary point of contact for the Program.

The SFBPC will monitor the progress of the Program, will evaluate effectiveness of the program by communicating regularly with its stakeholders and will regularly report findings to the Secretary and the signatories of this agreement. The Program plan shall be reviewed periodically by the SFBPC but not less frequently than once every three years. In accordance with the FACA, the Service provides staff assistance to the SFBPC, a federally chartered advisory committee. The Service's Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program coordinates all interactions necessary to fulfill the advisory responsibilities of the SFBPC under the Act. SFBPC, under the authority of the Act and the Federal Advisory Committee Act, provides advice to, consults and collaborates with the Secretary of the Interior, through the Director of the Service. Consultation, collaboration, and advice will be

provided to the Secretary in order to oversee implementation of the Program in a manner to satisfy the needs of the Secretary's recreational fishing and boating constituency. The SFBPC will facilitate the exchange of information and ideas between the Secretary and the SFBPC's mutual constituents. The SFBPC Chairman is the primary point of contact for the Program.

AFWA will serve as the liaison with the States and the signatories of this agreement. AFWA will assist in the facilitation and coordination of State Outreach Plans with the Program required under the Act. AFWA's Executive Director is the primary point of contact for this Program.

V. Conflict of Interest Provisions for Service Participation

To avoid the possibility of an actual or apparent violation of ethics laws and rules, when official time is used for service as a member of the Board of Directors for the RBFF, the following will apply:

- a. Federal employees may not represent anyone other than the United States before an agency or court in connection with a particular matter in which the United States is a party or has a direct or substantial interest (18 U.S.C. section 205).
- b. Unless waived under applicable procedures, Federal employees are required to refrain from working on particular matters as a Government employee when the employee is serving as an officer in a private organization and the organization in which he is serving has a financial interest in those Government matters (18 U.S. C section 208).
- c. If a Federal employee's participation in a project undertaken in conjunction with a private organization was done as part of his official duties, the employee is prohibited from sharing in any compensation by the dual compensation provisions of the law (18 U.S.C. section 209).
- d. Federal employees are prohibited from using official time and Government equipment to lobby on any issue pending before the Congress (18 U.S.C. section 1913; see also the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriation Act for Fiscal Year 1999, Public Law 105-277, Division A Title III, Section 303).
- e. Federal employees are prohibited from controlling or assuming any measure of practical responsibility for the fund raising activities of private individuals or organizations (E.O. 12731); see also 5 C.F.R. § 2635.808.

Federal employees must consult their agency Ethics Office and Solicitors Office if they have any questions about the scope of the restrictions.

VI. Period and Terms of Agreement

This MOU will be in effect from the date of execution until March 31, 2018. Authorized officials of the Service, SFBPC, or AFWA may terminate this Agreement, or any renewals, within 60-days written notification to the parties, or as otherwise required by law.

Transfers of funds, contracts, or other assistance will be executed in separate written instruments in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

The parties may revise this MOU as necessary through the issuance of a written amendment signed and dated by authorized officials.

The parties shall comply with all federal laws pertaining to discrimination. These laws include but are not limited to: Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964, (42 U.S.C. 20000d-1), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794); the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*); and applicable regulatory requirements to the end that no person in the United States, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, disability or age, will be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted within the scope of this agreement.

The relationship between the Service and the other participants under this agreement is intended to enhance service to the American public through more efficient application of Service programs. All actions will be directed toward attainment of that mutually beneficial goal.

Nothing in this MOU may be construed to obligate the Service, Department of Interior, or the United States to any current or future expenditure of resources in advance of the availability of appropriations from Congress.

No Party shall be authorized to bind any other Party without specific prior written consent of the Party to be bound.

This MOU is not intended to, and does not create, any right, benefit, or responsibility substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity against any Party, its agencies, or instrumentalities, its officers, employees, or any other person.

Public Statements and Written Materials. All Parties shall have the right to publicize its participation in this MOU.

Logos of the Parties. No Party shall make public use of any other Party's name, logo, trademark, official seal or logos associated with any Party (collectively referred to as "logo" hereafter) without obtaining prior written consent of such Party within a reasonable period of time before materials and publications are to be published and distributed unless otherwise stipulated in this MOU.

Use of Logos. Each Party may use the other Party's logo only in the forms provided electronically or hard copy by the owning or controlling Party of such logo. Except for size and subject to restrictions herein such logos may not be altered in any manner, be it proportion, color, movement, element, animated, morphed, or otherwise distorted in perspective, dimension or appearance. Any changes in the size of a Party's logo made by the other Party shall retain the full graphical integrity of the original image. Use of the Parties' logos shall not occur in any of the following situations, such use shall be taken down immediately and may result in immediate termination of the MOU and other associated agreements notwithstanding termination provisions otherwise agreed to:

- a. In a product name or publication title, or to identify a product or service not owned, controlled or approved by the Party with rights to the logo used

- b. In or as part of another Party's own logo
- c. In a manner likely to cause confusion by the public
- d. In a manner that disparages the other Parties
- e. In a manner that expresses or might imply another Party's affiliation, sponsorship, endorsement, certification, or approval other than as contemplated by this MOU or other related agreements

Freedom of Information Act. The Parties understand that any information furnished between the Parties under this MOU or related agreements is potentially subject to disclosure pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act 5 U.S.C. §552, et seq.

Privacy Act. The Parties understand that any information protected under the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. §552a will be treated in manner consistent with that Act.

Use of Data. All data gathered, associated with or shared among the Parties shall be used for the sole purpose of carrying out services and activities in support of this MOU or related agreement. All parties agree to maintain appropriate confidentiality over such data consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and respective policies. The parties agree to properly dispose of such data at the termination of their relationship, consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and respective policies.

Benefit. No member or delegate of Congress shall benefit from this MOU either directly or indirectly.

Endorsement. The Parties shall not imply Federal endorsement of any Party's, or related entity's product or service.

Entire Agreement. This MOU constitutes the entire understanding of the Parties with respect to their individual and collective roles and responsibilities in carrying out the terms of the MOU, and supersedes any prior or contemporaneous agreements or understandings.

VII. Principal Contacts

The following individuals will be the principal contacts for their respective organizations; however, any party may substitute other individuals upon written notice to the other parties.

Steve Guertin, Deputy Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C. Street NW, Room 3238
Washington, DC 20240

Scott Kovarovics, Chair
Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council

5275 Leesburg Pike, Mailstop FAC
Falls Church, Virginia 22041

Ron Regan, Executive Director
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
1100 First Street, NE
Suite 825
Washington, DC 20002

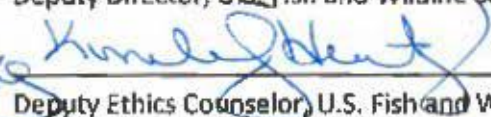
Ken Hammond, Chair
Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation
500 Montgomery, Suite 300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the participants hereto have executed this MOU as of the date first written above.



Deputy Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

1/25/16
Date

Acting 

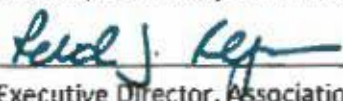
Deputy Ethics Counselor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

12 Feb 2016
Date



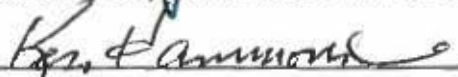
Chair, Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council

1/25/16
Date



Executive Director, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

2/2/16
Date



Chair, Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation

1/25/16
Date



26 January 2017

Mr. Steve Guertin
Deputy Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street, NW Room 3331
Washington, District of Columbia 20240

Mr. Nick Wiley
President
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
1100 First Street, NE Suite 825
Washington, District of Columbia 20002

Mr. Ken Hammond
Chairman
Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation
500 Montgomery Street, Suite 300
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Mr. Guertin, Mr. Wiley, and Mr. Hammond:

This letter is to update you on the status of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council's (SFBPC) multi-organization work team's effort to develop performance metrics for the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) and seek your organization's concurrence on the recommended performance metrics referenced herein. As a signatory organization of the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding that established organizational roles and responsibilities with the implementation of the National Outreach and Communication Program, your concurrence of these performance metrics is important. These metrics establish criterion to help the Council assess RBFF's progress with meeting the objectives of the program.

