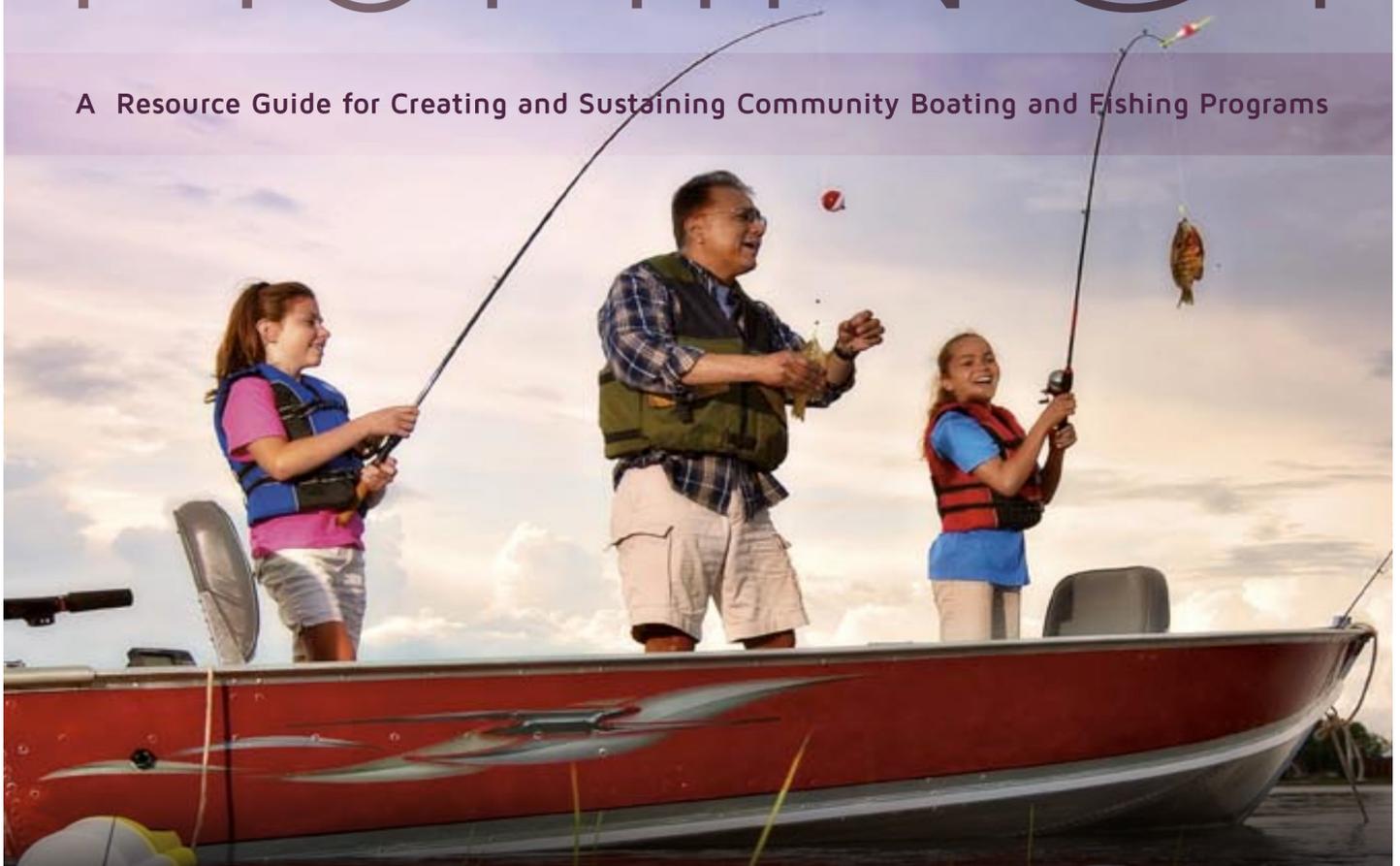


TAKE ME FISHING!

A Resource Guide for Creating and Sustaining Community Boating and Fishing Programs



**National Recreation
and Park Association**



**RECREATIONAL
BOATING & FISHING
FOUNDATION**

Produced by the National Recreation and Park Association with support from
the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation

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ABOUT

ABOUT THE NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing park, recreation, and conservation efforts that enhance quality of life for all people. Through advocacy, citizen engagement, and professional development, NRPA encourages the promotion of healthy lifestyles, recreation initiatives, and conservation of natural and cultural resources.

For digital access to NRPA's flagship publication, Parks & Recreation, visit www.parksandrec-magazine.org.

ABOUT NRPA'S TAKE ME FISHING™ INITIATIVE

Through a partnership with the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF), NRPA's Take Me Fishing™ initiative supports park and recreation agencies and youth organizations, which engage young people aged 6 to 15 in boating, fishing, aquatic education, and environmental conservation. The association provides grant opportunities, resources, and research emphasizing the long-term health and wellness benefits received through boating and fishing.

More than 200,000 kids in the U.S. have participated in recreational boating and fishing programming through grants made possible by RBFF.



ABOUT RBFF

RBFF is a nonprofit organization established in 1998 to increase public awareness and appreciation of the need to protect, conserve and restore the nation's aquatic natural resources. RBFF helps to increase participation in recreational angling and boating through national outreach programs including the Take Me Fishing™ campaign and Anglers' Legacy™.

For detailed resources and information, go to www.takemefishing.org.

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National Recreation
and Park Association

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND INSPIRATION FOR THIS GUIDE

