



# Launching a New Course



RECREATIONAL  
BOATING & FISHING  
FOUNDATION

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**FY24 was the year RBFF launched both its new three-year strategic plan and its unprecedented consumer campaign focusing on women as the gateway to increased participation in fishing and boating. By year's end, RBFF saw exceptional consumer buy-in to the campaign's message "Find Your Best Self on the Water," RBFF itself had innovated a stronger and sleeker approach to engaging its many stakeholders, and participation rates reached their highest levels ever.**





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## MESSAGE FROM RBFF BOARD CHAIRMAN

This past year, the Foundation started a new course with a new strategic plan. The plan focuses engagement into two areas: consumer and stakeholder. We consolidated stakeholder engagement — reducing the various silos we were operating under and taking a much more coordinated, integrated approach.

**As part of this, we're now applying "lessons learned" from our state engagement to federal agency and industry engagement.** This past year, RBFF contributed to the development of updated recommendations for recruiting, retaining, and reactivating (R3) anglers as part of a task force appointed by the president of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. RBFF recently created and filled the position of senior director of industry engagement. As we ramp up stakeholder engagement, especially through retailers directly and through their industry associations, this should be an important addition. Boating and fishing retailers are a critical piece of our overall retention strategy going forward.

**On the consumer engagement side, we have a hugely successful campaign that was launched this past year.** The Find Your Best Self on the Water campaign focuses on increasing participation among female anglers. This is a tremendous growth opportunity for participation across the country. Spending time and effort to focus on recruiting women to fishing and boating is wise and prudent move, and it appears to be gaining momentum.

Looking forward, we will continue core aspects of the campaign and add a new angle called "Second Catch," which focuses on reuniting Dads and daughters on the water. As a dad myself of college-age daughters, this notion of re-inviting the women anglers in your network to reconnect out on the water resonates with me — and I anticipate it will resonate with both men and women across the country.

The consumer engagement campaign of Find Your Best Self on the Water also has resulted in a larger profile and awareness of RBFF at industry events. Foundation-sponsored outings and other activities have generated a lot of buzz. These relationships are hugely important — they leverage and amplify our reach through and with partner organizations. We can't do it alone.

Especially after going through the pandemic, we all recognize the quality-of-life benefits of connecting with outdoor recreation and each other. We're seeing a groundswell of awareness about the life benefits of fishing and boating, an appreciation of what it means for our mental, physical and emotional well-being. Grit, perseverance, confidence, happiness — these are attributes that fishing builds in people, attributes I want to see in my daughters, and that attracts people to angling and boating.

**As "ambassadors" — the board, RBFF, and state, federal and industry stakeholders — we understand what fishing and boating means to the quality-of-life for everyday Americans. We know what it means to our lives personally, and we want everybody to be able to experience it.**



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Craig Bonds". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Craig Bonds**  
*Chairman of the Board*

## MESSAGE FROM RBFF PRESIDENT AND CEO

**I would like to start by calling attention to the new participation numbers for 2023.** They show that our consumer engagement efforts focused on recruiting women anglers is working. I am most proud of the fact that participation gains are across the board. They are not just among women, but also Hispanic Americans and Black Americans. All of these participation numbers were up, and in a substantial way. By every measure, the campaign is an exceptional success.

Our consumer campaign, outstanding as it is, though, is only part of the story. Our stakeholder partners are starting to leverage the work that we do. More and more, the imagery that you see is starting to reflect the real demographics of this country. RBFF has been at the forefront of this effort for many years. Now, the ripple effect we created is reaching and extending out from our stakeholders.

**Also, this year, RBFF began implementing our new strategic plan.** This was the first time we and our board of directors built a strategic plan from the bottom up, and everything is falling into place. We utilized the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS), which guided us towards basing our plan on two main pillars — consumer and stakeholder. Relying on the EOS process, we identified goals and tactics to achieve those goals, then aligned our staff accordingly so we could be more efficient helping people succeed with their important work.

Beyond getting our strategic plan into action, one of my key goals this year was to step up board engagement. At each board meeting we set aside time for meaningful conversations on topics pertinent to engaging more boaters and anglers.

We examine ways in which both states and industries can bolster their R3 efforts, with a focus on how RBFF can contribute to this pivotal endeavor.

**We began a conscious effort to build up our overall stakeholder engagement.** The board has been incredibly supportive of this, encouraging us to strengthen our relationships with federal partners. They acknowledged how great our work is with state agencies and challenged RBFF to develop similar partnerships with industry with a focus on retailers. We now have new staff dedicated to building relationships with the whole industry.