A team of representatives from the signatory organizations worked diligently throughout 2016 to review evaluate and ultimately propose performance metrics for RBFF. The team's work included a series of facilitated conference calls and an in-person meeting. The team's review, in our opinion, was thorough and all of the organizational representatives

CHAIRMAN
Scott Kovarovic
Executive Director
Izaak Walton League of America

VICE CHAIRMAN
Betty Huskins
Southeast Tourism Policy Council

MEMBERS
John Arway
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat
Commission

Janine Belleque
Past President
States Organization for Boating Access

Douglass Boyd
National Board Member
Coastal Conservation Association

Chris Edmonston
President
BoatUS Foundation

Barb Gigar
President
Aquatic Resources Education
Association

Fred Harris
National Board Representative
American Fisheries Society

Mac McKeever
Senior Public Relations Representative
L.L.Bean, Inc.

Jerry McKinnis
Co-Owner
B.A.S.S. LLC

Michael Nussman
President
American Sportfishing Association

Collin O'Mara
President
National Wildlife Federation

John Sprague
Chair, Government Affairs Committee
Marine Industries Association of
Florida

Alvin Taylor
Director
South Carolina Department of Natural
Resources

Nicole Vasilaros
Vice President, Federal Aid Legal
Affairs
National Marine Manufacturers
Association

James Zorn
Executive Administrator
Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife
Commission

Nick Wiley
Executive Director
Florida Fish and Game Conservation
Commission

Dan Ashe, ex officio
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Brian Bohnsack
Designated Federal Officer and
Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
5275 Leesburg Pike, MS-3C016A-FAC
Falls Church, Virginia 22041
P 703-358-2435 F 703-358-2210

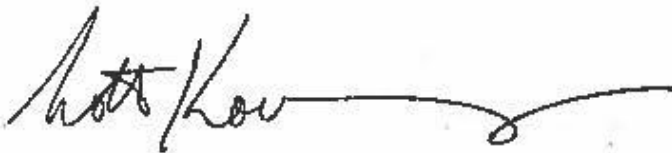
provided significant input throughout the process. We have enclosed a list of the working group participants, and any member of the group can also provide explanations and background information. The SFBPC sincerely appreciates the efforts of each of your organization's representatives.

The work team reached a consensus with the recommended performance metrics in December 2016. The SFBPC reviewed and approved these metrics during our January 17, 2017 teleconference meeting. I have attached a copy of the proposed metrics with a detailed rationale/reasoning for each of these measures for your review and consideration. If approved by all signatory organizations, the attached measures will update and replace the previously agreed upon RBFF performance metrics.

In keeping with past practice, each of the organizations represented in the working group must approve the metrics before the SFBPC and RBFF will use them to measure and evaluate performance. I request that you initiate the process within your organization to take such action before RBFF's next fiscal year begins on April 1, 2017. The goal is to have the new metrics fully approved by this date to allow RBFF to begin using them at the beginning of its fiscal year. The SFBPC unanimously approved the working group's recommendations on January 17, 2017.

Thank you in advance for taking action on this important issue. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (301)548-0150 ext. 223 or skovarovics@iwla.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Kovarovics", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Scott Kovarovics
Chair

Enclosures

cc: SFBPC/AFWA/USFWS/RBFF Performance Metrics Team

2016 Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council/Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies/Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation/ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Performance Metrics Work Team

Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council Representatives:

Scott Kovarovics- Council chair and Team Leader
Betty Huskins- Council vice chair and Team Facilitator
Fred Harris- Council member
Jim Zorn- Council member

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Representatives:

John Biagi- Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Craig Bonds- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
John Lott- South Dakota Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Ryan Roberts- Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation

Frank Peterson- President
Jim Hemenway- Chief Fiscal Officer
Carl Blackwell- Board member, National Marine Manufacturers Association
Maurice Bowen- Board member, Bass Pro Shops

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Brian Bohnsack
Linda Friar
Robert Pos
Jeff Underwood

SFBPC/RBFF/AFWA/USFWS Performance Metrics Team RBFF Recommended Performance Metrics

The multi-organizational team consisting of representatives from the: 1) Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (SFBPC), 2) Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF), 3) Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), and 4) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) met, developed and finalized recommended performance metrics for the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation. The metrics were developed through a series of in-person meetings and teleconference calls with all team members participating throughout the process.

The team's effort responded to the recommendation from the 2010-2012 SFBPC assessment of RBFF to "review the metrics for each consensus measure to ensure they remain up-to-date and relevant. As part of this process, the parties should focus on revising existing and/or developing new metrics to ensure, to the extent possible, they measure outcomes, sustained participation in angling and/or boating, and improved public understanding and conservation of aquatic resources over time." The SFBPC uses the metrics as the basis to evaluate RBFF's performance every 3 years. Based on the recommendation in the 2012 assessment, the team did not revise the Objectives and Goals from previously agreed upon measures.

A total of 20 performance metrics were developed and are proposed for consideration by AFWA, FWS and RBFF. On January 17, 2017, the SFBPC approved the team's recommendations in full.

The following provides a brief summary of rationales and other factors that were considered for each of the newly proposed Reporting/Analysis Measures.

Objective 1: Increased participation in recreational angling and boating (Unchanged)

Goal 1: Communicate with anglers, boaters and the general public to increase awareness of: angling and boating opportunities, boating and fishing techniques, and the availability of and access to boating and fishing locations thereby reducing barriers to participation in angling and boating. (Unchanged)

Proposed Reporting/Analysis Measures

1. Demonstrate an annual increase of new recruits to fishing (first time participants) from the 2015 baseline of 2.5 million as measured by the Outdoor Foundation's Special Report on Fishing.

Rationale/Reasoning: The first 3 metrics focus on the key target audiences identified in RBFF's most current strategic plan: new recruits of any age; youth; and the growing Hispanic population. The team recommends the use of the annual report completed by the Outdoor Foundation as the source of this metric. The report is produced in a timely manner, is independent, and widely used. The database exists for previous years. The baseline year is from Council's last assessment. The team does not recommend specifying a percentage increase that must be achieved annually, which is included in the original metrics, because at some point, a 10% annual increase, for example, becomes

mathematically impossible to achieve.

2. Demonstrate an annual increase in youth participation in fishing from the 2015 baseline of 10.7 million as measured by the Outdoor Foundation's Special Report on Fishing.

Rationale/Reasoning: See #1.

3. Demonstrate an annual increase in Hispanic participation in fishing from the 2015 baseline of 3.4 million as measured by the Outdoor Foundation's Special Report on Fishing.

Rationale/Reasoning: See #1.

4. Demonstrate a trend of increased boating participation over 3 year periods as reported by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) U.S. Recreational Boating Participation Survey using total participation as documented by the first NMMA study (expected in 2017) as the baseline.

Rationale/Reasoning: The original metrics focused almost exclusively on annual changes in participation. Although annual information is important, with the multitude of factors that influence participation, many of which are completely beyond the influence of RBFF, the team recommends metrics that also focus on longer periods of time. Over 3 and 5-year periods, trends may become clearer and the one-time impacts of external events, such as weather, may average out. With a focus on longer time periods, accountability for RBFF and the impacts of its campaigns also increases. The team recommends the use of the annual survey completed by the NMMA as the source of this metric. No other national metric exists for boating participation of this nature. The NMMA expects to complete a new survey in calendar year 2017, which will provide the baseline for measuring progress.

5. Demonstrate a trend of increased fishing participation over 3 year period beginning in calendar year 2015, and in each successive 3 year period, as reported by the Outdoor Foundation's Special Report on Fishing.

Rationale/reasoning: The same rationale applies here as described above. The team recommends the use of the annual report completed by the Outdoor Foundation as the source of this metric. This is the same report as used in metrics 1 thru 3.

6. Demonstrate a trend of increased fishing participation as reported in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation.

Rationale/reasoning: The team recommends the use of the USFWS' national survey as the source for this longer term measure. The survey is completed every 5 years and is very reliable in terms of reporting overall fishing participation.