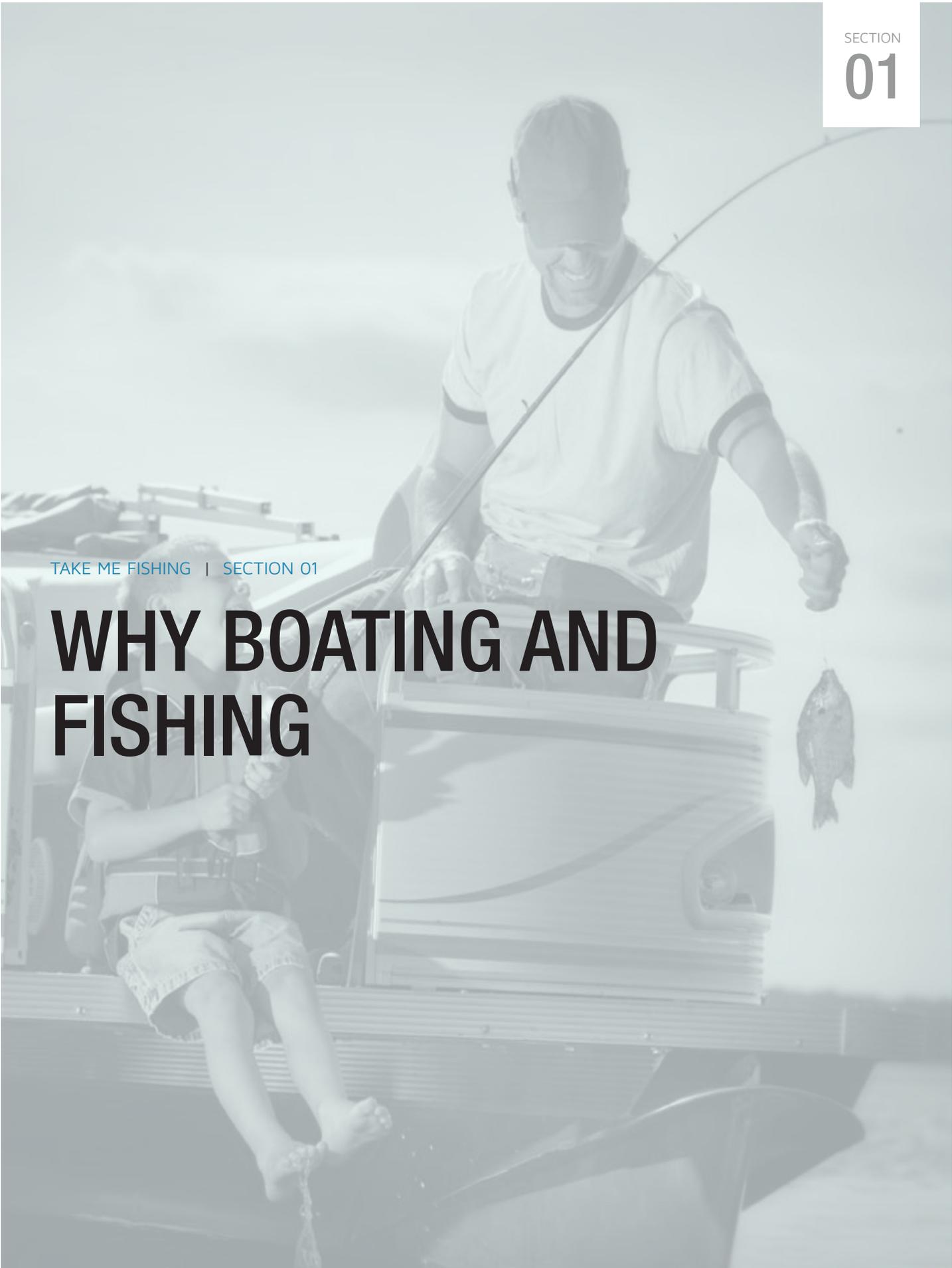
Across the U.S. , there has been a movement to engage youth in the outdoors and increase the opportunities young people have to connect with their natural surroundings through recreation and learning-based activities. NRPA created this resource guide to help agencies develop and maintain successful programs that will engage thousands of youth in the lifetime pursuits of boating and fishing, and create a new generation passionate about nature.

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TAKE ME FISHING | SECTION 01

WHY BOATING AND FISHING



WHY BOATING AND FISHING?

RECREATION AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Two of the most-recognized benefits afforded by boating and fishing programs include recreational activities and outdoor learning. Youth today spend more time indoors than previous generations—and this notion rings particularly true for urban areas. The learning aspect of boating and fishing programs are viewed as especially important, and many successful programs incorporate at least some classroom and in-the-field education on topics such as aquatic stewardship, the natural environment, boating/fishing fundamentals, and swimming and safety.

Benefits of Boating and Fishing Programs

- Recreation/Learning Opportunities
- Introducing Life-Long Passions
- Health/Personal Growth
- Family Engagement
- Appreciation for the Environment
- New Activities
- Community
- Special Programs



In Houston, Texas, program administrators work with youth on the fundamentals of fishing, providing introductory instruction and education on rules and regulations, in order to “wet their hands” and prepare them for excursions.

INTRODUCING LIFE-LONG PASSIONS

In many families, the love of boating and fishing is passed down from generation to generation, but this is not always the case. Boating and fishing programs provide opportunities for young people and their families to experience a new activity outdoors, and can lead to a life-long appreciation, which participants can eventually share with their children and friends.

Alternatively, excited and interested children can lead to engaged parents and elders, resulting in the counter-clockwise creation of new families passionate about these activities.

HEALTH AND PERSONAL GROWTH

Boating and fishing are healthy outdoor activities—good for the mind, body, and soul—which keep children physically engaged and provide stress-relief for adults. As gateway outdoor activities, they are effective strategies in fighting the obesity epidemic prevalent in today’s youth and promoting long-term healthy lifestyles.

Equally important is the personal-growth factor, as learning and applying new skills leads to the creation of knowledge, a sense of accomplishment, and a boost in self-esteem.

“GETTING KIDS EXPOSED AND INTERESTED IN FISHING AND BOATING. THAT’S THE BIG THING. IF YOU CAN GET THE KIDS EXCITED ABOUT IT...YOU GET EVERYBODY INVOLVED.
- CADILLAC, MICH.



“ THERE’S NOTHING LIKE THE BOND YOU GET WHEN YOU’RE SITTING ON THE SIDE OF THE LAKE OR ON A BOAT FISHING...IT DOESN’T MATTER IF THE FISH ARE BITING. THOSE ARE MEMORIES THAT YOU CANNOT PUT A PRICE TAG ON. – GREEN VALLEY, ILL.

Due to a variety of factors, the opportunities for many urban youth to get on or near the water are limited. Community boating and fishing programs bridge the gap and offer constructive and rewarding alternatives to less productive activities.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Organized boating and fishing programs provide the ideal settings for family bonding and relationship building—and thus, improve communities through the construction of stronger family foundations. These programs often attract grandparents as well, bringing families together across generational lines.

For many parents, household income can be the biggest limiting factor in the variety of activities to which their children have access. Boating and fishing programs like those provided through NRPA’s Take Me Fishing™ initiative are free or are provided at a very low cost, allowing participation across all economic backgrounds.





"A notable source of joy for youth—when they catch their first fish after learning and practicing the proper technique!"

APPRECIATION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

An obvious, but important benefit of boating and fishing programs—they help instill an appreciation for the environment. Many administrators note that their programs have allowed residents a better understanding of life cycles, local habitats, and the value of protecting and maintaining natural resources.

