

Building Social Support Communities for Iowa's Female Recreational Paddlers RBFF State R3 Program Grants

OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

After launching in June 2022, Iowa DNR refreshed the Hook n' Paddle Passport that was female-focused and helped build a sense of community among female recreational paddlers.

Goals and objectives:

- Increase female participation in fishing and paddling.
- Provide fishing and/or paddling programming to build participant and confidence skills, with family-friendly activities and social support communities.
- Increase the number of active Hook n' Paddle Passport participants.

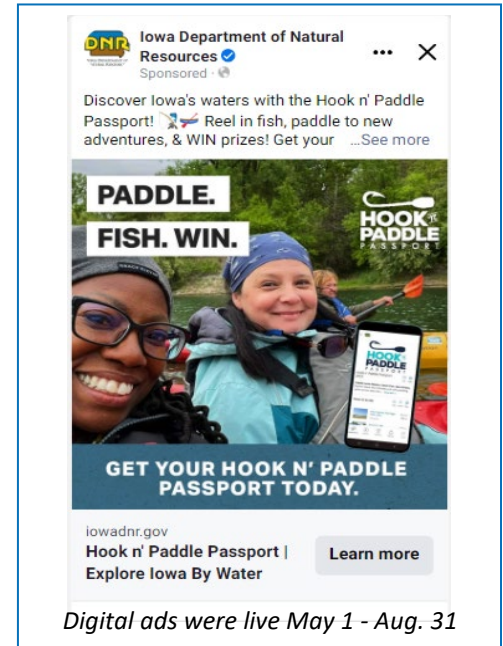
RESULTS

- Response rates for the online survey were 25.8% with 306 out of 1189 completing the survey; 48% used the 2022 passport, 39.5% didn't and 12.5% didn't know.
- Last year's passport had 1514 sign-ups and the refreshed passport had 1563 sign-ups.
- Last year's passport had 889 check-ins and the refreshed passport had 2947 check-ins.
- The social digital advertising campaign spent \$12,000 and generated 399 website purchases for almost \$17,000 in revenue. It reached 301,692 people; generated 2,392,266 impressions and 24,704 link clicks; received 1,729 post reactions, 122 post comments and 267 post shares.
- Our goal was to increase female participation from 48% last year to 60% this year. We increased our female participation to 53%.
- Last year, only 14% of passholders were active (checked into at least one location). This year, 22% were active.
- A new feature of this program allowed passholders to check into a location more than once, as long as they wait two weeks in between visits. Of the 349 active passholders, 144 (41%) checked into a single location two or more times.
- More than 300 participants attended Hook n' Paddle sponsored events.
- Passholders represented 376 cities across 95 of Iowa's 99 counties.
- Our campaign webpage had 27,561 views with 21,933 users from March 22-August 31. A second webpage with a calendar of all sponsored events had 1,615 views with 1,194 users from March 22-August 31.

SUPPORT

"This fun digital passport is a great addition to our efforts to increase female outdoor recreation in Iowa. Partnerships with local women's outdoor recreation groups has helped us introduce new communities to fishing and paddling."

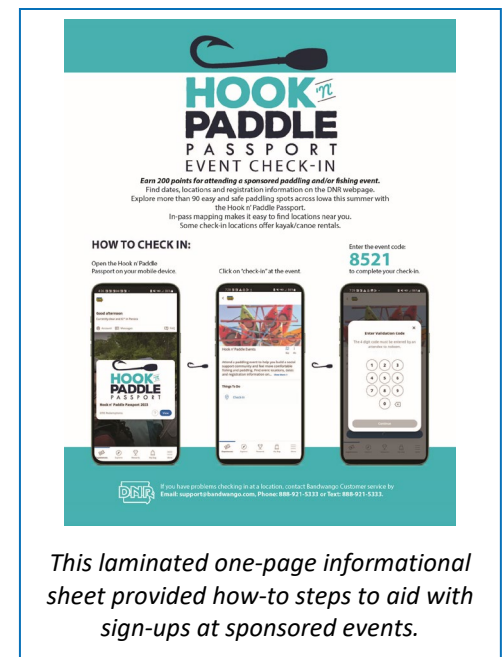
- Tammie Krausman, Director of Communications



Digital ads were live May 1 - Aug. 31

PARTNERS

- Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF)
- Brandt Information Services
- Bandwango
- Travel Iowa
- Bass Pro Altoona
- Local outdoor recreation and conservation groups



This laminated one-page informational sheet provided how-to steps to aid with sign-ups at sponsored events.

BENEFITS

Paddling is one of Iowa's fastest growing outdoor recreational activities. The success of both this and last year's Hook 'n Paddle campaigns proves that Iowa DNR should continue its marketing and communication efforts to this important target audience.

During this grant, approximately \$12,000 was spent in social media ad buys. This spend resulted in 399 website purchases with almost \$17,000 in revenue, even though the ad campaign was not optimized for website purchases.

METHODOLOGY

Audience: Female, recreational paddlers with an interest in fishing

- Iowa DNR conducted an online survey of 2022 passport holders who opted in to receive emails in April before the campaign started.
- The refreshed Hook n' Paddle Passport launched May 1 to take advantage of family-friendly holidays.
- 40 additional sites with female-friendly amenities were added for a total of more than 90 easy and safe fishing/paddling spots
- A new prize system allowed passholders to earn points to redeem for prizes; 352 passholders banked points to redeem for prizes
- Iowa DNR offered 33 female-focused fishing and/or paddling events in the metropolitan areas to help build social support communities.
- Iowa DNR provided event partners with a toolkit to introduce new communities to fishing/kayaking with a sign-up for the passport.
- To help encourage passholders to actively participate, Iowa DNR increased the frequency of in-feed messages, emails and texts.
- Iowa DNR partnered with Brandt Information Services to place digital advertising to promote the refreshed passport and encourage female recreational paddlers to add fishing to their outdoor pursuits. Digital ads highlighted the internal benefits of fishing that appeal to women (i.e. mental wellness, resilience, confidence, self-esteem).
- The call-to-action of the digital ads drove users to a campaign landing web page at www.iowadnr.gov/kayakfishing, designed to appeal to both paddlers interested in trying fishing as well as anglers interested in trying paddling.



33 fishing and/or paddling events were offered June 1 - August 27 to more than 300 participants

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LESSONS LEARNED & FUTURE PLANS

- While this was strictly an awareness campaign and was not optimized for website purchases this year, we saw a positive return on investment from our ad spends, in license system transactions.
- Partners were engaged in early spring and were willing to host Hook 'n Paddle classes, but were not able to deliver at the frequency that was planned. Even with money available to pay for equipment, instructor time and materials, capacity ultimately continued to be problematic, even for our partners.
- Iowa DNR will discuss plans for a third year of the Hook n' Paddle Passport. We will continue to explore strategies to engage and support Iowa's recreational paddlers.



This grant program was conducted in 2023 and partially funded by the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) under cooperative agreement #F23AC00806 from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. For more information on RBFF's State R3 Program Grants, please visit www.takemefishing.org/r3.