7. Maintain a favorable variance in fishing and boating intentions among target audiences exposed vs those not exposed to RBFF campaigns, and who are not currently engaged in these activities, as measured by annual campaign effectiveness studies.

Rationale/reasoning: In evaluating the original metrics and considering potential new ones that are more outcome-based, the team focused on measuring RBFF's performance based on activities over which it exercises direct control or influence. Marketing campaigns designed to influence behavior are a primary example. RBFF regularly studies the effectiveness of its campaigns and uses the results to inform future campaign development and implementation. This is a commonly used and accepted metric among marketing professionals as a measure to assess effectiveness of marketing and advertising campaigns. This metric focuses specifically on intention to participate.

8. Maintain or grow awareness of RBFF campaigns among target audiences, as measured by annual campaign effectiveness studies.

Rationale/reasoning: This metric is designed to measure overall awareness of RBFF campaigns among the target audiences. Measuring awareness of its campaigns at a broad level is important because that awareness is a necessary first step toward influencing participation.

9. Achieve an annual increase in aggregate organic traffic (i.e. non-paid traffic from search engines), as defined and measured by Google Analytics, to TakeMeFishing.org using RBFF fiscal year 2017 as the baseline.

Rationale/reasoning: Many of the original metrics focused on measuring outputs tied to the TakeMeFishing.org (TMF.org) web site. With the Council recommendation to consider more outcome-based metrics and the evolving nature of web site analytics, the team recommends eliminating most of the web site metrics. However, because TMF.org remains a central portal to information that facilitates participation and educates anglers and boaters about aquatic conservation, the team believes it is important to continue to measure visitation to TMF.org. This metric more narrowly focuses on organic traffic to the web site because this traffic represents visitation by people who seek out the site on their own rather than are potentially driven there by search engine marketing (SEM) (fees paid by RBFF (or other entities) to boost traffic). RBFF and other representatives on the team find that these visitors spend more time on their web sites and return at higher rates than paid traffic. The focus here is on engaging higher quality visitors and also recognizes that RBFF does not have unlimited resources to allocate to paid SEM.

Goal 2: Collaborate and engage state agencies, industry and stakeholders in developing and implementing marketing and outreach strategies to recruit, retain and reactivate boaters and anglers as described in the National Outreach and Communication Plan. (Unchanged)

Proposed Reporting/Analysis Measures

1. At least 25 states adopt a new or additional RBFF recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) model program over the 3-year period beginning in RBFF fiscal

year (FY) 2017, and in each successive 3-year period.

Rational/Reasoning: The team recommends the use of this metric as the development and refinement of R3 programs is a joint focus of RBFF with state fish and wildlife agencies and the Aquatic Resources Education Association.

2. Maintain a state agency satisfaction rate of at least 74% or greater of state agencies using 2 or more RBFF products or resources as measured annually by a consistent customer satisfaction survey conducted by an independent third party.

Rationale/Reasoning: The original metrics measure RBFF performance based on state agency responses to annual satisfaction surveys. The current metric measures satisfaction overall and does not take into account whether a state or personnel completing the survey's use RBFF products or services. The team recommends focusing the metric more specifically on measuring satisfaction among states that actively use RBFF's products or services. This more precisely assesses the target audience and changes in satisfaction levels among this group increases accountability for RBFF and allows it to more effectively adjust its strategies and tactics to meet evolving needs of its partners. The baseline of 74% is derived from the RBFF fiscal year 2016 survey of state agency satisfaction and the response is from those states that use two or more of RBFF's products/programs.

3. Maintain or achieve an industry (fishing and boating) satisfaction rate of 72% or greater as measured annually by a consistent industry satisfaction survey conducted by an independent third party.

Rationale/Reasoning: The rationale for this metric is the same as number 2 focused on industry stakeholders.

4. For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in referrals from Take Me Fishing (TMF) digital assets to state fishing license purchase pages from the FY 2016 baseline of 746,781. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

Rationale/Reasoning: The original metrics track referrals to state fishing license and boat registration web sites and DiscoverBoating.com and set annual percentage rate increases for each. The team recommends tweaking the metrics by establishing new baselines because of web site redesign and eliminating the specific annual percentage rate increase in referrals. The expectation remains that referrals will increase.

5. For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in referrals from TMF digital assets to state boat registration pages from the FY 2016 baseline of 90,938. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

Rationale/Reasoning: The rationale for this metric is the same as number 4.

6. For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in referrals from TMF digital assets to DiscoverBoating.com from the FY 2016 baseline of 119,570. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

Rationale/Reasoning: The rationale for this metric is the same as number 4.

7. For FY 2017, achieve an annual increase in total boat registrations sold through the RBFF Boat Registration Marketing Program from the FY 2016 baseline of 43,057. For FY 2018 and each successive year, achieve an annual increase over the prior fiscal year's actual results.

Rationale/Reasoning: Historically, RBFF funded direct mail campaigns on behalf of states with the goal of increasing fishing license renewals and boat registrations. RBFF and its state partners periodically reviewed these initiatives based on overall effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and in comparison to other goals. This recommendation is based on previously completed analysis that identified a positive return on investment for the boat registration direct mail campaign. A similar analysis of the fishing license campaign concluded the return on investment was not high enough to continue. As a result, the metric was narrowed to focus on boat registrations.

Goal 3: Develop and implement strategies to ensure that RBFF has sufficient funding to achieve its objectives. (Unchanged)

Proposed Reporting/Analysis Measures

1. Annually raise non Federal Dollars and in-kind contributions (not including value added in purchased media buy) to equal 25% of federal dollars received. (Unchanged)

Rationale/Reasoning: The team recommends the continued use of this metric.

Objective 2: Increased public awareness of sound fishing, boating and conservation practices. (Unchanged)

Goal 1: Promote the conservation and responsible use of the Nation's aquatic resources by anglers, boaters and the general public and improve the public's understanding of the contribution of recreational angling and boating to the conservation of aquatic resources. (Unchanged)

Proposed Reporting/Analysis Measures

1. Maintain awareness of the connection between licensing and local conservation by anglers and boaters, as established every 3 years by the Council to Advance Hunting and Shooting Sports (CAHSS) /RBFF Conservation Study using the 2015 study as the baseline awareness level (75%).

Rationale/Reasoning: This metric is designed to measure conservation awareness

among boaters and anglers by assessing their knowledge about how licensing revenue, especially fishing license revenue, directly supports aquatic conservation. RBFF and CAHSS partnered to conduct a baseline study and will collaborate to evaluate awareness going forward.

2. Achieve an annual increase in aggregate unique page views to the TakeMeFishing.org pages featuring prominent conservation messaging, using RBFF FY 2017 as the baseline. (Prominent conservation messaging pages include “Get a License” and “Register a Boat” and each state specific license and registration page.)

Rationale/Reasoning: Until a web site redesign in early 2016, the TMF.org web site had distinct conservation pages and the original metrics measured visitation to these pages. RBFF found that these pages were viewed at dramatically lower rates than other sections of the web site. When redesigning TMF.org, RBFF moved to integrate conservation information and messaging throughout the site. With conservation content dispersed throughout the site, the team recommends this metric because it focuses on pages that have more conservation-related content. The metric, in keeping with changes to other metrics, also removes a specific annual percentage increase in page views.

Goal 2: Promote safe fishing and boating practices. (Unchanged)

Reporting/Analysis Measures

1. Achieve an annual increase in aggregate unique page views to the Fishing Safety and Boating Safety sections of TakeMeFishing.org using RBFF FY 2017 as the baseline.

Rationale/Reasoning: As part of the web site redesign, RBFF retained pages devoted to boating safety. This metric continues to measure views of these pages and also eliminates the specific annual percentage increase in page views.



July 25, 2016

Mr. Scott Kovarovics
Chair, Sport Fishing & Boating Partnership Council
Executive Director, Izaak Walton League of America
707 Conservation Lane
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Dear Scott:

On behalf of the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation's (RBFF) Board of Directors, thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide feedback on the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council's (SFBPC) programmatic assessment of RBFF's activities for fiscal years 2013 through 2015.