NEW ACTIVITIES

Boating and fishing programs are beneficial to youth of all backgrounds and interests, including those who

IN TUSTIN, MICH., AN ECONOMICALLY-DEPRESSED AREA, THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR NOTES THAT AFFORDABLE FAMILY ACTIVITIES WITH AN EDUCATIONAL COMPONENT ARE WELL RECEIVED BY THE LOCAL CITIZENS.

“ WITH OBESITY AND HEALTH ISSUES OF CHILDREN TODAY, WE HAVE CHOSEN TO ATTACK THAT BY PROVIDING AS MANY OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AS WE POSSIBLY CAN. – YAKIMA, WASH., ON THEIR CHILDREN’S FISHING PROGRAM.

already engage regularly in other sports and fitness-related activities. While they are similar to traditional sports in that they are healthy recreational pursuits, they reach youth through a less structured and less competitive setting, and best of all, they’re fun!



"It's awesome, people of all different cultures coming together for a common cause—to fish." – Ocala, Fla.

COMMUNITY

Not to be overlooked as a benefit: community unity. Boating and fishing programs cross socioeconomic and cultural lines, and allow different people to come together. They are effective not only in getting youth outdoors, but also in connecting participants through a common, constructive experience.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Creating a level playing field for all citizens in a local area—this is a goal for every park and recreation agency. Boating and fishing programs can reach all populations of a community with incredible outcomes.

For example, a majority of Miami, Fla.'s, program serves children with physical and intellectual disabilities. Other administrators note creating special programs for the economically disadvantaged, or for military families, such as Minneapolis's "Poles for Heroes."

IN THE MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., "POLES FOR HEROES" PROGRAM—FATHERS SERVING OVERSEAS WATCH AND ENGAGE ONLINE WITH THEIR CHILDREN FISHING VIA THE INTERNET, AND EVEN HAVE A DISCUSSION. THE BROADCASTS WERE ALSO RECORDED AND POSTED ONLINE.

TAKE ME FISHING | SECTION 02

DEVELOPING A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM



DEVELOPING A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

- Funding, Community Outreach and Partnerships
- Choosing Your Audience
- Selecting a Site
- Information/Resources
- Securing Equipment
- Enthusiastic Administrators
- Safety
- Staffing
- Volunteers
- Challenges
- Incentives

FUNDING, COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS

Each of the organizations interviewed for this guide receive grant support from NRPA's Take Me Fishing™ program. However, financial support can come in a variety of forms, and most grantors and funding sources have different requirements for target audience, program design and goals, and reporting. For guidance on how to raise other funds, please see [SECTION 6](#).

Securing donations and sponsors can greatly enhance your ability to serve participants in the short and long term. Potential partners include:

- State Departments of Natural Resources
- State Fish and Wildlife, Boating and Waterway Divisions
- Boating and Fishing and Professional Anglers Associations
- Outdoor Retailers
- Local Businesses and Corporate Offices
- Community Support Organizations

The primary emphasis of your outreach should be on the importance of supporting youth in the community and the benefits of boating and fishing programs for young people. For retailers, focus on the advertising and promotion benefits—specifically if you are planning a program or event with a large number of people.

The amount of pitching necessary will vary. For some, they will already be sold on the benefits, while others may require a good deal of information before they make a decision.

Supporters will want to know how they will be promoted,

and successful programs recommend creating a detailed sponsorship package. Potential ideas for sponsor recognition include:

- Event Banners/Signage
- Printed/Electronic Materials
- Website
- Social Media
- T-Shirts/Hats
- Gifts for Participants
- Newsletters
- Annual Reports
- Press Releases/Media Outreach

CHOOSING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Local Demographics

To state the obvious—though it cannot be overstated—designing your programs based on the needs and makeup of your specific community will significantly increase your chances of long-term success. Knowing your citizens will also result in more effective and efficient outreach and publicity. While household income is particularly important, other considerations include age, sex, race, ability, and total population.

Reaching Underserved Audiences

Reaching traditionally underserved audiences, such as low-income and inner-city youth, minorities/non-English speaking citizens, and people with disabilities can be successfully achieved through a variety of ways.

One method for success is networking with neighborhood/community groups, non-profit organizations, houses of worship and schools who serve your target audiences. Programs will be strengthened considerably by building relationships with other like-minded organizations.

Tips for Serving Underserved Audiences

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Programs may need to make modifications, such as requiring lower child to adult ratios and making sure sites/activities are accessible by persons with disabilities. Partnering with organizations that specialize in serving people with disabilities is a way to ensure that you are successful in both reaching and accommodating this population.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Are your sites ADA compliant* (includes pathways, piers, docks, and ramps)?
2. Do you have the proper equipment to accommodate your participants?
3. Are your sites accessible for people with physical difficulties such as older adults?
4. Are your staff members trained to work with people with special needs?



MINORITIES/NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING CITIZENS

Programs who work with non-English speaking audiences should take care to address language barriers, especially when developing rules, safety information, and outreach. Two quick tips include making sure you have bi-lingual staff and volunteers, and engaging in publicity through the use of local non-English media.

URBAN/INNER-CITY YOUTH

When working with urban/inner-city youth, income and transportation can be extremely limiting factors to participation. Program administrators note the importance of offering programs free-of-charge or that waive/reduce fees for low-income families (for example, Green Valley, Ill., specifically promotes the fact that their program is entirely free), and suggest partnering with entities such as local schools for bus transportation.

FEMALES

Existing programs note that girls are just as enthusiastic and capable about fishing as boys. While some programs actively network with women's fishing groups, mothers' groups, and Girl Scout troops, others do not—but take steps to ensure they are included equally in outreach efforts.



"A bulk of our kids are from the more disadvantaged quadrants of our community...we're reaching kids that don't otherwise have the opportunity."
– Yakima, Wash.

SELECTING A SITE

Assessing Your Resources

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What are your fishing and boating resources?
2. What bodies of water are most accessible to your target audiences?
3. What experiences (visual and physical) will they offer?
4. What laws and regulations (local and state) do you need to take into account (e.g. time of day/year, fishing seasons, licensing, quotas, etc.)?
5. What are the physical safety considerations for each site?
6. What are the environmental safety considerations?
7. How could the weather in your local area affect accessibility and safety?



AQUATIC RESOURCES: HOW WELL STOCKED ARE THE LOCAL BODIES OF WATER?

When selecting the best site(s), it is important to consider the natural resources available in the community, how accessible they are to your target audience(s), and how they can best be used to achieve your goals.

