



RECREATIONAL
BOATING & FISHING
FOUNDATION

RBFF + Ipsos Women's Research

January 11, 2023

Research Fielded May 2022

collemcvoy



Fishing and boating have benefited from the recent boost in outdoor participation

52.4M

Americans fished at least once during 2021— 2.3M more participants than before the pandemic.

4.7M

Hispanics fished in 2021, a 3% annual increase over the last 3 years.

8%

Black participation increased to 8%.

A group of people, including children and adults, are fishing from a wooden pier. They are holding fishing rods and looking out towards the water. The background is a dense forest of green trees. The image has a dark, teal overlay.

But with rising interest and participation, it's become clear that fishing and boating still have more work to do among underrepresented groups.

People of color cannot equally
access the outdoors or explore
them as safely as other groups.

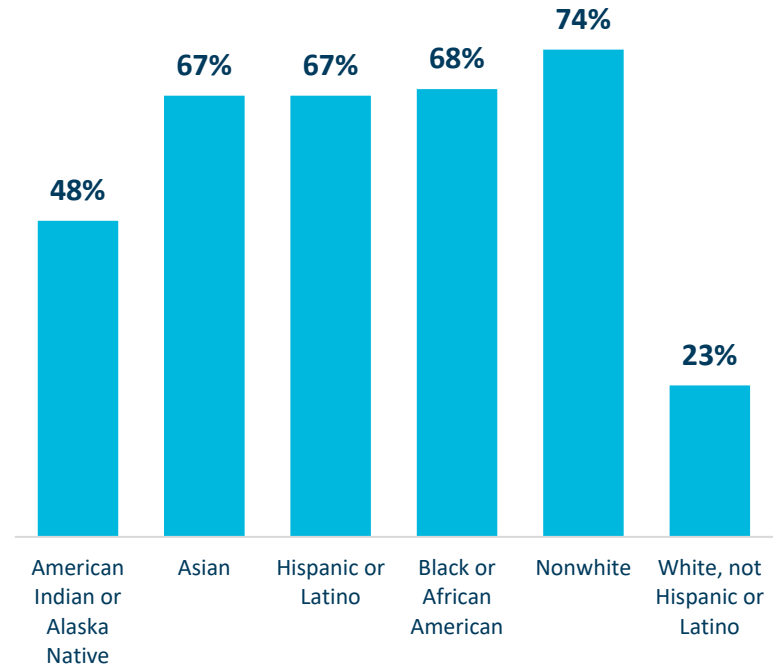
This land is your land
'Bad things happen in the woods':
the anxiety of hiking while black

Three African American hikers describe fears and stereotypes they have faced - and why they love hitting the trails

People of color cannot equally access the outdoors or explore them as safely as other groups.

People of color are more likely than white people to live in an area that is nature deprived

Percent of people living in a nature-deprived area by census tract demographic in the United States, 2017



People of color cannot equally access the outdoors or explore them as safely as other groups.

“Which of the following outdoor activities do you currently do? Please select all that apply.”

	Any outdoor activities	Active outdoor activities	Passive outdoor activities
All	92%	87%	62%
	Index to All (All = 100)		
Male	101	101	102
Female	98	98	99
18-34	101	101	103
35-54	102	103	103
55+	96	94	95
White	102	103	108
Black	91	87	84
Asian	103	104	87
Hispanic (of any race)	99	98	93
<\$50K	96	94	91
\$50K-74K	99	99	105
\$75K+	102	103	103

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a teal jacket and a grey cap, is smiling while fishing from a boat. She is holding a fishing rod that is bent, indicating she has caught something. The background shows a calm lake with another boat in the distance and a forested shoreline under a cloudy sky.

And women, particularly women of color, remain underrepresented in fishing and boating.

While 48% of women were interested in trying fishing, only 36% actually participated — the largest gap among all groups.

Female anglers stopped fishing at a 10% higher rate than their male counterparts.

Among those more likely to drop out of the participant pool were Hispanic and Black anglers.

It's a trend in we see in many outdoor sports.