RBFF's Board and staff understand that the intent of the assessment is to assist RBFF in being even more successful in future years. Indeed, RBFF has already made significant progress in implementing the SFBPC's recommendations, as many of them are unchanged from the fiscal year 2010 through 2012 assessment report released in 2015.

We have carefully reviewed the assessment report and are herein providing our official response, as well as an update on the status of efforts currently underway to put into effect each of the nine recommendations made by the SFBPC.

Recommendations:

- 1. RBFF, SFBPC, FWS and AFWA should develop a new list of consensus measures and metrics on which to base future assessments of RBFF's effectiveness. As part of this process, the parties should first review the metrics that were established for each of the current consensus measures to ensure they remain up-to-date and relevant. Metrics and measures that are no longer relevant or meaningful should be removed. In addition, the parties should revise existing metrics and develop new metrics that are outcome-based wherever possible, and that are directly related to the five questions from the legislative mandate for the National Outreach and Communications Program.*

RBFF, SFBPC, FWS and AFWA have assembled a metrics working group that has already reviewed the 2012 Measures of Success and determined that the two overall objectives identified in that document should remain in place. Each consensus measure has also been reviewed and those that are no longer relevant or meaningful have been eliminated. New metrics are currently under development and wherever possible they will be outcome-based.

500 Montgomery Street, Ste 300
Alexandria, VA 22314-1657
Ph: 703.519.0013
Fx: 703.519.9565

- 2. The SFBPC, AFWA and FWS should work with RBFF to identify surrogates for certified license sales data and boat registration data that would allow RBFF to more quickly respond to changing market conditions and modify its recruitment and retention programs.*

The metrics working group described under Recommendation #1 has identified a new fishing participation measure that will replace the certified license sales measure. The group is currently working to identify a meaningful boating participation measure to replace the boat registration measure.

- 3. RBFF should engage in a genuinely collaborative and ongoing partnership with stakeholders about how to improve programs to increase and sustain participation in boating and angling in the United States. The collaboration process should include identifying specific stakeholders and their specific goals and needs. In addition, RBFF should proactively pursue opportunities to collaborate with states that want more customized services, including alternatives to the current lapsed angler program, and additional contractual services such as enhanced state agency marketing.*

RBFF has already organized a task force, consisting of seven current and former board members, to create plan, identify stakeholder needs and goals and to engage with stakeholders on a more customized basis. The task force will meet initially with individual state stakeholders and then proceed to meetings with boating and fishing industry stakeholders. In addition, RBFF has implemented its “State Innovative R3 Grants Program” to collaborate with individual states to develop innovative new programs to recruit, retain and reactivate anglers and boaters (R3). Successful programs will be documented in case studies that other states may use as a guideline for development of their own unique R3 programs.

- 4. For TMF.org pages that include state information, there is an opportunity for RBFF to work with states to highlight those programs and resources that states may want to promote (e.g., banners with links to state program sites). When states do not have the capacity for state-specific information, RBFF should work closely with these states to ensure information posted on TMF.org is available and accurate. RBFF could make state-specific banner ad space available on TMF.org state pages to highlight state events and add links from RBFF “Where-to” pages to the most accurate state resources. One potential way to measure the success would be to track the number of referrals from the TMF website to state-specific resources.*

In 2015, RBFF completed a project to update all body of water and fish species data on TMF.org to assure that they agree with the corresponding data on each state’s website. State-specific data is monitored on an ongoing basis to assure it is consistent with each state’s own data on public waters and excludes private waters. In 2016, RBFF is engaged in a project to verify that the body of water and fish species data has been successfully transferred to its newly redesigned website. In addition, RBFF is currently working with the States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA) to verify and improve the accuracy and completeness of the boat ramp data on TMF.org. RBFF also works on an ongoing basis with individual states that are interested

in running banner ads on TMF.org to promote state events and state-sponsored fishing and boating R3 efforts.

5. *RBFF should begin reporting the number of visitors that are referred to each state licensing/registration page. In addition, the RBFF should work with state agencies to encourage development of systems that would allow state agencies to track users that are referred to fishing license and boat registration pages from TMF. (A system is currently being pilot-tested in Florida.) If/when such systems are in place, RBFF should report state-by-state referrals and outcomes as part of its consensus measures.*

RBFF currently has the ability to track referrals to each state licensing or registration page; however, the metrics working group described under Recommendation #1 has not established a measure at this level of detail. The Florida pilot has shown that tracking actual license purchases resulting from RBFF referrals is possible with the proper systems in place. RBFF is working closely with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to simplify the online license purchase experience and thus increase the level of successful outcomes. A similar pilot is currently underway with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Learnings from these pilots will be used to encourage development of improved licensing systems with other states.

6. *RBFF, AFWA, FWS, and SFBPC should work together to establish specific goals and objectives and a process for rigorously evaluating and reporting on RBFF's effectiveness at enhancing the public's understanding of aquatic resources and sustained participation in boating and angling. (For example, how will RBFF evaluate the effectiveness of the Disney and Hispanic campaigns and measure success?)*

RBFF has conducted a third-party survey to establish a baseline awareness level of the connection between licensing and local conservation among anglers and boaters and among RBFF's target audiences. The metrics working group described under Recommendation #1 is considering recommending that this survey be conducted every three years to evaluate RBFF's effectiveness at enhancing the public's understanding of aquatic resources and sustained participation in boating and angling.

7. *RBFF should work with SFBPC, FWS, and AFWA to develop a communications plan to proactively integrate conservation and safety messaging with all fishing and boating messages and increase prominence of conservation messaging in RBFF communications.*

RBFF has rolled out the newly redesigned TMF.org that features integrated conservation and safety messaging throughout the website. The effectiveness of this messaging will be evaluated as discussed under Recommendation #6 above.

8. *The Assessment Team commends the quality of the images provided by RBFF and recommends that the image library be regularly updated (e.g. diverse ethnicity, urban backgrounds in shots, updated PFD styles, etc.).*

RBFF continues to update the image library on a regular basis. In addition to the professional photography featured in the library, RBFF is now leveraging social media tools and campaigns to

develop user-generated images that regularly update the library with diverse, multicultural images at a low cost.

9. *Work with SFBPC, FWS, and AFWA to develop one or more metrics to measure the outcomes of RBF's activities on conservation and responsible use of aquatic resources by boaters and anglers.*

This recommendation has been addressed as discussed under Recommendation #6 above.

RBF's Board of Directors and staff will continue implementation of the SFBPC's recommendations and will provide annual reports on our progress. We appreciate the time and effort the SFBPC assessment team puts into developing these recommendations and we thank the SFBPC for its continued support of our mission to increase participation in boating and fishing and make the public aware of the need to protect America's precious waterways.

Sincerely,



Kenneth S. Hammond

RBF Chairman

cc: Hon. Sally Jewell, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior
Dan Ashe, Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Steve Guertin, Deputy Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
David Hoskins, Assistant Director, Fish and Aquatic Conservation
Brian Bohnsack, SFBPC Designated Officer
Frank Peterson, RBF President & CEO

FY24-26 Strategic Plan

RBFF FY24-26 Strategic Framework

Mission

Increase participation in recreational angling and boating and thereby increase public awareness and appreciation of the need to protect, conserve and restore this nation's aquatic natural resources.

Vision

RBFF is committed to spreading the joy of fishing and boating to all ages, genders and cultures; we envision one nation united in our passion for fishing and boating. A nation committed to the pursuit of leisure activity on the water. A nation that embraces our fishing and boating heritage, and conserves, restores and protects the resources that sustain it. **We believe the water is open to everyone.**

Goals

1. Consumer Engagement (B2C)

Increase participation in recreational boating and fishing by engaging in R3 efforts to grow the activities (emphasis on **recruitment**).

2. Stakeholder Engagement (B2B)

Sustain participation in recreational boating and fishing by collaborating with industry, state and federal agencies to develop, implement and evaluate programs & resources to support R3 (emphasis on **retention** and **reactivation**).

INDUSTRY

STATE

FEDERAL

Strategies

Build awareness, trial and interest through national marketing campaign: advertising, PR, social media, digital content, web.

Engage industry, state and federal agencies in partnerships, research, grants, training, toolkits, events and more to be activated at the local level.