Other important considerations include weather (which can limit access to sites) and environmental factors—in Baton Rouge, La. , for example, administrators monitor the pH quality of the water.

While it may seem obvious, having well-stocked waters is also critical to success. Waters are typically stocked by state agencies (e.g. wildlife and natural resources)—and program administrators recommend keeping in regular contact with these agencies to stay informed of stocking schedules and supply.

INFORMATION/RESOURCES

Program administrators note relying heavily on information from NRPA and RBFF’s Passport to Boating and Fishing and other resources for the development of programs. Organizations that are considering launching new programs or expanding current programs are advised to take advantage of the printable brochures and pamphlets, educational curriculum and materials, best-practices, bookmarks, and other online resources listed at the end of this guide.

SECURING EQUIPMENT

Securing equipment is a crucial step, however, equipment will vary greatly based on each program’s specific needs, and can include boats and kayaks, personal-

flotation devices, fishing rods, reels, hooks, bait, and lures.

Many program administrators note that they cannot rely on loans and donations, and a majority of grant money received is used to secure boating and fishing equipment. Successful programs leverage their grant funds through a variety of ways, including:

- Purchasing equipment at discounted rates
- Purchasing used equipment
- Securing donations from local sponsors
- Securing in-kind donations of equipment and supplies

ENTHUSIASTIC ADMINISTRATORS

Having a successful administrator who is passionate about boating and fishing is a key component. However, successful programs do not require an administrator with a lengthy background in boating and fishing. In fact, many successful programs have been developed and sustained with administrators who have little or no background, but supply a passionate and infectious commitment.

SAFETY

All of the administrators interviewed for this publication stressed the importance of paying the utmost attention to safety. Because these programs consist of activities on or near the water and are created for children, there are numerous safety concerns that must be addressed. Successful programs require establishing a protocol for safety when the program is being crafted, and maintaining a focus on safety as the program is developed and maintained.



IN MIAMI, FLA., AS A RESULT OF THE SUCCESS OF THEIR PROGRAM, THE LOCAL COMMUNITY FORMED A NOT-FOR-PROFIT TO BUY NEW BOATS. AS A RESULT, MIAMI DOES NOT HAVE TO RELY ON RENTALS. IN ADDITION, THE PROGRAM HAS SECURED DEALS TO USE COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND LOCAL BOATING CLUBS AT NO COST.

Examples of Safety Protocols:

- Ensure that children know how to swim prior to going out on the water.
- Provide instruction on how to handle equipment safely and conduct one's self on and near the water.
- Ensure that instructors are certified in their specific areas.
- Maintain low participant to instructor ratios.
- Make sure that the program's focus on safety is conveyed at all times, in all communications/materials about the program, and to all parents, youth, and other participants.
- Be sure to do proper background checks on all volunteers (see Volunteers).
- Provide PFD's to participants (Personal Flotation Devices)

RESOURCES

<http://www.takemefishing.org/fishing/fishopedia/fishing-safety>

<http://www.takemefishing.org/boating/boat-responsibly/related-links>

Miami, Fla. , requires that all participants know how to swim and ensures that when taking children out on sailboats, there is also a “chase boat” present in case of emergencies. They also maintain a tight teacher-student ratio of 5:1 when on the water, and require proper certifications for those running their programs.

STAFFING

Staff/Time Allocation

Community boating and fishing programs are often launched with existing staff—in most cases with one or two full-time staff members. These individuals have other responsibilities as well, with about 25 percent or less time allocated to the boating and fishing programs. For example, in Columbus, Ohio, two administrators spend approximately 15 percent of their time each year pursuing partnerships and completing necessary paperwork and contracts.

On rare occasions, programs noted having 10 or more full-time staff involved; in these cases the programs have grown to a point where they are active in multiple locations. Still, only a portion of the full-time employees’ time is allocated to the boating and fishing programming.

WHEN TRAINING STAFF, PRAIRIE DUE CHIEN, WIS., FOCUS ON THE GUIDELINES AND CODE OF ETHICS FOR STAFF.

Staff Training

Most agencies and organizations noted that when launching programs, the majority of information provided to staff was conveyed during weekly staff meetings. However, formal training is sometimes provided by state government agencies—mostly fish and game commissions.

VOLUNTEERS

Recruiting Volunteers

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, COLUMBUS, OHIO, IMPLEMENTS STAFF TRAININGS EVERY YEAR IN THE SPRING, AND SETS UP A FISHING COMMITTEE FOR YEAR-ROUND PLANNING.

Volunteers are critical to success—most programs cannot survive without them. When recruiting volunteers, programs should take a pro-active approach, which typically requires making formal contact with organizations and sharing pre-prepared information and promotional materials.

When soliciting volunteers, it is important to:

- Clearly communicate the volunteers’ responsibilities
- Share any information about the program’s reach and credibility
- Provide training regarding safety protocols, curriculum and program goals

Community organizations, marinas and local chapters of professional fishing organizations (BASS, Trout Unlimited) schools, local and federal government agencies, local businesses, houses of worship and family connections are all good places to begin your volunteer search. By reaching out to directly (via phone, e-mail, and at club/community meetings) and building relationships, you can help encourage active, ongoing participation and interest.

Training Volunteers

Administrators should seek volunteers who are knowledgeable and interested in boating, fishing, and the outdoors. This will lend credibility to the program and reduce the time needed for training.

In most cases, training takes the form of an orientation the morning of an event to discuss safety, the program

Sources For Volunteer Recruitment

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Community groups are a good starting point. The lists of community groups in local areas vary, but can include Kiwanis Club, Key Club, boating and fishing clubs, churches, mentoring programs, rod and gun clubs, and rotary clubs.

SCHOOLS

Boating and fishing programs benefit greatly from teen volunteers. They are respected by younger participants, and in turn for their service, develop leadership and mentoring skills.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Volunteers can also be located through local government agencies, including police and fire departments. In addition, networking with retired government worker groups can also lead to potential recruits.

LOCAL BUSINESSES

The local business community is a valuable source from which to draw, in fact, some businesses (usually large) require employees to participate in a small amount of community service each year. Don't forget to reach out to department stores and sporting retailers. The best contacts to make are generally within the human resource departments.

FAMILY MEMBERS

Family members of staff and participants have great long-term potential; they are likely to develop a full awareness of the positive impact programs have in their communities, and are therefore committed to their success.

and its goals and to assign responsibilities. Tips should also be given on how volunteers can best relate to the participants, and how the volunteers can help make the experience a positive one for both the participants and themselves.