Girls' participation averages **55%**

Boys' participation averages **66%**

The participation gap for women widens as they age

From age 26 to 66, women's participation declines to less than **20%** compared to **40%** for men

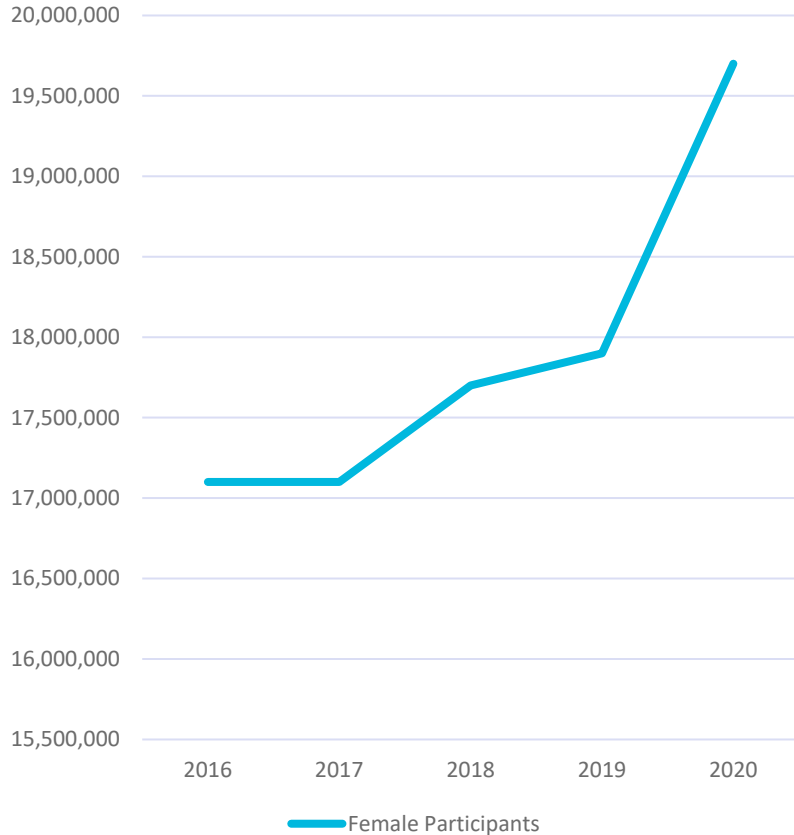
75% of outdoor participants are white



**We've already seen the potential of
putting women at the forefront.**



Female Fishing Participation



- ▶ Women Making Waves campaign launched in 2018
- ▶ Women Making Waves video crushed it with a more than 85% completion rate
- ▶ Women Making Waves social content outperformed general market assets with a nearly 8% engagement rate
- ▶ And we've amassed dozens of female influencers since launching Women Making Waves

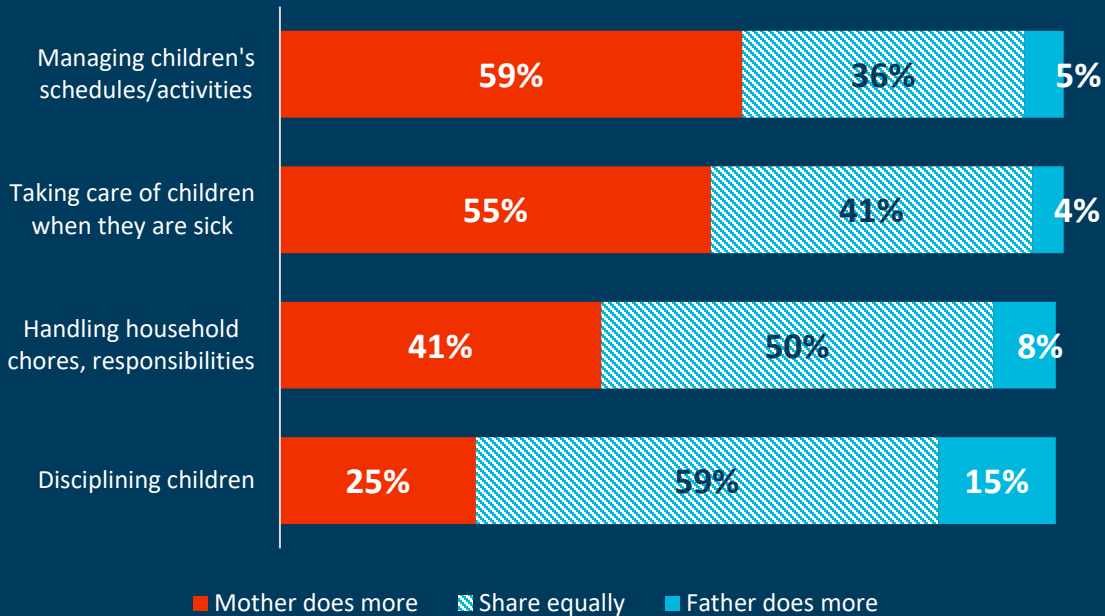
**But we haven't even begun to scratch the surface
of this audience's true potential.**