Measurement

Increase first-time participants to fishing & boating among consumer target audiences

Maintain awareness of connection between licensing & conservation among consumer target audiences

Increase awareness and effectiveness of Consumer Engagement campaigns among consumer target audiences

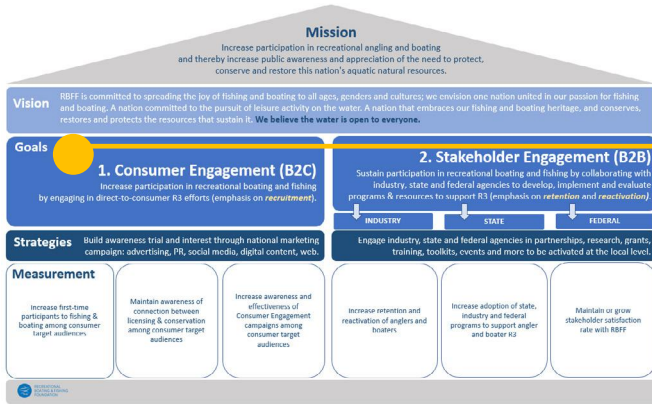
Increase retention and reactivation of anglers and boaters

Increase adoption of state, industry and federal programs to support angler and boater R3

Maintain or grow stakeholder satisfaction rate with RBFF



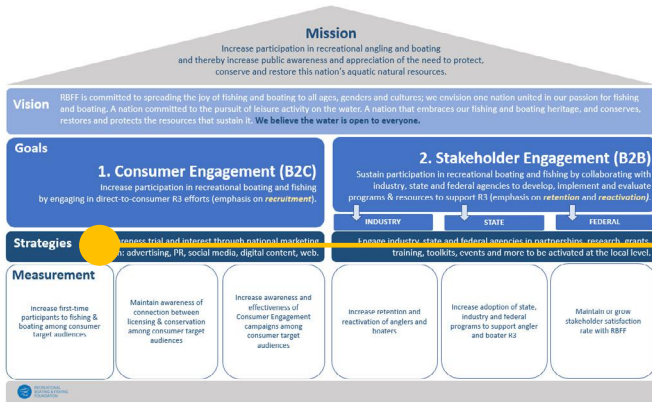
Consumer Engagement Goals



1. Consumer Engagement (B2C)
 Increase participation in recreational boating and fishing by engaging in R3 efforts to grow the activities (emphasis on *recruitment*).



Consumer Engagement Strategies



01 National Marketing Campaign to Recruit New Audiences

02 Connect Consumers to Local Information



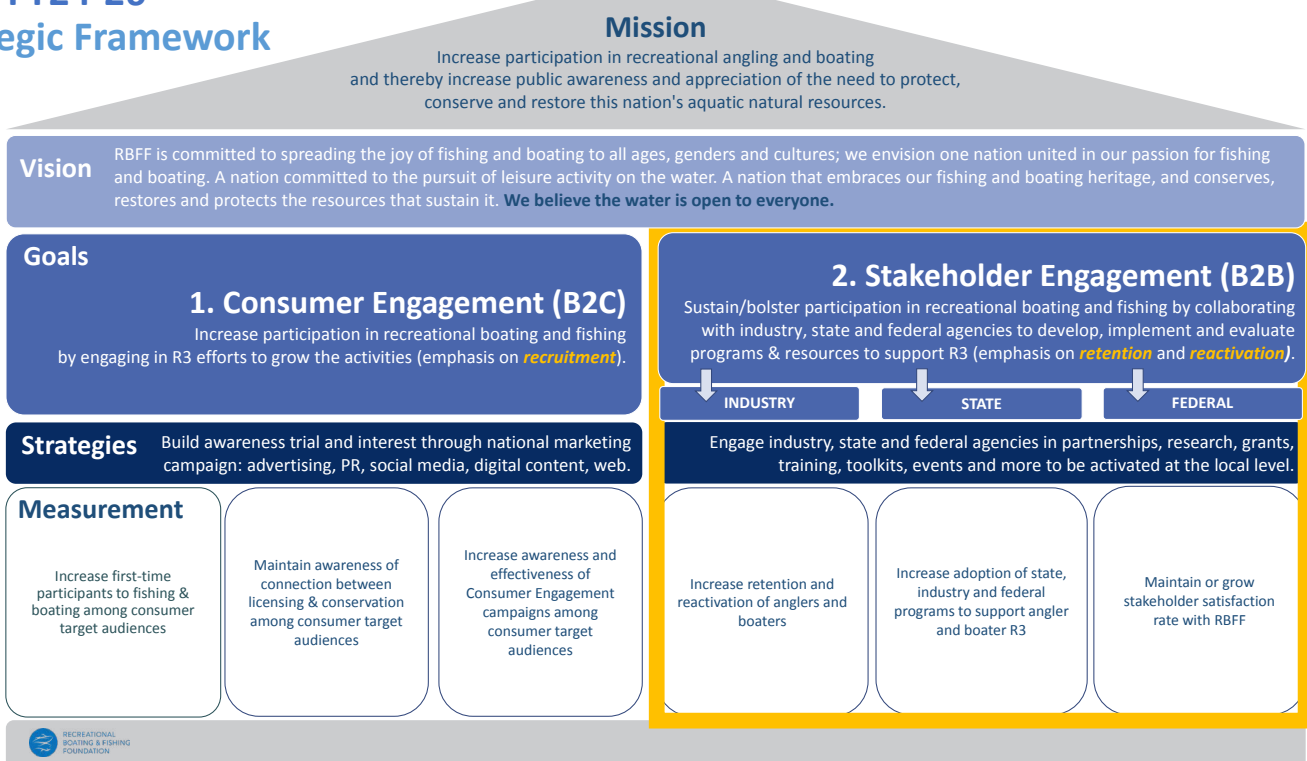
Consumer Engagement Measurement



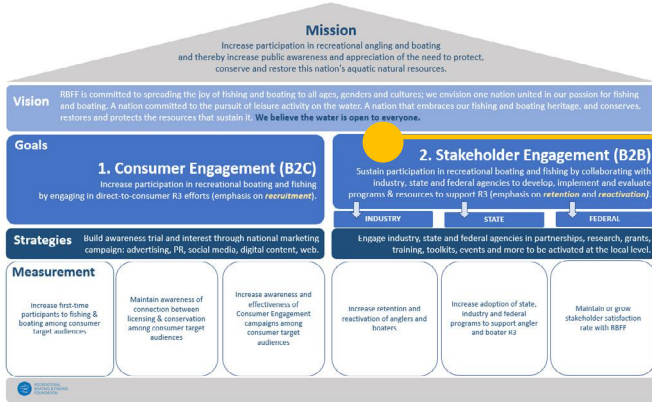
- Increase first-time participants to fishing & boating among consumer target audiences
- Maintain awareness of connection between licensing & conservation among consumer target audiences
- Increase awareness and effectiveness of Cons. Engagement campaigns among consumer target audiences



RBFF FY24-26 Strategic Framework



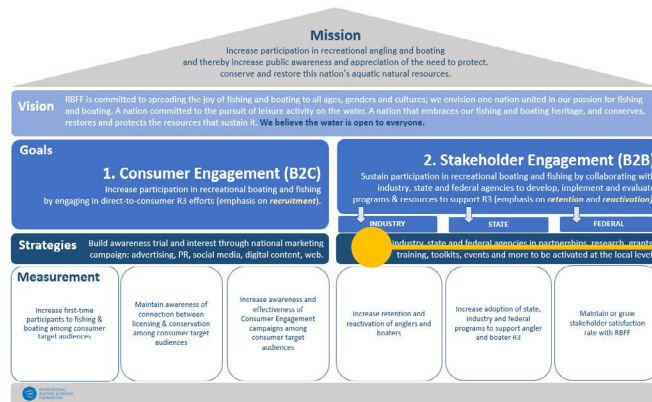
Stakeholder Engagement Goals



2. Stakeholder Engagement (B2B)
 Sustain participation in recreational boating and fishing by collaborating with industry, state and federal agencies to develop, implement and evaluate programs & resources to support R3 (emphasis on *retention* and *reactivation*).