A partnership that I think deserves special attention this year is our Mobile Catch Center program. Since 2017, Take Me Fishing™ Mobile First Catch Centers™ have been spreading the joys of fishing across the United States. These mobile trailers, filled with fishing rods and fishing equipment, have motivated thousands to try fishing by offering up fishing experiences to underserved communities. With twenty-nine trailers operating in twenty-four states, last year alone our partners hosted 417 events reaching more than 40,000 attendees.

In the re-alignment of our strategic plan objectives and organization, in the successful rollout of our new consumer campaign, and in the growth of our research-based stakeholder programs, this has been an exceptionally good year for RBFF. I particularly want to thank the board and recognize how engaged its members are. Like us, they are excited about the work we are doing and what lies ahead.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Chanda". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Dave Chanda**  
*RBFF President and CEO*



Participation

# Year-One: Record-Breaking Headway

MOST EVER

# 57.7 Million

## Americans went fishing

5.7% increase over 2022 (54.5M)



HIGHEST SINCE 2007

# 19%

## Fishing participation rate of the U.S. population

5.2% increase over 2022 (17.9%)

RECORD HIGH

# 21.3 Million

## Women Anglers

7.5% increase over 2022





MOST ON RECORD

**6.3 Million**

Hispanic Americans went fishing

MOST ON RECORD

**5.2 Million**

Black Americans went fishing



Youth (ages 6-17)

**13 Million**

in 2023 — an increase from 2022 & 2021

**261k**

Boats Sold\*

Down since pandemic surge, but remaining strong  
\* NMMA







Consumer Outreach

# Find Your Best Self on the Water

# LAUNCHED: FIND YOUR BEST SELF ON THE WATER

RBFF's new consumer outreach campaign got fully underway in FY24. Grounded in research highlighting the benefits to women of embracing fishing, the Find Your Best Self on the Water campaign extended an invitation to women to feel happier, healthier, and fully welcome as they cast their lines on the water. With women making most family activity and spending decisions, these newly recruited women anglers are likely to bring their families along for the fun in the months and years ahead — potentially multiplying this year's record-breaking participation gains.

## INNOVATIVE MESSAGING, RESEARCH-CHARTED COURSE

Find Your Best Self on the Water is supported by earlier RBFF findings that a 10 percent increase in women's participation in fishing can mean an additional \$1.0 billion for sportfishing. Based on the \$962 annual spend per female angler estimated by Southwick, the 1.7 million more women who participated in fishing in 2023 delivered \$1.63 billion to the fishing industry...in one year! The actual benefits to women: invaluable.

## OUT THERE, EVERYWHERE

Find Your Best Self on the Water connected with millions of women through integrated messaging appearing on multiple popular platforms that the campaign's target market visits daily.

## WELL-NAVIGATED SOCIAL MEDIA CONNECTIONS

Influencer and RBFF's own paid social media presence reached women where they live — with posts featuring a woman enjoying boating and fishing and inviting other women to give it a try.

- 1 in 4 Women say fishing** improves mood, brings peace, manages stress, teaches patience, and develops self confidence.
- 2.89B Campaign-wide impressions**
- 84.9M paid social media impressions**
- 35M content views** (TikTok)
- 4.8% engagement rate** (influencer average 2.05%)





- 🐟 **25k new followers**
- 🐟 **384% increase in conversations**
- 🐟 **15.9% increase in female audience**
- 🐟 **91% video completion rate**
- 🐟 **149M PSA impressions**  
(TV, radio)
- 🐟 **\$14M donated media value**  
— additional reach above \$5.3M paid media buys

### ORGANIC SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH

The ripple effect of women posting and re-posting Find Your Best Self on the Water messages has been powerful. FY24 saw a surge in women-related fishing and boating hashtags across Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, and TikTok.

### FINDING YOUR BEST SELF – IN ADS AND ON TV

The campaign’s inviting look and compelling message connected with women in print ads and in 60-second and 30-second commercials, all appearing in media visited by prime market segments.

### PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The PSA campaign, an in-kind media placement, got the Find Your Best Self on the Water message across to millions of women.

### THE VIDEO DIMENSION

Relevant, fun, welcoming. Find Your Best Self on the Water videos, placed on TikTok, YouTube, and YouTube Shorts beat the industry’s average completion rate of 70% by over 20 points, proof that the message and campaign are on target.



## EARNED MEDIA COVERAGE

Find Your Best Self on the Water is a newsworthy, empowering message — one reason RBFF’s public and media relations campaign resonated with both consumer and trade media outlets who ran unique, campaign-related stories and press releases.