Screening Volunteers

Most boating and fishing programs require a background check on any volunteer that will be working with the program on an ongoing basis. While staff members sometimes perform the background checks themselves, they are usually performed by government agencies—free of charge.

Some programs have the protective measure in place of never allowing an adult to be alone with children; they always require two adults to be present.

RESOURCE

For information on NRPA's Operation TLC2 Making Communities Safe Volunteer Management and Background Screening program, go to www.NRPA.org/tlc2.

Recognizing and Rewarding Volunteers: Appreciation is the Greatest Gift!

Many programs have an annual recognition event—usually in the form of a reception, luncheon, or banquet (sometimes held as part of an annual meeting)—where volunteers are recognized individually for their valuable service.

MIAMI, FLA., USES COAST GUARD VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE BEEN GOVERNMENT SCREENED, AND ONLY ALLOWS ONE-ON-ONE CONTACT WITH PARTICIPANTS FROM TEACHERS WHO HAVE BEEN FINGERPRINTED THROUGH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT.

Gifts are a great way to show appreciation, and generally take the form of hats, mugs, clippers, T-shirts or sweat-shirts, gas coupons, and fishing passes. Some programs also provide free access to outdoor/recreation facilities such as golf courses, parks, gardens, skating rinks, and recreation centers, based on interest.

It is important to note that most administrators interviewed reported that the feedback they have received from volunteers is that involvement alone is the only recognition they desire.

CHALLENGES

Programs interviewed for this publication reported very few challenges—however, three common themes surfaced including:

1. limited funding;
2. weather; and
3. managing growth.

Despite these challenges, none of the programs indicated that they were insurmountable. The following sections summarize these challenges and briefly discuss ways they may be overcome.

Limited Funding

Most boating and fishing programs have struggled to some degree with funding, and have overcome this obstacle in a variety of ways, including:

- Securing additional grants
- Community sponsorships
- Equipment donations/expertise from related organizations

- Partnering with schools and community groups
- Volunteer recruitment

Weather

As would be expected with outdoor activities, weather and water depth fluctuations can play a cruel role in the cancellation of events and outings. In addition to disappointing participants, they can also result in the loss of volunteers due to scheduling conflicts.

Administrators recommend scheduling alternative dates and developing good back up/contingency plans as precautionary measures. Prepare alternative indoor programming utilizing the resources provided at the end of the guide, including: games, activities relating to boating and fishing, boat model drawing and building, knot tying, fish-ed, identifying bodies of water and types of fish in your area, aquatic education projects.

Managing Growth

The above points notwithstanding, the biggest challenge boating and fishing programs have faced are the popularity of the programs and subsequent rapid growth. In these cases, programs struggle with their limited resources of staff and volunteers, equipment, fish, space, and even—as Honolulu, Hawaii’s, program observed—adequate parking spaces.

When additional resources are hard to secure, programs may need to cap participation numbers or require pre-registration.

LA CROSS, WIS., MAKES SURE THAT NO PARTICIPANT WALKS AWAY EMPTY-HANDED; EVERY INDIVIDUAL RECEIVES A TAKE ME FISHING HAT. THE PROGRAM PARTNERS WITH LARGE SPONSORS TO HOLD GIVEAWAYS (E.G. ROD AND REEL COMBOS FOR THE FIRST TWO HUNDRED CHILDREN TO SHOW UP).

INCENTIVES

Gifts and Awards

Incentives can play a valuable role in engaging youth. Children respond favorably to receiving small mementos or gifts for their participation, or for the chance of winning an award or trophy.

Many boating and fishing programs provide gifts to everyone who participates, and obtain their gifts from sponsors such as local retailers and businesses. Typical gifts include tackle boxes, rods and reels, bobbers, tape measures, clippers, camping equipment, life vests, hats and visors, t-shirts, pens and certificate/awards. Many programs also hold events with contests and prizes—e.g. for casting or for the first/largest/most fish caught.

Appreciation and Fulfillment Through Participation

Some programs do not use any incentives to attract participants and still have reported high participation, indicating that their programs are fun, engaging, and simply successful by providing the fishing equipment and the adults to implement the program.



TAKE ME FISHING | SECTION 03

ENCOURAGING BOATING/ FISHING AS LIFELONG LEISURE PURSUITS



ENCOURAGING BOATING/FISHING AS LIFELONG LEISURE PURSUITS

- Emphasis on Nature
- Equipment
- Positive Experiences
- Opportunities to Improve Skills
- Encouraging Family Participation

When asked about special efforts to encourage youth to pursue boating and fishing as lifelong leisure activities, most administrators place an emphasis on the need to simply introduce the activities themselves. While it is understood that, due to lack of access, some children can't or won't pursue the activities outside of their program participation—many administrators believe that the key is to “start young.”

EMPHASIS ON NATURE

Instilling a love and appreciation for nature and outdoor activities is an important part of enticing youth to continue boating and fishing in the future. For many programs, this is emphasized just as much as skill level. Though it may take some young people years to develop good boating and fishing techniques, their love of nature will keep them engaged.

OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE SKILLS

Many programs recognize the need to offer incremental educational and mentor programs to further engage and motivate youth to improve their skills over subsequent years. For example, Miami, Fla., offers opportunities for youth to develop and improve skills from age 10 to age 21. La Cross, Wis., offers secondary and continuing level programming—so youth can slowly work toward advancing their skills—while always encouraging a general respect, appreciation and love for the outdoors.

PROVIDING EQUIPMENT

Providing equipment to youth that they can keep and continue to use outside of the program is an effective

“ WE MAKE SURE WE GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO MAKE THEM WANT TO COME BACK. THOSE KINDS OF THINGS MEAN A LOT TO THE KIDS. YOU OUGHT TO SEE THEM COME RUNNING, THE LIGHT IN THEIR FACES. — OCALA, FLA.

way to keep them engaged long after their participation in the program ends. And for youth from low-income families, it may also be the only way that they are able to enjoy the activities post-program.

ENCOURAGING FAMILY PARTICIPATION

Attracting family members of participants not only expands the reach and support of the programs, but increases the chances that people will continue the activities on their own.

POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

While it may seem obvious, it is vital that program administrators do everything they can to ensure that participants of boating and fishing programs have positive, enjoyable experiences. The more they enjoy the experiences in youth, the more likely they will continue the activities as adults.