Stakeholder Engagement Strategies – Part 1 of 2



- 01** Leverage partnerships to engage consumers in fishing and boating
- 02** Develop training and/or education to support stakeholder R3 efforts
- 03** Develop programs and resources to support stakeholder R3 efforts



Stakeholder Engagement Strategies – Part 2 of 2



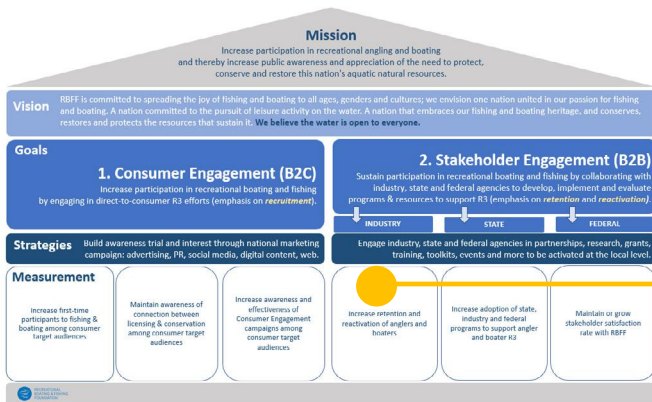
04 Conduct research to provide stakeholders with actionable R3 insights

05 Use PR & communications to build awareness of RBFF and its programs and resources

06 Participate in stakeholder events to build awareness of RBFF and its programs and resources



Stakeholder Engagement Measurement



Increase retention and reactivation of anglers and boaters

Increase adoption of state, industry and federal programs to support angler and boater R3

Maintain or grow stakeholder satisfaction rate with RBFF





RECOMMENDED METRICS

SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL
OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

FALL 2023



OVERVIEW

In October 2022, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (SFBPC) engaged Spitfire to facilitate an assessment of the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation's (RBFF) implementation of the National Outreach and Communications Program (NOCP) for fiscal years 2016-2021. The 2016-2021 Assessment Report includes findings and recommendations based on the review of RBFF materials; stakeholder interviews with experts in recreational boating, fishing, marketing, program implementation and economic development; and discussions with Assessment Team members. The 2016-2021 Assessment Report includes recommendations that fit within the scope of the RBFF's current work to implement the NOCP and can easily connect to its work in progress.

In this document, Spitfire shares additional recommendations and metrics for further refining RBFF's focus on what matters most – including topics and considerations RBFF has begun work on since the end of the 2016-2021 assessment period. These recommendations name both outputs and outcomes and focus on increasing diversity (across race, gender and geography), using resources to signal a sense of welcome, creating resources with local communities in mind, extending grant periods, intentionally connecting conservation to boating and fishing, modernizing language and creating specific calls to action. These topics are priorities for the NOCP and RBFF, and addressing them will create meaningful, measurable progress.

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

A shared approach to evaluation and shared definitions of “outputs” and “outcomes” will set RBFF and its partners up to consider what’s working and make adjustments in their day-to-day work. **Outputs** are the activities that move a strategy forward, and **outcomes** are results of those activities.

Every output should have a corresponding outcome — if it is helping to make progress toward goals and objectives. RBFF and its partners seek outcomes that are meaningful changes for boating, fishing and conservation. The number of people reading an article about a campaign isn’t an outcome (it’s an activity from which we measure outputs). If the article leads to more people, and more diverse people, visiting a local park to boat and fish over the course of a year, the output connects to an outcome.

Outputs

Outputs, **the activities that move the strategy forward**, may include:

- Number of visitors to a specific page on your website.
- Online engagement (such as likes) on your social media platforms.
- Participants attending an event.
- Increased news coverage about boating, fishing and conservation.

For each of these activities, RBFF and its partners can count the people reached, begin to track how and if they stay engaged and track progress toward reaching NOCP objectives.

Outcomes

Outcomes, **changes you see occurring** because of outputs, may include:

- People from diverse communities boating, fishing and engaging in conservation behaviors.
- New local partners, especially ones representing diverse communities, engaging in programs and co-creating programs.
- Demonstrated individual and group behaviors related to boating, fishing and conservation in local communities (such as understanding how license fees connect to conservation or catch-and-release programs sustain ecosystems).

1. MODEL AND ARTICULATE A COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY ON BOARDS, IN LEADERSHIP ROLES, AND IN PROGRAM STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION.

The assessment of RBFF's work finds that RBFF has made important strides in its efforts to engage Latino/a/e/s audiences and women through its national campaigns and by funding local programs like First Catch Centers (FCCs). To take this work to the next level and increase its effectiveness, RBFF must model, articulate and support a deep commitment to diversity across race, gender and geography in leadership roles across the field and the inclusion of individuals from diverse backgrounds in the development of strategy and implementation.

Where RBFF has decision-making power to move beyond the primary identity associated with this field (cisgender, straight, white men), it can engage individuals on boards, identify best practices that made these changes possible and activate its capacity-building power to coach partner organizations on how to do the same. Engaging more diverse individuals in decision-making processes will bring diverse perspectives to marketing, education and outreach, thereby improving efforts to reach more diverse communities.



Activities associated with this recommendation may include work to:

- Identify best practices for RBFF's recruitment, hiring and retention of more diverse staff (especially people of color) internally and share those practices via capacity-building efforts with partners. RBFF has already introduced these ideas at past marketing workshops and received enthusiasm from participants.

- Identify prominent identities of RBFF board members and other leaders and seek to begin including individuals with a greater variety of identities. These identities may include gender, race, ethnicity and other lived experiences. Identifying underrepresented identities will help RBFF in its recruitment and engagement of new leaders, and RBFF can share lessons learned with partner organizations to help them address this same need. SFBPC has an important role to play in this recommendation because it nominates five people to RBFF's board.
- Develop and deliver trainings on recruitment, hiring and retention best practices and lessons learned at the annual marketing workshop.
- Create a community leadership development program that builds a pipeline of leaders from groups central to RBFF campaigns, invests in leaders who represent priority communities and integrates new lived experiences into planning.
- Conduct follow-up evaluations to determine how/where RBFF partners are making progress toward increased diversity and offering coaching to support ongoing improvement. This could be integrated into existing R3 plans.

Metrics associated with this recommendation may include work to:

- Increase the number of RBFF board seats held by individuals whose identities vary from the prominent identity **(outputs)** and evaluate opportunities for those board members to share their lived experiences, shape the work and authentically engage other leaders in efforts that support boating, fishing and conservation **(outcomes)**.
- Develop an approach for identifying recruitment, hiring and retention of more diverse board and staff members **(output)** at RBFF and identify a plan for sharing these practices with partners and gathering data from their efforts to activate the same/similar approaches that result in more diverse individuals engaged in planning **(outcomes)**.

RBFF can meaningfully help change the way our nation welcomes and engages diverse populations to boating, fishing and conservation. Learning from individuals with a variety of lived experiences and connecting them to leadership roles will improve the quality and effectiveness of strategy development, campaign and program implementation, and course-correction to make all stronger.

For example, when RBFF activates approaches to recruit, hire and retain more diverse staff members, those initially will reflect on an output: the changes in numbers of identities of staff members. That output will change to an outcome as RBFF's campaigns and programs improve with insights from these new colleagues. Sharing their learning at the national marketing workshop, RBFF staff members will demonstrate how partner organizations can experience the same change: initial outputs they will track for recruitment, hiring and retention followed by the outcomes of welcome and inclusion at the local level; improved strategies; and an increased likelihood of diverse engagement in boating, fishing and conservation.

2. INTENTIONALLY USE RESOURCES TO CLEARLY SIGNAL A SENSE OF WELCOME AND DEMONSTRATE CULTURAL COMPETENCY.

In addition to its national campaigns, RBFF has supported local efforts to engage racially diverse audiences through Vamos a Pescar and FCC grants. Spitfire sees these local efforts are critical to RBFF's work to increase diversity, inclusion and belonging in fishing and boating. When people from a local community are part of planning programs for that community, authenticity can shine through, and effectiveness likely increases. Although the council ultimately will review and make recommendations about metrics, the review team has identified a handful of recommended metrics here. Working toward these metrics, RBFF can make its outreach efforts focused on people of color and women more effective and help foster belonging both at the national and local levels while building/strengthening local partnerships likely to yield data helpful to better understanding audience behaviors.