Women are the gateway to families.

Moms plan the activities and manage calendars — even when they're working full-time.

54%

Even in households with two parents working full-time, 54% say moms do most of the activity planning



Moms are more likely to introduce their children to fishing.

85%

of sons participated in fishing with their mothers, compared to 71% who participated with their fathers.

63%

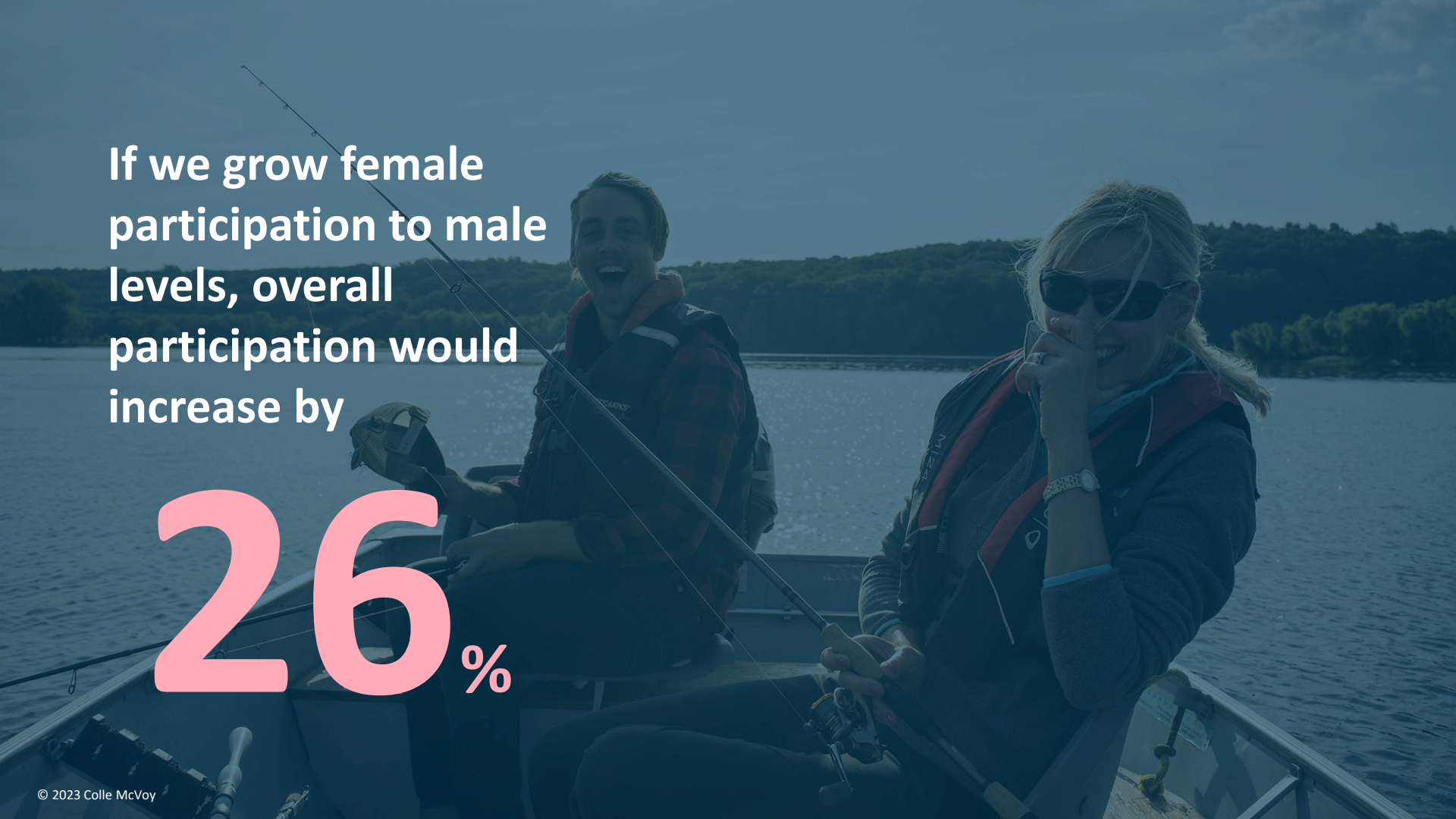
of daughters participated in fishing with their mothers, compared to 45% who participated with their fathers