## MEMORABLE MEDIA EVENTS GET NOTICED

RBFF invited female media members to Bozeman, MT, for a one-of-a-kind fishing and boating experience. Media engaged with all three segments of RBFF’s stakeholder audience — state, federal and industry — while they visited the SIMMS factory, fly-fished from a boat, waded in the river, and kayaked at a lake. At a fish hatchery, they saw firsthand how fishing license funds support conservation efforts. The trip generated huge enthusiasm and publicity for fishing, boating, and the Find Your Best Self campaign.

## WOMEN BUOY TAKEMEFISHING.ORG VIEWS

There’s a new look to RBFF’s iconic consumer website. In addition to a diverse mix of multicultural audiences, photos of women enjoying boating and fishing appear throughout the website. Blogs that come directly from women chronicle the joy and how-tos of fishing and boating. Plus, Find Your Best Self on the Water has its own featured page. The nation’s women are taking notice.

### Consumer earned media

> 2.8B impressions  
2,834 unique stories  
41.5% increase over FY23

### Trade earned media

> 3.4M reach

### 32M visits to digital assets\* (websites and YouTube)\*

### 2.1M referrals to state license pages\*

### 212k referrals to state registration pages\*

### 474k visits to *Find Your Best Self on the Water* landing page

\*Including [VamosAPescar.org](http://VamosAPescar.org)

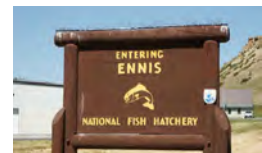
### State Partner:



### Industry Partner:



### Federal Partner:



USFWS Ennis  
National Fish Hatchery

## ON SITE AND IN VIEW

RBFF brought its campaign to events across the country, increasing brand awareness for both Take Me Fishing™ and Find Your Best Self on the Water.

- 🐟 Texas Fly Fishing & Brew Festival
- 🐟 Virginia Fly Fishing & Wine Festival
- 🐟 Ladies, Let's Go Fishing

- 🐟 Major League Fishing High School Camp
- 🐟 Reel Girls Fly Fishing Program



## FOR MANY, A NEW LIFELINE

RBFF's new consumer campaign is helping many women find their best selves — and thrive — on the water. They've responded. Of those who saw the campaign:

- 🐟 **80% are likely to fish within the next 24 months** (up from 76% YOY)
- 🐟 **66% intend to fish from a boat** (slightly up)
- 🐟 **39% brand awareness** (slightly up from 36%)

# THE ALLIANCE CONTINUES: BRANDING AT WALT DISNEY® WORLD RESORT PROPERTIES.

RBFF's brand-building alliance with Walt Disney World Resort produced thousands of Take Me Fishing™ guided fishing excursions pushing off from Walt Disney World Resort marinas, along with a whopping number of Take Me Fishing™ brand exposures at Resort properties.

## CAMP TAKE ME FISHING

New this year, Disney Alliance Promotions and Disney Event Group collaborated with RBFF's Take Me Fishing brand to create a custom event for Walt Disney World Resort guests. A single Camp Take Me Fishing event attracted 300 guests!

## MEDIA BUYS ON THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY DIGITAL AND CABLE TV

The Take Me Fishing™ brand reached millions of key target audience members through ads and placements on Disney-owned channels. Media exposure generated not only brand awareness, but an impressive number of online searches for and engagements with TakeMeFishing.org.

- 🐟 **Branding on marina signage, in-room TVs, take-along guides**
- 🐟 **New celebrity fishing events**
- 🐟 **Geocator ads on Disney's Hulu channel outperformed benchmarks by over 500%**
- 🐟 **Interactive Touch Points**
  - Mini-guided fishing excursions
  - Live DJ
  - Casting targets
  - Take Me Fishing-branded activities
  - Character meet & greet





## **WINNING OVER WOMEN CONSUMERS — AND WINNING TOP AWARDS**

“Interesting. Dynamic. Culturally relevant. Insight driven.” These were just a few of the reasons the American Advertising Federation (District 8) named RBF’s Find Your Best Self campaign, created by Colle McVoy, its top 2024 Best of Show award winner. The campaign was also a finalist for MediaPost Media Planning & Buying Awards in the Native Marketing category, which honors marketing that appears next to or within content on the same topic.



Stakeholder Partnerships

# Launched: New Routes for Revving Up Stakeholders





This was the first year RBFF put into action its strategic plan for consolidating stakeholder strengths, ideas, and enthusiasm to achieve common objectives. The consolidated approach led to new efficiencies and created new opportunities for state, industry, and federal agency partners to work together towards the shared goals of increased participation and retention of participants. Whether angling for multicultural markets, active women, or lapsed boaters, RBFF stakeholder groups discovered innovative ways to recruit, retain, and reactivate fishing and boating participants.