Activities associated with this recommendation may include work to:

- Allocate at least 75% of Vamos A Pescar grants for community organizations led by people who identify as Latino/a/e/s.*
- Ensure at least 75% of funds associated with campaigns focused on women go to organizations led by women.*

**Note: These recommendations begin with a minimum of 75% in the first year and expand to a minimum of 85% in following years to allow time for partnership development.*

- Follow similar practices that prioritize resource allocation to organizations with leaders who share identities with audiences vital to diversifying boating, fishing and conservation (e.g., Black-led organizations).
- Co-create new materials for national campaign efforts with organizations that are serving new communities of focus for RBFF.



Metrics associated with this recommendation may include work to:

- Track the number of Latino/a/e/s- or women-led organizations receiving funds as described in recommendations (75% in first year with new metrics and 85% after that) **(outputs)**, mark the change from past years and note their ongoing engagement from year to year **(outcomes)**.
- Track the number of Black-led organizations receiving funds **(outputs)**, build relationships with Black community leaders and discuss where funding gaps exist **(outcomes)**, and increase those grants/programs by 50%.
- Survey leaders at these Latino/a/e/s-, Black- and women-led organizations to better understand what worked, what adjustments they would recommend, their interest in future involvement and their engagement of other diverse leaders **(outcomes)**.

- Track the number of Latino/a/e/s individuals, Black individuals and women participating in capacity-building efforts at the national marketing workshop (**outputs**) and gather insights from them about the experience they will carry forward to encourage others who share some of their identities (**outcomes**).

3. PACKAGE AND DISTRIBUTE RESOURCES WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS IN MIND.

Local community partners are important to RBFF's program and campaign implementation, and they add insights and customization to national efforts. By engaging local community partners in developing and/or customizing resources — and better packaging and distributing resources with guidance from local partners — RBFF will be able to create more effective campaigns, sustained partnerships and new partnerships vital to this work. Better engagement with local partners also will yield more useful data about audience behaviors, because these partners can observe and track changes not only in participation but also in specific behaviors — the outputs and the outcomes RBFF seeks to evaluate.

Activities associated with this recommendation may include work to:

- Share a schedule of campaigns and other anticipated outreach resources with partners so they can anticipate guidance and materials. If local partners know when campaigns and materials may be available, they can identify ways to better connect resources to state and local calendars that relate to funding, programs and more.
- Provide equipment to urban-based programs by working with industry partners to streamline the equipment donation process and better support communities RBFF prioritizes in campaigns.



- Crowdsource, with input from local partners, the most important materials to include in a baseline kit that each partner should have to support their work. Translate those materials into Spanish (and potentially other languages based on insights from local partners and RBFF's assessment of needs). Make this kit available to all partners to build collaborative effort around using shared messaging with clear calls to action.
- Partner with community and local organizations to identify and hire translators to translate materials in the languages the community needs (recognizing that materials provided in individuals' first language increase the likelihood of behavior change).

Metrics associated with this recommendation may include work to:

- Track the number of local partners who receive schedules, a baseline kit and guidance from RBFF staff (**outputs**) and tracking the usage and customization of these materials (**output and potential outcomes**) and work with partners to evaluate local engagement linked to these useful materials (**outcomes**). (An online portal, for example, would allow easy uploads of local audience engagement following local events and around local campaign implementation and would capture these output and outcome metrics).
- Identify and replicate lessons learned from local evaluation efforts, such as the FCC program (**outcomes**).
- Improve accessibility for baseline materials by appropriately translating them, sharing them with communities and securing feedback (**output and potential outcomes**). (Note: Translation recommendations include not only language translations but understanding specific dialects in local communities).
- Request and secure feedback on approaches most supportive to local partners and demonstrate action on requested changes or continued activities (**outcomes**).

4. CREATE EXPANDED GRANT PERIODS TO ALLOW FOR EVALUATION, COURSE-CORRECTION AND REEVALUATION.

Throughout our assessment, Spitfire heard appreciation from state partners for RBFF's approach to learning what works and what doesn't during work associated with an RBFF grant. Rather than feeling pressure to share reports of successes, grantees expressed the belief that RBFF sincerely sought to understand what worked and what didn't to foster a partnership where learning and improvement were possible. Grantees also shared that the current grant periods didn't allow ample time to implement new practices based on what they had learned. By creating extended grant periods (connected to the federal fiscal year), RBFF will make it possible for local partners to continue this evaluation and learning — and take time to test course-corrections.

These course-corrections will inform efforts not only within a single grantee's work but likely improve other RBFF campaigns and programs. This approach ensures a focus on outcomes by intentionally working to secure more meaningful insights about how and if audiences are engaging in education/outreach/marketing efforts.

Activities associated with this recommendation may include work to:

- Change grant periods from one to two years to allow for the described course-correction, evaluation and local/state needs (staffing, related funding, etc.).
- Create a reporting structure for grantees to identify behavior changes they seek, evaluation of progress toward those behavior changes, intended local implementation adjustments and updated evaluation.
- Provide capacity building during the grant period.

Metrics associated with this recommendation may include work to:

- Track the number of grantees who request this longer time period to allow for adjustment and further evaluation (**outputs**).
- Track and share insights from these longer grants with other grantees and partners to improve their efforts (**outcomes**).
- Conduct capacity-building pre- and post-surveys to identify whether support is meeting grantee needs, where they seek additional guidance, and how RBFF may adjust its coaching and training (**outcomes**).

COURSE-CORRECTION

Embracing the practice of course-correction and sharing it across a network of partners normalizes the notion that things don't always go as planned, partners do and should make changes as they're needed, and partners should report what works and what doesn't so others can learn from their experiences — and not repeat their mistakes.

RBFF partners reported that RBFF wants to hear about mistakes, and that willingness to discuss what works is a solid foundation for establishing practices of course-correction. These practices may include small adjustments in a program, such as changing the physical setup of a fishing clinic or edits to a message to help it work more effectively in a specific setting or with a priority audience. RBFF can encourage these ongoing practices and actively secure information about course-correction to better move toward meaningful outcomes.

Course-correction pro tips

As RBFF and its partners review what is happening in a campaign or program, it can evaluate progress and consider course-correction in several ways.

1. **Objective:** Is the objective or overall strategy unclear? An updated objective may require fine-tuning to identify the specific outcome or time period for achieving the outcome.
2. **Audience:** Is the audience too general? A clearer focus on a specific audience will increase the likelihood of connecting with that audience.
3. **Message:** Does the message include a clear call to action? Specific, low-risk actions make for messages that engage audiences.
4. **Messenger:** Does the messenger have lived experience in common with the audience? Such commonalities between messenger and audience increase a sense of trust and are more likely to result in engagement and action.
5. **Activity:** Is the activity the right one for the audience and the moment in time? If the activity is a mismatch for the audience, another activity may be more effective. If the activity requires substantial resources that aren't available, another approach may be more realistic or effective in the short term.

By breaking down and reviewing these components for potential course-correction, RBFF is sure to keep its good thinking, adjust where needed and encourage partners to do the same to make meaningful change.

5. USE LANGUAGE TO INTENTIONALLY CONNECT BOATING AND FISHING WITH CONSERVATION — AND IDENTIFY SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS RELATED TO AQUATIC RESOURCES.

As noted in the assessment, RBFF has taken important steps to integrate conservation messaging more strategically across TakeMeFishing.org. It has tested conservation messaging and shared its findings with state partners so that they can integrate these learnings into their own outreach efforts. In the Assessment Report, Spitfire identified some specific ways RBFF can build on this moment, and below outlines metrics specifically related to using language more intentionally.