Women are the gateway to the greatest growth in fishing and boating participation.

A person with long brown hair, wearing a white cap and a blue jacket, is seen from behind, aiming a bow in a forest. The background is a dense green forest. The image has a blue tint.

10%

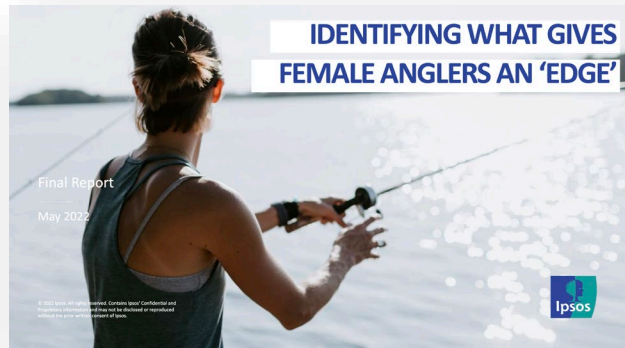
**boost in female participation in
2020**

A man and a woman are sitting in a boat on a lake, both wearing life jackets and holding fishing rods. The man is on the left, smiling broadly, and the woman is on the right, wearing sunglasses and smiling. The background shows a calm lake and a line of trees on the shore under a clear sky.

If we grow female participation to male levels, overall participation would increase by

26%

In partnership with Ipsos, Take Me Fishing conducted a study to understand the benefits, behaviors and barriers female anglers experience.



"I just think that women who fish have something in them...to fish you have to have patience and you have to love um...it's just a spirit that's different."

"I think women that don't fish tend to be more anxious and I feel like they have a harder time relaxing and being able to clear their mind. Fishing is one of those things that kind of keeps you and helps you to be at peace with nature."

75% Mental / 25% Physical
Anglers see fishing primarily as a mental sport but recognize that there are physical aspects embedded in the idea of needing strength to reel in larger sportfish or getting a boat off the trailer.

"I just think that women who fish have something in them...to fish you have to have patience and you have to love um...it's just a spirit that's different."

25 Ipsos

"Dear Fishergirl, You're doing great. Read a book about fish and learn the differences between the species in your area. Use circle hooks so you don't hurt the fish you catch, and try to avoid using live bait, unless you're planning to eat your catch. This goes for everything in life - if boys tease you, or some man says you can't do that, prove them wrong! You can do whatever you want to do, and anyone can catch a fish! I'd want to see the girl keep up with her hobby and enjoy doing it." –Active Angler

The findings have tremendous implications for how we need to evolve as an industry to better attract and retain female anglers.

RECRUITING FEMALE ANGLERS:

**WHY SHOULD WOMEN CARE
ABOUT FISHING?**

Fish aren't the only wonderful things women find in the water.

Based on the research, one thing is clear:

Women find the most confident, patient, and resilient versions of themselves on the water.