“ WE TRY TO GET THE ADULTS THAT ARE TAKING THE CHILDREN FISHING TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED. THEY CAN TAKE THEM OUT, AND THOSE CHILDREN IN TURN WILL CONTINUE TO RECREATE OUTDOORS. AND AS THEY GET OLDER, THEY WILL SHARE WITH THEIR CHILDREN. – JACKSON, MISS.



TAKE ME FISHING | SECTION 04

RECRUITMENT AND PUBLICITY



RECRUITMENT AND PUBLICITY

- Sources for Recruitment

- Publicity and Outreach

Publicity and outreach are essential to the success of any community program. All successful programs engaged in vigorous promotions to generate participation.

Promoting boating and fishing programs may require the writing and printing of brochures, fliers, and other promotional materials, many of which can be produced and publicized at little or no cost. The following paragraphs summarize how many successful programs have taken advantage of community resources and the Internet to engage in affordable, successful outreach.

SOURCES FOR RECRUITMENT

Schools

One of the most effective methods of promoting programs is via local area schools. In addition to reaching mass quantities of young people, working with schools can lead to field trips, after school programs, teacher training/involvement, and formal integration into the students' curricula.

Most administrators recommend making direct contact with principals, and acquiring permission to make presentations to students and hand out promotional information (e.g. flier or brochure).

Community Organizations

Community organizations are excellent sources for generating participation and support. While most communities have endless groups from which to draw, those that have proven effective are recreation centers, libraries, supermarkets, 4-H Clubs, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, houses of worship, YMCAs, boating and fishing clubs, and retailers. Other potential community organizations include youth groups and home school groups.

State Agencies

State agencies can be an effective way to market programs, as many states publish booklets and department catalogs with program offerings listed per local area. Many administrators have been successful in getting their programs promoted in catalogs, brochures, and other marketing materials produced by state park and recreation departments.

PUBLICITY AND OUTREACH

Web/E-mail Promotions

Most boating and fishing programs post information on their department/organization websites, including general information, photos, event calendars, and registration. Some programs work with other organizations to have information/links posted on their websites as well—e.g. boating and fishing clubs, community organizations, city and county chamber websites and government agencies.

E-mail can be a very effective method for reaching participants. In addition to using pre-established mailing lists crafted through the your other program offerings, administrators suggest compiling distribution lists from sources such as Chambers of Commerce, local businesses, non-profits, and community groups.

Social Networking

While social media has yet to become fully integrated into many programs, it is an effective method for public engagement. Even if your program does not have its own social media pages, promoting your program through other organizations and individuals who use social media can help reach participants. Some commonly used social media sites include:

- Twitter: www.twitter.com
- Facebook®: www.facebook.com
- LinkedIn®: www.linkedin.com
- Fishington: www.takemefishing.org/community/home
- YouTube: www.youtube.com
- Foursquare: www.foursquare.com
- Ning: www.ning.com

Press/Public Relations

Public relations—generating attention for your program via newspapers, radio, TV, and Internet, can be a low-cost and effective means of reaching citizens in the local area. Ideas include:

- Press Releases/Pitch E-mails (to induce feature stories/briefs)
- Media Advisories (to invite electronic and print media to local events)
- Community Calendar Postings
- Community Festivals and Events
- Public Service Announcements (PSAs)
- Op-Eds/Letters-to-the-Editor (about the importance of programs)
- Online/Print/TV/Radio Advertising
- Public Event on Location to Introduce Programs
- Government Officials

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS CAUTION THE USE OF MEDIA OUTREACH WITHOUT TAKING STEPS TO ENSURE APPROPRIATE CAPACITY. ADVERTISING CAN RESULT IN AN INFLUX OF PEOPLE AND SAFETY CONCERNS.

TAKE ME FISHING | SECTION 05

EVALUATING YOUR PROGRAM



EVALUATING YOUR PROGRAM

- Program Indicators
- Tracking Tools
- Community Indicators

Evaluation and measurement helps programs refine, expand and sustain engagement, participation and support. The resulting information and metrics can be used as a tool to engage and sustain funding support from partners.

PROGRAM INDICATORS

Boating and fishing programs touch a large number of youth in local communities. Among the 20 programs interviewed for this publication, the majority serve 2,000 or more youth a year.

NRPA Take Me Fishing™ Programs – Participation Breakdown Example

- Under 2,000 Per Year: 1 Program (new)
- 2,000 Per Year: 6 Programs
- 2,000 to 3,000 Per Year: 6 Programs
- 4,000 Per Year: 3 Programs
- 5,000 and Over Per Year: 4 Programs

Evaluation is implemented largely by two main indicators:

- The number of youth who participate in programs
- The number of participants who return to programs year after year

Some programs also monitor skill progression (over the course of numerous years) in order to refine their programs and determine if participants are benefiting from instruction and are experiencing ongoing, developmental growth.

COMMUNITY INDICATORS

New and increased interest from the community is also used to track success, as building a base of volunteers or securing contributions can show how a community is perceiving and/or reacting to programs over time.

Potential community indicators include:

- Sponsorships/Donations/In Kind Contributions (from local businesses and organizations)
- Community Involvement (volunteers numbers/ repeat involvement over time)

HONOLULU, HAWAII, MONITORS ITS VOLUNTEERS—NOTING A CORE BASE OF PERMANENT VOLUNTEERS WHO RETURN EACH WEEK TO PARTICIPATE.



BATON ROUGE, LA., TAGGED A LIMITED NUMBER OF TROUT, AND ASKED PARTICIPANTS WHO CAUGHT A TAGGED FISH TO E-MAIL THE TAG INFORMATION. THOSE WHO CAUGHT NON-TAGGED FISH WERE ASKED TO TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS AND E-MAIL THEM/POST THEM ON FACEBOOK. THE EXERCISE RESULTED IN A COLLECTION OF ANECDOTES, FEEDBACK, AND VISUALS.

TRACKING TOOLS

Of course, numbers alone will not serve to indicate the success of programs. Participant reaction/testimonials can assist in letting programs know that they've impacted lives and contributed to their community.

Formal Surveys

Formal surveys can serve as very effective tools for evaluation, since they can be designed to collect almost any type of qualitative or quantitative data. Results are invaluable for ongoing program development, and for refining marketing materials and campaigns.

Popular survey methods include:

- In-person Interviews
- Electronic/Paper Mail Surveys (www.surveymonkey.com, <http://www.surveygizmo.com>)
- Comment Cards

Some Questions to Consider

1. Demographic data desired (Age/Sex/Race/Household Income)
2. Local geographic area
3. What did the participant enjoy the most?
4. How can the program be improved?
5. Where did the participant learn about the program?
6. Was this the first time participating in this program?
7. Was this the first time participating in a boating or fishing program of any kind?
8. Would the participant come back?