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### **MULTI-STAKEHOLDER, MULTICULTURAL OUTREACH: FIRST CATCH CENTERS**

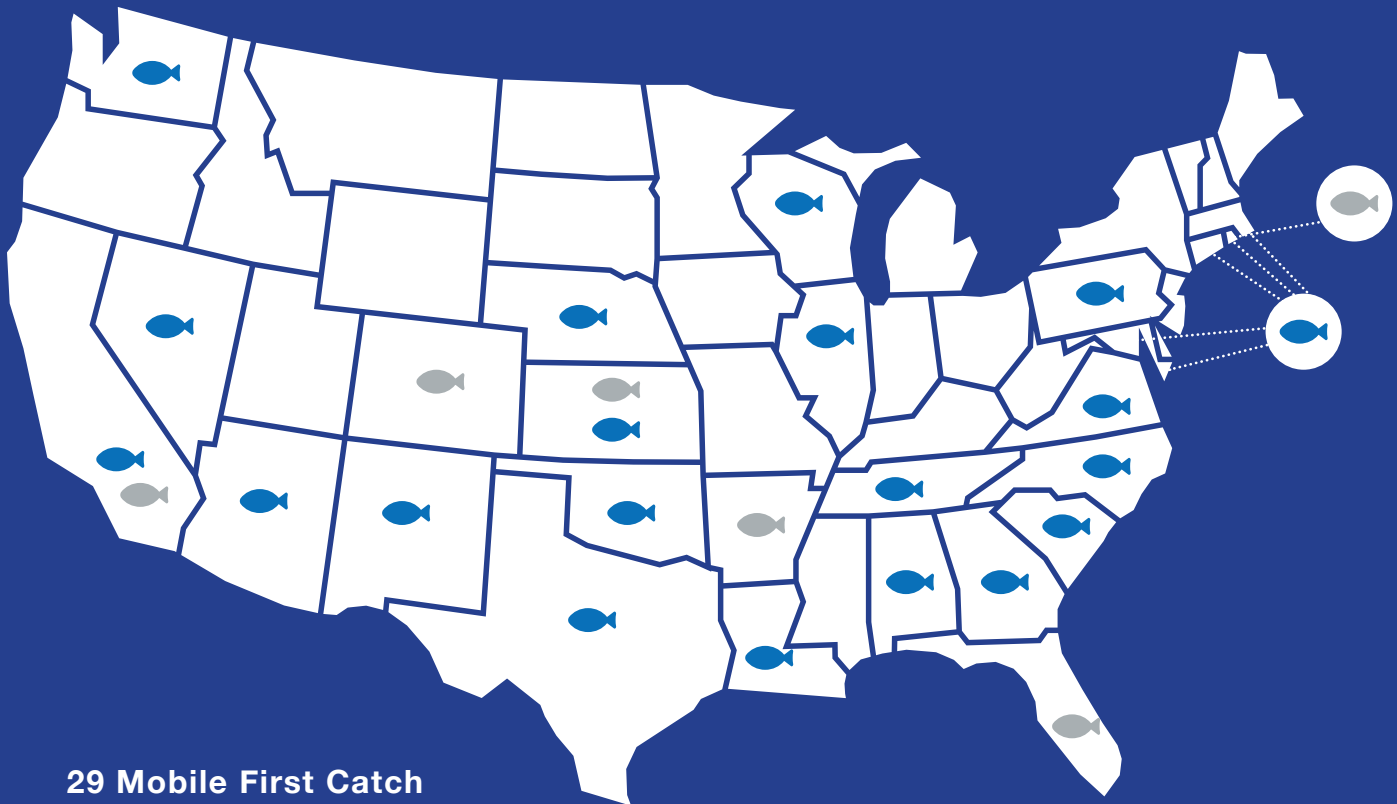
Each First Catch Center brings the how's and wow's of fishing straight to kids and families in urban communities. This year, RBFF state and industry stakeholders brought 29 Mobile First Catch Centers to 24 states, plus one fixed center in Pennsylvania. A program first: a saltwater First Catch Center trailer, located in South Carolina.

### **GEORGE H.W. BUSH *VAMOS A PESCAR*<sup>™</sup> EDUCATION FUND GRANTS**

These iconic fishing, boating, and conservation education grants are closing the gap between Hispanic families and outdoor fun. The fund was kicked off in 2014 with a generous contribution by Bass Pro Shops (BPS) founder Johnny Morris and continues making an impact with industry donations matched 1:1 with funds from state fish and wildlife agencies. It supports outstanding community programs implemented by local organizations.

### **NEW RELEASE FY24: 2024 SPECIAL REPORT ON FISHING**

Produced along with the Outdoor Foundation, the 2024 Special Report on Fishing reveals important findings on participation — figures that will serve as a baseline for evaluating the ongoing impact of RBFF's award-winning consumer campaign and stakeholder collaborations.