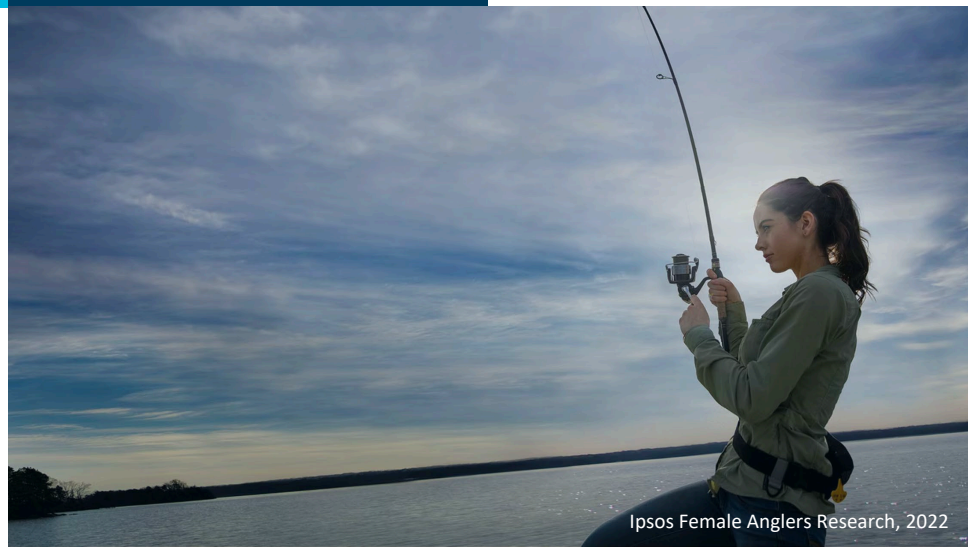
Female active anglers have significantly greater perseverance, grit, perceived health and life satisfaction than lapsed anglers and non-anglers.

Active anglers are 24% more likely than non-anglers to say that **setbacks don't discourage them.**

1 in 5 active anglers say fishing **makes them feel like they can do anything they set their mind to.**

Active female anglers are 25% **more likely to say their health is very good** compared to non-anglers.

Active female anglers are 27% **more likely to be satisfied with their lives** than non-anglers.



Female anglers also report greater mental strength and stress management than non-anglers.

1 in 4 active anglers say fishing helps them **manage their moods and long-term stress.**

Almost half of active female anglers say that **fishing teaches them patience.**

1 in 3 active female anglers say fishing teaches them **how to be still and concentrate.**

**But the industry today isn't set up to
welcome women.**

75% of women don't feel well represented in fishing marketing and advertising.

"It's simple - include diverse faces in your ads. Enough with the pink camo! Don't target female customers, just don't forget about them. We want - all the same things men want."

–Active Angler

"I would also show a more casual style of fishing that includes women and children - not always the white male decked out in logo fishing gear on his fancy bass boat."

–Active Angler

80% of women don't think that fishing gear or apparel is designed with women in mind.

“Have more female oriented gear, and by that, my hands are smaller, my feet are smaller than most males.”

-Active Angler

“I haven't found any vented fishing shirts that will fit my body type (fat arms, large breasts, smaller waist, big hips) without looking like I'm wearing a sail, so I usually wear a t-shirt and sweat in the sun.”

-Active Angler

Only 43% of female anglers have
been satisfied with recent
shopping trips

“Any time that I am at the store .. a male employee will always ask me if I need help. They usually start by asking if I am buying a gift for someone, which makes me feel like they think there is no possible way that I could be fishing myself.”

–Active Angler

”I end up not being approached by associates, or when I approach them with a question or need help, they tend to be very vague.. So honestly, I don't even ask for help anymore.. It's all definitely geared towards males.”

–Active Angler

And culturally, we have a long way to go.



8 in 10

women think of men when they think of someone
who fishes or someone who is good at fishing.

Women still experience cultural barriers to fishing.

43% of active female anglers do not feel respected by the angler community.

At least a third of Female Anglers experience men making jokes or mocking their participation; **half** have experienced feeling belittled by male anglers.

31% of active female anglers say it was intimidating to be a woman and fish with men.

1 in 4 female anglers believe negative stereotypes exist about women's ability to fish.



Even 1 in 4 active female anglers don't want to participate in fishing at times because they will be the only woman.

And women of color especially
experience **real barriers** to
fishing.

Less than half of non-white active
female anglers feel safe when fishing
alone.