Informal Feedback

In addition to formal surveys, eliciting informal feedback from participants and volunteers is another useful way to determine how your program is received. This may be accomplished through a variety of ways, from e-mail feedback and testimonials/letters, to engaging in general conversations at events.

TAKE ME FISHING | SECTION 06

SUSTAINING PROGRAMS



SUSTAINING PROGRAMS

- Additional Funding
- Sponsors
- Fundraisers/Events
- Partnerships
- Donated Time
- Donated/Discounted Equipment
- Continued Participant Engagement and Advancement

“ TAKE A HARD LOOK AT THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROGRAM. FOR SOMEBODY THAT GETS ONE OF THESE GRANTS, THEY GET SOME MONEY AND THEY GET SOME EQUIPMENT. THAT’LL GET YOU THROUGH A YEAR. BUT HOW CAN YOU DO THIS FOR YEARS TO COME? – LA CROSSE, WIS.

You’ve secured funding, you’ve developed and launched a successful program...and now you want to ensure that you continue to positively impact the community year after year.

Programs agree that ongoing success comes hand in hand with having a detailed plan of action, vision and direction for the future. The following paragraphs include tips, suggestions, and anecdotes for sustaining programs and participation.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

It is advisable for programs to explore and develop relationships with as many sources as possible to help support long-term growth and sustainability. This is also important for programs who have secured grants through initiatives such as NRPA’s Take Me Fishing™ program, as these funds are not intended to stand alone and sustain programs over the long term.

Successful programs can secure funding from a wide range of sources, including:

- Private Foundations
- Federal Programs (e.g. Communities Putting Prevention to Work/Aquatic Education Act/Sport Fish Restoration Act)
- State Fish and Wildlife Divisions
- Private Companies
- Boating/Fishing/Recreation Associations

A good starting point for tracking grant opportunities offered through these organizations is to subscribe to their newsletters and e-mail alerts.

SPONSORS

Sponsors are another key resource for programs—and most large boating and fishing events are not viable without them. The list of potential sponsors is endless, but the best prospects are usually the corporate headquarters of larger firms, national companies, and chain retail stores.

As covered in [FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIPS](#) in [SECTION 2](#), administrators suggest creating a detailed sponsor-

ship package outlining how companies/agencies will be benefit from supporting your program. Being able to show that you are serving a large number of youth and families, and outlining in detail how you will recognize sponsors will help facilitate interest.

FOR COMPANIES WHO HAVE NOT PARTICIPATED IN OR SUPPORTED BOATING AND FISHING SPECIFIC PROGRAMS BEFORE, FORT WORTH, TEXAS, APPEALS TO THEM BY EMPHASIZING THE NON-TRADITIONAL PARENTS REACHED, THE FAMILY FOCUS, AND THE FACT THAT THE EVENT CAN BE OFFERED FREE TO THE PUBLIC.

FUNDRAISERS/EVENTS

Boating and fishing programs can raise funds through fun and unique ways, including:

- Dinners
- Raffles/Sales/Silent Auctions
- Contributions in Memory of Loved Ones
- Cash Donations (Groups/Individuals)
- Community Events and Fairs

Similar to sponsor engagement, it is important that administrators prepare information that clearly describes the program, and how it will benefit both the community and the donor/contributor.

YAKIMA, WASH., RAISED \$20,000 TO PAY FOR EQUIPMENT, INSURANCE, AND T-SHIRTS NEEDED FOR AN EVENT BY FUNDRAISING IN THE COMMUNITY FROM LOCAL CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS.

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are a key component in developing and sustaining boating and fishing programs. In addition to adding credibility to programs, they can greatly assist with staffing needs, expertise and training, publicity, and outreach. Some potential partners include:

- State Departments of Natural Resources
- State Fish and Wildlife Divisions
- Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts
- Schools
- Houses of Worship
- Fishing and Boating Organizations—Marinas, Chapters of BASS and Trout Unlimited

DONATED TIME

Successful boating and fishing programs have relied on the donated time and services of a variety of entities, included but not limited to:

- State Departments of Natural Resources
- State Fish and Wildlife Divisions
- Community Groups
- Boating and Fishing Clubs
- Private Citizens
- Media Organizations

Donated services—which free up financial resources for other aspects of the program—can include training, teaching, curriculum development, environmental cleanup, water quality testing, event set-up and support, marketing and publicity.

DONATED/DISCOUNTED EQUIPMENT

Though programs do not rely on donated equipment alone, it can be very helpful for increasing the amount of children and families served. Good sources for donations include:

- Boating and Fishing Retailers
- State Fish and Wildlife Divisions
- Special interest organizations such as BASS and Trout Unlimited
- Retailers including big box and sporting goods retailers