**29 Mobile First Catch Centers in 24 states and more coming soon!**

**Over 40,000 people participated in First Catch Centers in 2023**

**FISH STATES WITH MOBILE FIRST CATCH CENTERS**

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Alabama*        | Nevada          |
| Arizona         | New Mexico      |
| California*     | North Carolina  |
| Connecticut     | Oklahoma        |
| Washington D.C. | Pennsylvania    |
| Georgia         | Rhode Island    |
| Illinois        | South Carolina* |
| Kansas          | Tennessee       |
| Louisiana       | Texas           |
| Maryland*       | Virginia        |
| Massachusetts   | Washington      |
| Nebraska        | Wisconsin*      |

\* Indicates states with two First Catch Centers

**FISH GEORGE H.W. BUSH *VAMOS A PESCAR*™ EDUCATION FUND GRANTS AWARDED TO 6 STATE AGENCIES**

- Arkansas
- California (4 programs)
- Colorado
- Florida (4 programs)
- Kansas
- Rhode Island

**\$172,800 in total grants awarded**

**New industry donor**  
Vista Outdoors,  
owner of Simms  
Fishing Products



## FY24 MARKETING WORKSHOP STATES NAVIGATE THE FUTURE – WITH STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

This year’s State Marketing Workshop in Atlanta brought together nearly 200 delegates representing 48 states and the District of Columbia, along with the support of more sponsors than ever.

### STATE MARKETING WORKSHOP EXPO

Based on past workshop feedback, RBFF inaugurated a fun new opportunity for states to showcase and share their recent marketing and communications programs. At the Expo, Workshop attendees were able to easily see on tabletop displays other states’ multimedia, posterboard, branded item, and computer-screen marketing campaign elements, and discuss best marketing practices for retaining, reactivating, and recruiting anglers.

-  **200 attendees**
-  **31 sponsor organizations**
-  **Raised 26% over goal to support the event**

### PUTTING A BOATLOAD OF DIGITAL TOOLS AND STRATEGIES TO WORK

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in state R3 outreach? Yes, AI is here — and along with social media, texting, and other proven communications strategies, it can help states reach out to women, families, lapsed anglers and boaters, and more. Workshop attendees learned the ropes.

#### Tools

Artificial Intelligence (AI)  
 Social media engagement  
 Texting  
 Media familiarization (FAM) events  
 Influencer collaboration

#### Reaching

Hispanic anglers  
 Women anglers  
 Multicultural audiences



## FROM STATE WORKSHOP TO STAKEHOLDER VIDEO SERIES

Marketing workshop learnings aren't just for state agencies anymore. This year's video series delivered two days of online access to 14 workshop session presentations. Any R3 marketing person in industry, federal agencies, or state agencies who could not attend the workshop in person could view online.

New this year, Bruna Carincotte, RBFF Director of Public Relations & Communications, conducted a yoga session during the FY24 Marketing Workshop to help attendees rejuvenate before a day filled with sessions.

## A WAVE OF WEBINARS

### FIND YOUR BEST SELF CAMPAIGN RESEARCH

RBFF introduced stakeholders to the supporting research and successful rollout of its groundbreaking Find Your Best Self on the Water consumer campaign. Also included in the webinar were tips on using the campaign to reach women in a stakeholder's own market.

### FISHBRAIN CONNECTION

RBFF's second webinar of the year introduced state agencies to Fishbrain, one of the world's largest online fishing communities. This unique social media platform is where 15 million users share their fishing adventures and catches — an easy free tool for states to reach anglers. The webinar helped state agencies discover ways the Fishbrain app can be a helpful tool in promoting their work and opportunities.

## EVERYDAY EMBEDDABLE RESOURCES

RBFF continued to offer its valued digital resources free of charge, ready to embed in stakeholders' own websites. Always available are the embeddable Places to Boat & Fish Map, Fishing License & Boat Registration plug-in, and how-to videos for fishing and boating newcomers.



## WELCOMED ON BOARD

Industry, state, and federal agency partners demonstrated their commitment to achieving shared priorities by inviting RBFF leaders to join their boards and other key decision-making groups.