I have invited my female friends to go with me, but they get intimidated by the process of getting the boat there, off the trailer and into the water. They usually say that it's just 'not for them' and we do something else instead.

— Active Angler



“

BARRIER:

It's not for me.

”

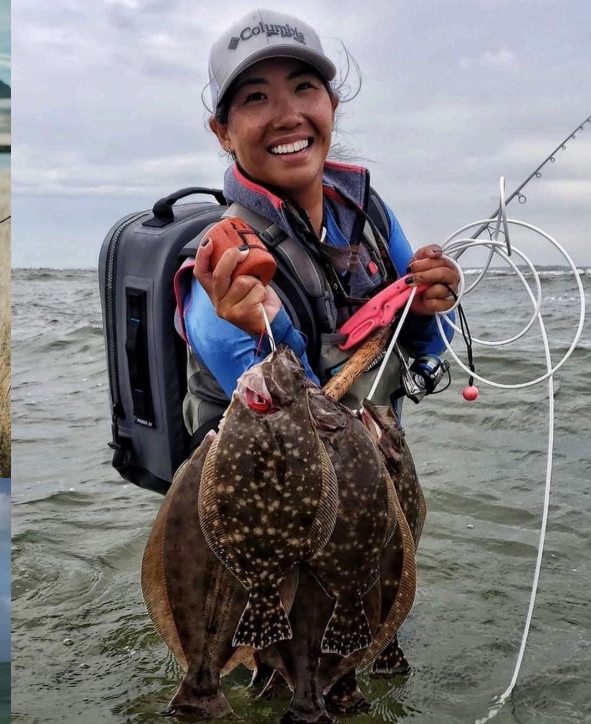
GRIT


CONFIDENCE

SELF-ESTEEM

HEALTH

HAPPINESS



A photograph of three women in fishing gear, including jackets and hats, looking towards the right. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is centered over the image.

Take Me Fishing is launching a new campaign this spring focused on confronting this barrier and changing women's perceptions of fishing.

Your help in spreading this campaign will inspire every woman in the nation:

To try something new.

To challenge herself.

To discover the self she can become on the water.

**We can work together to
tell women a new story about fishing.**

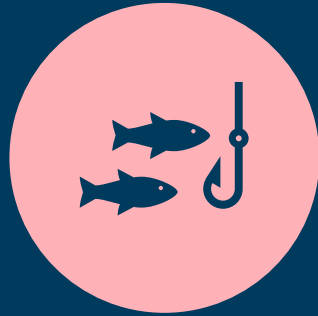
**We can work together to
change our cultural narrative.**

**We can work together to
welcome women more intentionally.**

How you can help recruit more women:



Better represent women and women of color in your marketing – for example working with content creators who identify as women



Focus on Professional Female Anglers the same ways Males are focused on



Reach out to existing women's groups in your community to make them aware that fishing and boating can be for them



Optimize your retail or online experience to be more welcoming to women

RETAINING FEMALE ANGLERS:

HOW CAN WE **KEEP** THEM
FISHING?

**Building memories with others is the
#1 motivator to go out and fish among Active
Female Anglers**



“Unfortunately, I do not have anyone I fish with regularly. My best friend moved a couple years ago but she really liked to. Now if I ask anyone it seems like a chore to get them to come out with me.”

–Active Angler





“I did not feel like I was part of a supportive community of anglers. I think it would have been fun to be part of a community because then we could have shared tips and tricks with each other.”

–Lapsed Angler



A group of ten people, mostly women, are standing on a rocky shore in a river or stream, fishing. They are wearing colorful rain jackets in shades of teal, blue, and purple, along with grey waders. Several of them are holding fishing rods, and some are waving or smiling at the camera. The background is a misty, overcast day with a calm body of water. The overall mood is cheerful and communal.

Community is the **key** to retention.

Community is key

Only 5% of active female anglers fish as much as they want to

14% don't have anyone to go fishing with

40% want a women's fishing club to help them fish more often

Building a Sense of Community is a Core Retention Strategy



Partner with existing local women's fishing and boating groups



Host **recurring** women-only events where women curious about fishing can learn more and meet potential new fishing buddies



Connect with RBFF to activate female focused events and campaigns