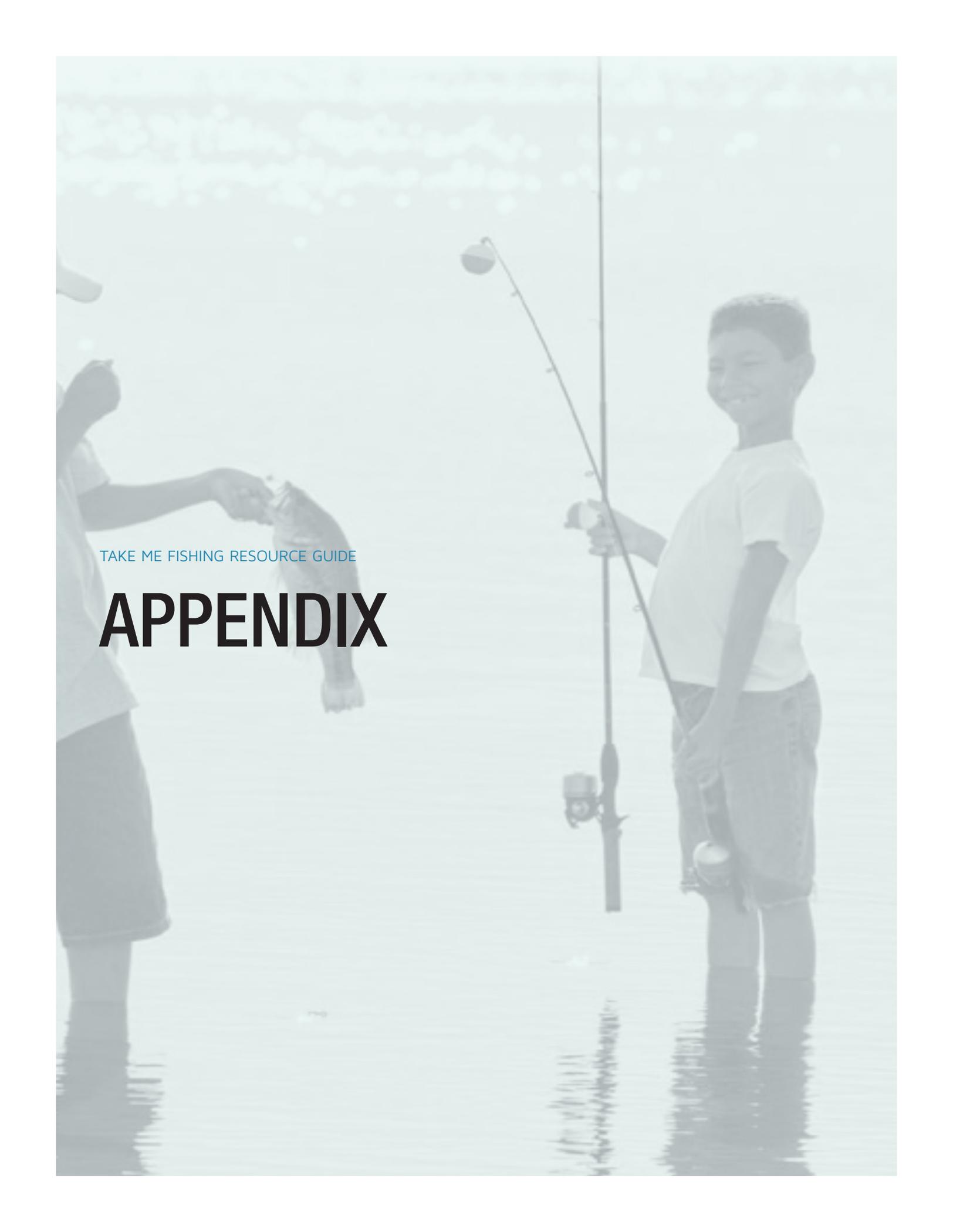
HONOLULU, HAWAII, RECEIVED 150 POLES FROM THE LOCAL AIR FORCE BASE AND 50 LOAVES OF BREAD FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO CAME WITHOUT BAIT.

Donations usually come in the form of fishing poles, tackle, and bait, refreshments and food, as well as incentives and prizes.

When boating and fishing programs cannot secure free equipment, many are still able to purchase equipment at a discounted price from businesses who are informed about the program's mission/audience. Retailers will want to connect their name/brand to programs that serve local youth and families, and will benefit from the opportunity to expose their products to a larger audience.

CONTINUED PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT AND ADVANCEMENT

It is widely recognized that participants will remain engaged if allowed to advance their education and experience. Providing these opportunities, mentor opportunities and referrals to advancement are key to increasing the likelihood that participants will become lifelong boating and fishing enthusiasts.



TAKE ME FISHING RESOURCE GUIDE

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

WEB BASED RESOURCES

<http://www.NRPA.org/Fishing> or <http://www.rbff.org>

BOATING, FISHING AND AQUATIC EDUCATION RESOURCES

http://rbff.org/Uploads/Resources_bestpractices/Best-Practices-Workbook-FINAL_1.pdf

<http://exploretheblue.discoveryeducation.com/>

PASSPORT TO FISHING AND BOATING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Download printables and curriculum. <http://rbff.org/page.cfm?pageID=123>

MENTOR PROGRAM

Engage and inspire community volunteers as mentors through the Angler's Legacy Ambassador program:

<http://www.takemefishing.org/community/anglers-legacy/home>

SOCIAL NETWORKS

Create your own community fishing group on FaceBook or at Fishington:

<http://www.takemefishing.org/community/home>

FISHOPEDIA

The encyclopedia of fish and fishing! <http://www.takemefishing.org/fishing/fishopedia/home>

EVENT HOSTING RESOURCES

<http://www.takemefishing.org/community/events-and-attractions/event-hosting-resources>

FAMILY FUN AND GAMES

<http://www.takemefishing.org/fishing/family/fishing-with-your-family>

Download and printable beginners guide from the US Fish & Wildlife Service:

http://www.takemefishing.org/assets/downloads/Fishing_is_Fun_2010.pdf

Printable Easy Tip Sheets: <http://rbff.org/page.cfm?pageID=153>

Many more resources on how to fish and boat, fishing licenses, boat registration, maps of where to fish and boat can be found at: www.takemefishing.org

METHODOLOGY

To compile the information used in this publication, formal survey interviews were conducted with 20 agencies and organizations in the U.S., that have implemented successful boating and fishing programs through the Take Me Fishing™ initiative. The interviews, which ranged in length from 30 to 60 minutes, were conducted by Denver-based consulting firm Left Brain Concepts, Inc., (LBC) in January 2011. The interviews were recorded and transcribed by LBC with approval from each of the 20 participating interviewees.

All of the organizations interviewed for this project expressed enthusiasm about their programs. While some administrators reported challenges (mostly limited budgets), they also noted that the challenges have not been insurmountable. In addition, all interviewees expressed that the programs have been worthwhile, and have improved the quality of life for their communities.

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TAKE ME FISHING™
takemefishing.org



RECREATIONAL
BOATING & FISHING
FOUNDATION

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Barack Recreation Center – Columbus, Ohio
City of La Cross – La Cross, Wisc.
City of Ocala Recreation and Parks – Ocala, Fla.
East Baton Rouge Recreation and Park commission – Baton Rouge, La.
Fayetteville-Cumberland Parks and Recreation – Fayetteville, N.C.
Fishing for Life – Minneapolis, Minn.
Fort Worth Parks and Community Services – Fort Worth, Texas
Greens Bayou Corridor Coalition – Houston, Texas
Honolulu Botanical Gardens – Honolulu, Hawaii
Houston Parks and Recreation Department – Houston, Texas
Larry's Casting Kids – Green Valley, Ill.
MDNRE/Mitchell State Park – Cadillac, Mich.
Miami-Dade County Public Schools – Miami, Fla.
Michigan 4-H/Kettunen Center – Tustin, Mich.
MS Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks – Jackson, Miss.
Prairie du Chien Parks and Recreation Department – Prairie du Chien, Wisc.
Three Rivers Park District – Plymouth, Minn.
Yakima Greenway Foundation – Yakima, Wash.
York Center Park District – Lombard, Ill.

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