**American Sportfishing Association (ASA)** Marketing Committee and Market Insights Committee Member, Stephanie Vatalaro

**American Sportfishing Association (ASA)** R3 Committee Member, Rachel Auslander

**Association for Conservation Information (ACI)** Board Secretary, Joanne Martonik

**Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA)** President's Task Force on Angler R3 Members, Dave Chanda and Stephanie Hussey

**Marine Marketers of America (MMA)** Board of Directors and Member of Education & Mentoring Committee, Stephanie Vatalaro

**Marine Marketers of America (MMA)** Social Committee Member, Rachel Piacenza

**Marine Marketers of America (MMA)** Neptune Awards Committee Member and Award Judging Co-Chair, Rachel Auslander

**National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI)** Board Member, Dave Chanda

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)** National Marine Sanctuaries Business Advisory Council member, Stephanie Vatalaro

## Netting Honors

Stakeholders across the fishing and boating community recognized RBFF and its top people for their participation-winning efforts.



**Women Making Waves**  
2023 Honoree, Rachel Auslander



**2024 Neptune Award**  
(Marine Marketers of America)  
for Best PR Campaign for RBFF's  
Bozeman, MT, Media Event

## STATE-SPECIFIC PARTNERSHIPS

# FOCUS ON STATE AGENCY STAKEHOLDERS

While engaging state agencies as a vital part of multi-stakeholder initiatives, RBFF also continued state partner-specific activities — building agencies’ own R3 capacity and helping them recruit, retain, and reactivate anglers and boaters.

## STATE ANGLER R3 SCORECARD — TO-DATE AND ONWARD

The Year 5 state agency self-assessment results show tremendous progress in implementing the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) President’s Task Force on Angler R3 Recommendations. Coming up, RBFF is working with AFWA in developing a next-gen State Angler R3 Scorecard to assess progress with the newly released 2024 Angler R3 Recommendations.

## SCORECARD PROGRESS

**32 States**

have a full-time Angler R3 Coordinator –  
an increase from 21 in Year 1

**24 States**

have an R3 Plan in launch/implementation  
or sustain/monitoring phase – an increase  
from 11 in Year 1

**40 States**

have full-time marketing staff –  
an increase from 30 in Year 1

## ON BOARD WITH STATE R3 PROGRAM GRANTS

RBFF grant dollars plus states' own funding brought new power to communications geared towards recruiting urban, female, and multicultural audiences, and towards retaining or reactivating current and lapsed anglers and boaters.

- 🐟 **\$503K** in Total Funding Support
- 🐟 **\$157K** in RBFF grants
- 🐟 **7 state agencies**
- 🐟 **\$290K** state agency project funds and in-kind support

### Arkansas

Game and Fish Commission [R3 Fishing Plan]

### Ohio

Division of Wildlife [Leveraging a CRM to Extend the Efficacy of Marketing Recruitment Efforts]

### Florida

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission [Hispanic Angler Communications Methods Marketing Campaign]

### Texas

Parks and Wildlife Department [Text Messages to Lapsed Boaters]

### Georgia

Division of Wildlife Resources [Atlanta Fishing Guide]

### Utah

Division of Wildlife Resources [Underserved Communities Marketing Campaign]

### Indiana

Division of Fish and Wildlife [Female Angler Retention and Reactivation Marketing Campaign]



# REACHING LAPSED BOATERS

RBFF's FY24 Boat Registration Reactivation Program used both traditional and email outreach plus select Facebook ads to lure boat owners with lapsed boat registrations back to the water.

## REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

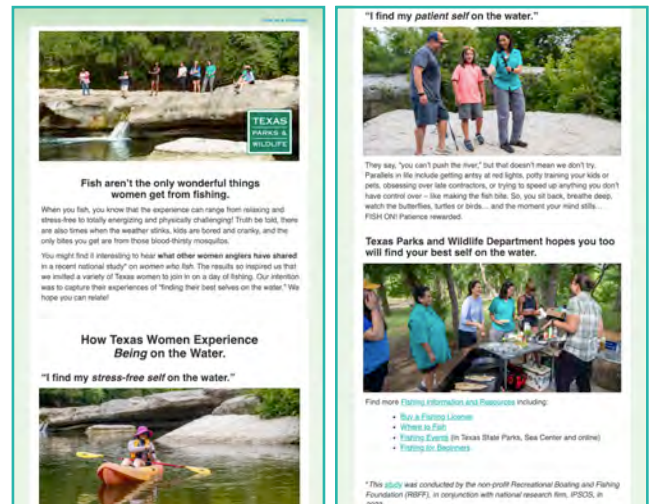
RBFF partnered with the R3 Committees of both the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) and the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) to develop collections of photo assets that represent the many diverse people, places and fishing and boating opportunities in their regions of the country.

## R3 TRAINING

Along with the Council to Advance Hunting & the Shooting Sports (CAHSS), RBFF cohosted a valuable half-day R3 training session for state agency R3 practitioners at CAHSS's National R3 Symposium.

## FIND YOUR BEST SELF MATERIALS GO PLACES

State agencies found it easy to add photo assets and messages from RBFF's Find Your Best Self on the Water campaign into their own communications. The campaign's visual outreach to women anglers was instant, effective, and free.