Activities associated with this recommendation may include work to:

- Update messages from “boating and fishing” to “boating, fishing and conservation.” Linking these two behaviors to a result reminds individuals that they often are acting in ways that promote conservation, thereby validating their behaviors. Intentionally making the connection between boating, fishing and conservation sets new boaters and anglers on a path to understanding how their behaviors in these new activities will affect the natural world.
- More regularly test and evaluate messages to identify what language best makes this connection for various audiences. This testing may determine what language best resonates with a priority audience for RBFF, translation needs or regional differences between acceptance and understanding of terms including conservation, protection, aquatic resources and/or natural resources.
- Work with local and state-based partners to collect information on how permit fees for fishing and boating fund conservation efforts — and develop messages and materials that make this connection. RBFF materials may include customizable templates, as they are considering in other work, for local partners to connect fees to local conservation efforts/outcomes individuals can see where they live.
- Provide guidance to state and industry partners about a clear call to action that they should include in conservation messaging. It may differ by region, but RBFF can offer overarching guidance about the importance of including a call to action and how to determine the best one based on the audience. RBFF’s customizable templates also may be useful to industry partners and related associations in their work.



Metrics associated with this recommendation may include work to:

- Develop and disseminate updated messages, including conservation calls to action, to partners across the country and count the dissemination **(outputs)**.
- Train partners to use and customize updated messages, including conservation calls to action to determine which partners are taking this new approach **(outputs)**.
- Evaluate the number of partners changing their approach and reporting usage of updated messages **(outcomes)**.
- Mark changes in conservation behaviors related to aquatic behaviors noted in call-to-action messages **(outcomes)**. NOTE: RBFF and its partners should review this more frequently than every three years when the conservation study is published.

6. MODERNIZE LANGUAGE TO CLEARLY SIGNAL A SENSE OF WELCOME AND BETTER ENGAGE PRIORITY AUDIENCES.

As noted above and in the Assessment Report, RBFF has made great strides in its efforts to reach and engage new audiences in fishing and boating. The language used to describe these communities must adapt to make these efforts as effective as possible. Most organizations identify a baseline style guide for communication and adapt it to fit their specific needs and values. AP style is the standard style, including language and punctuation, for mass communication and is an effective starting point for efforts in support of the NOCP. AP style, along with others, has changed much of its language to encourage usage of more inclusive terms that communities have noted they prefer. RBFF can adopt these practices to clearly signal a welcome to audiences outside the primary identity they have historically reached (white men) and to better engage new audiences in boating, fishing and conservation.

Activities associated with this recommendation may include work to:

- Use the term *Latino/a/e/s* instead of *Hispanic* and update materials to reflect this change, which follows AP Style and reflects cultural competency.
- Use the term *Black* instead of *African American* and update materials to reflect this change, which follows AP Style and reflects cultural competency.
- Use the term *priority audiences* in place of *target audiences* to de-normalize violence.
- Track and implement ongoing changes in language as it evolves and communities express how they self-identify.
- Follow aforementioned recommendations for translating, at a minimum, baseline materials into the first language for priority audiences (which may include different languages and/or different dialects of a language). RBFF has already made important strides on this front in its *Vamos a Pescar* campaign and Spanish-language ad campaigns, but there are additional opportunities for growth.

Metrics associated with this recommendation may include work to:

- Complete or make progress updating language in online and print materials **(outputs)**.
- Complete or make progress updating language in strategy documents and planning materials (including the consensus metrics) to better signal cultural competency and a sense of welcome to a more diverse group of leaders **(outputs)**.
- Review select strategy documents and materials by a more diverse group of leaders to demonstrate a sense of welcome and invite their comments and insights for ongoing improvement **(outcomes)**.
- Translate materials into priority audiences' first language **(outputs)**.

7. REPLACE A FOCUS ON AWARENESS WITH SPECIFIC CALLS TO ACTION.

The Assessment Report finds that RBFF's national campaigns are generally successful in reaching RBFF's priority audiences and increasing the likelihood that they report being "very" or "somewhat" likely to fish in the next 12 months. However, beyond the Campaign Effectiveness Studies, RBFF has little data on what changes in behavior its outreach efforts inspire beyond growing awareness about fishing and boating. This is not uncommon for national campaigns of this kind.

However, wherever possible, we recommend a clear focus on actions RBFF is asking audiences to take. This clarity of focus ensures RBFF recognizes the change it seeks and names the audience action that helps make that change possible.

Connecting RBFF's goals with specific action recommendations for specific priority audiences will make better progress toward those goals than a general "awareness" campaign.



The best calls to action are simple and easy to do, within the power of the person taking that action, indicate that others “like me” are doing it, and name a connection between the action and reaching a goal/seeing an outcome.

Activities associated with this recommendation may include work to:

- Review priority education/outreach/marketing materials (ones most important to current and future activities) and identify a specific call-to-action message for each.
- Share priority education/outreach/marketing materials with partners, noting the specific call-to-action message and make recommendations for how they can further customize the message for their local area.
- Ensure a call-to-action message is part of all future education/outreach/marketing materials and that the message is customizable for local partners.

Metrics associated with this recommendation may include work to:

- Update call-to-action messages in materials **(outputs)**.
- Review local partners' customization of call-to-action messages **(outputs and outcomes)**.
- Identify mechanisms for tracking behavior changes linked to these call-to-action messages **(outcomes)**.
- Identify a number of behavior changes linked to these call-to-action messages **(outcomes)**.



CRAFTING A CALL TO ACTION

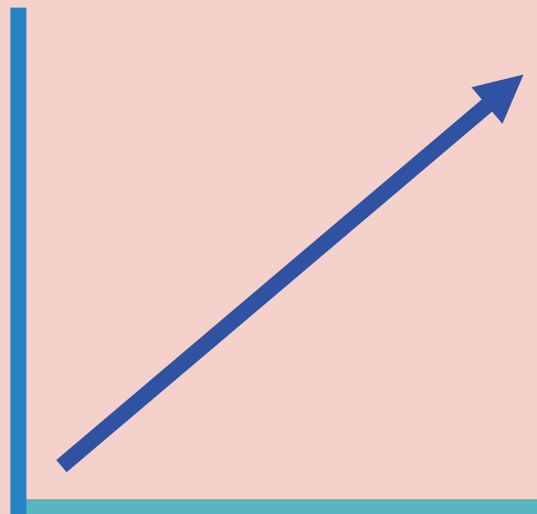
Actionable, achievable calls to action will engage audiences and make progress toward RBFF objectives for boating, fishing and conservation. These calls to action emerge when solid, strategic decisions are in place and when messages clearly convey the actions audiences must take.

To create the strategic conditions for a call to action:

- What's the action, behavior or change you want to see?
- What can the specific audience member do to make that happen?
- When will the audience be in the mindset to receive the call to action?
- Who is the best messenger to deliver the call to action?
- What is the best activity to convey the call to action?

To write a call to action in a message:

- Use a clear action verb (sign up for x, pick up this gear at y, slow your boat at z).
- Be specific so the audiences understand what to do.
- Audiences may agree with “protect our waters,” but they won't know how to do it. Being specific, such as “pack out what you pack in to keep our waters clean” defines a specific action the audiences can take.
- Start with an action that presents no or a low risk for the audience member so they're more likely to take the action.



Evaluate if and how audience members take these actions. Evaluation may be as simple as yes or no. Comments about if, how and why audiences act will help RBFF better understand its audiences and refine messages to better move them toward boating, fishing and conservation behaviors.

CLOSING

RBFF has earned the trust of many partners across the country, and they can broaden this network to include more organizations and individuals who represent diverse communities. The recommendations and metrics shared here build on recommendations in the 2016-2021 Assessment Report and easily plug into current campaigns, programs and training/coaching opportunities. RBFF's work in the years following this assessment period demonstrate commitment to addressing many of the topics noted in these recommended metrics.

Spitfire and Assessment Team members recognize the Council must review these recommendations and approve any new metrics stemming from these recommendations. We look forward to providing insight to inform new/refined metrics specific to increasing diversity, using resources to signal a sense of welcome, creating resources with local communities in mind, extending grant periods, intentionally connecting conservation to boating and fishing, modernizing language and creating more calls to action.

Spitfire and Assessment Team members are eager to see the progress RBFF will make through its thoughtful work and collaborations in the years ahead.





15