## BOAT REGISTRATION REACTIVATION PROGRAM STATS

- 🐟 **362k mailings**
- 🐟 **34,572 total registered**
- 🐟 **21,600 net increase in registrations**
- 🐟 **9.95% success rate**  
(Slightly over 9.61% 10-year average)



## INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC PARTNERSHIPS

# FOCUS ON INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS

RBFF and its industry partners — including retailers — set off on new collaborations, with many of its initiatives steered by RBFF’s Industry Engagement Task Force. Just on the horizon: a new Senior Director of Industry Engagement to lead RBFF’s upcoming retention effort.

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### FISHING SHARE THE FUN CAMPAIGN

RBFF teamed with the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) for the second year of its Fishing Share the Fun campaign. Highlights included a redesigned campaign website, new resources for businesses to activate their avid customers in recruitment and retention efforts, and the ASA presentation at the 2023 State Marketing Workshop on how states can get on board.

### A NEW LINE ON REACHING WOMEN ANGLERS

RBFF partnered with Berkley, a Pure Fishing brand, to create Fearless Fishing Line, a PR-led initiative to encourage women to become anglers. Introduced during National Fishing and Boating Week, the campaign promoted the product as “Strong Line for Strong Women” and featured a chance to win a gift card to cover the cost of a new fishing license.

### SUPPORTING INDUSTRY EVENTS WITH A WOMEN’S CAST

RBFF once again sponsored the ICAST Industry Breakfast and premiered the Find Your Best Self campaign video, which was enthusiastically received by attendees. Also at ICAST, RBFF hosted a Women’s Engagement Breakfast, presenting to a sold-out crowd its research on increasing women’s participation in fishing and its new consumer outreach campaign. Industry partners MarineMax and KastKing also supported the event.

For the Virginia Fly Fishing & Wine Festival and its sister event, the Texas Fly Fishing & Brew Festival, RBFF sponsored symposiums offering fly-fishing and safety programming created specifically for women.

RBFF also sponsored and participated in the “Women Making Waves and Their Strategies for Success” panel discussion at the *Boating Industry’s* Elevate Summit.





### HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

RBFF participated in ICAST’s Lunch & Learn sessions with its presentation on Improving Your Sport fishing Business and Spinning Your Wheels Instead of Your Reels. At the ASA Summit, RBFF partnered with Rob Southwick, President of Southwick Associates, to share updates on participation trends, which also was the focus of RBFF’s industry breakfast presentation at IBEX and at the Miami Boat Show.

### ON COURSE, TOGETHER

RBFF sponsorship helped propel the success of a variety of additional industry events promoting fishing and boating.

- 🐟 Association of Marina Industries (AMI) Conference & Expo
- 🐟 Discover Boating’s Miami International Boat Show
- 🐟 American Boating Congress
- 🐟 ASA Summit
- 🐟 American Fly Fishing Trade Association (AFFTA) Confluence (featuring RBFF’s Joanne Martonik as a speaker)
- 🐟 IBEX
- 🐟 MRAA Dealer Week – Sales & Marketing Pathway

## FEDERAL-SPECIFIC PARTNERSHIPS

# FOCUS ON FEDERAL AGENCY STAKEHOLDERS

While leveraging the joint engagement of federal agencies, state agencies, and industry stakeholders, RBFF is also steadily building direct collaborations with federal agencies.

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### MOVING R3 INITIATIVES FORWARD

Throughout the year, RBFF worked closely with the US Fish & Wildlife Service and the US Forest Service to explore partnership opportunities for implementing R3 projects. A key strategy is supporting community-based R3 angling programs on public lands and waterways, especially in urban areas or with underrepresented audiences. RBFF will continue to build on these efforts and expand with additional federal agencies in the coming years.

### TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Moving forward, RBFF is working to identify and address the needs of federal agencies for R3 training, resources, and support.





# Launched: Conservation & Finding Your Best Self

Prominent in FY24 RBFF consumer communications is the message that fishing and boating are good for everyone's health and well-being — and also that the healthy well-being of the outdoors is good for all. Across RBFF's award-winning campaign, every consumer-directed ad image, influencer post, and how-to instruction underscored appreciation of our environment, and the need to protect it.

### CONSERVATION THROUGH PARTICIPATION

As always, by boosting fishing and participation, RBFF generated state fishing license and boat registration sales — with sales supporting state conservation projects.

### CONSERVATION AWARENESS REACHES NEW HIGHS

The FY24 results of a three-year RBFF study showed that four in five anglers (80 percent) know that fishing license fees are part of aquatic conservation, up from 66 percent in 2019. Anglers also say that conservation, while not the driving force that gets them out on the water, is important to them.

**92%** of anglers want to help protect and preserve waterways

**91%** care about healthy fish populations

**91%** care about public access to fishing

**90%** of anglers like that all their licensing fees go towards conservation



**5.8M** visits to Conservation pages\*

**6.4M** visits to How-To pages\*

Up 6.2% and 89.5% from pre-pandemic FY21 and FY 20.

\*Includes TakeMeFishing.org and VamosAPescar.org.



### HEADING TO CONSERVATION ON TAKEMEFISHING.ORG

Conservation page visits on RBFF’s consumer websites remained high at 5.8M (including TakeMeFishing.org and VamosAPescar.org). The figure is slightly lower (down 3.85%) compared to visits the previous year, but is well over pre-pandemic visits — up 18% vs. FY21 and up 135% vs. FY20.

### THE CONSERVATION MESSAGE THROUGHOUT

The combined billions of views of RBFF consumer advertising, social media, influencer messaging, PSAs, and free publicity helped create high levels of conservation awareness, all while communicating the how-tos of conservation-wise angling and boating practices.



Ahead

# Year Two, Already Underway



As the second year of RBFF’s award-winning Find Your Best Self on the Water consumer campaign and its three-year strategic plan enters year two, RBFF is implementing a next phase of consumer outreach, stakeholder collaboration, and RBFF organization — all with an extra emphasis on improving retention.

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## CONSUMER OUTREACH

# B2C - FINDING YOUR BEST SELF ON THE WATER, ANGLING FOR RETENTION

In its second, follow-up year, RBFF’s powerful consumer campaign will address both recruitment and retention. Efforts include building on new research into lapsed anglers and boaters, and a new consumer campaign tactic, Second Catch. Its purpose: to motivate dads to welcome their daughters back to fishing and boating.

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## RETENTION RESEARCH

New Ipsos research learned directly from lapsed anglers and boaters reveals the greatest challenges to staying with fishing and boating, as well as the benefits and rewards that might lure them back. RBFF will be applying these insights to FY25 consumer outreach, including the mobilization of social media influencers. One strategy RBFF is pursuing is building a sense of community, a potentially important retention tactic.

## CALLING ALL DADS: SECOND CATCH

RBFF will be inviting dads to help their daughters find their best self on the water with its upcoming Second Catch campaign. Second Catch will give dads the tools to reach out, make daughters feel welcome ... and create lifelong memories.



## MULTISTAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

# HELPING STAKEHOLDERS MAKE WAVES TOGETHER

The upcoming year will continue new and already-proven research-based initiatives, many of which target women and multicultural markets.

### RESEARCH TO APPLY

Ahead, RBFF's Psychology of Churn research will be available to stakeholders to address and reverse "the leaky bucket" of lapsed anglers and boaters. FY25 is also when RBFF's three-year Sport Fishing & Boating Partnership Council (SFBPC) performance evaluation report will be released.

### 2025 MARKETING WORKSHOP

Informing and rallying all stakeholder segments, RBFF's next State Marketing Workshop will be held in **Baltimore, Maryland, February 24-26, 2025.**

### ADDING NEW PLANKS

RBFF will build on an FY24 first for its First Catch Centers — working with a non-state agency partner to create new centers. In FY24, The Ike Foundation took the helm of a new First Catch Center.

### ENGAGING RETAILERS

Ahead, RBFF's Psychology of Churn research will be available to stakeholders to address and reverse "the leaky bucket" of lapsed anglers and boaters. FY25 is also when RBFF's three-year Sport Fishing & Boating Partnership Council (SFBPC) performance evaluation report will be released.



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## 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.

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## MISSION

RBFF's mission is 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.

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## SPORT FISH RESTORATION

Through the Sport Fish Restoration program, tax dollars from the purchase of rods, reels, lures, flies, motorboat fuel and accessories go toward conducting research, reintroducing sport fish species, restoring habitats, offering aquatic education, and constructing boat ramps and fishing piers. By incorporating the Sport Fish Restoration logo — a shared symbol of cooperative conservation — in communication materials, RBFF partners and stakeholders can help educate the public about how boaters and anglers contribute to funding conservation in this country.



Produced under cooperative agreement #F23AC00806 from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



A large, stylized blue fish graphic is centered on the page. The fish is composed of several overlapping, curved bands of varying shades of blue, creating a sense of movement and depth. The head of the fish is on the right side, with a small, solid blue circle representing the eye. The tail is on the left side, with several long, flowing bands that suggest movement.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**  
Please find RBFF's Financial Statements  
for Fiscal Year 2024 by clicking [HERE](#)

