

Targeting Fishing Crossover Activities with Google and Social Media Ads RBFF STATE R3 PROGRAM GRANTS

OVERVIEW

The goal of this project was to enhance our agency's capability to develop and implement effective recruitment tactics. Using targeted search engine marketing, display ads, and social media ads, we engaged campers to drive awareness and interest in fishing. We targeted campers with this recruitment effort because camping is the top crossover activity to fishing and is growing in popularity.

We partnered with the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to develop and promote a list of Top 10 Campsites for Fishing in Massachusetts. Sites were selected statewide that offer exceptional camping and fishing opportunities. Google Search, Google Display, Facebook, and Instagram ads were used to drive traffic to the Top 10 List.

RESULTS

Using Google, Facebook, and Instagram ads, we engaged campers to increase their awareness of and interest in fishing, the first stages of successful recruitment. Our paid ads resulted in:

- 5,441,261 impressions
- 71,478 link clicks
- 1,469 license purchases*

*Due to an unplanned upgrade to our licensing system, pixels used to track license purchases were disrupted for over a third of this campaign. Therefore, license purchases reported here only reflect confirmed purchases and should be considered a very conservative estimate of total license sales driven from this campaign.

Across all paid platforms, click through rates (CTR) exceeded industry benchmarks with 5.66% CTR on Google Search, 1.81% on Facebook, and 0.89% on Google Display. Viewers spent an average of 6:59 minutes on our Top 10 List, compared to an average of 2:03 spent on other Mass.gov web pages, indicating readers were deeply engaged with the content and willing to spend time delving into the article.

In addition to paid ads, we also promoted the Top 10 List through organic social media posts to our 43,000 Facebook followers, an article in our MassWildlife Monthly e-newsletter to over 56,500 subscribers, and a press release to 565 members of the media. These unpaid efforts resulted in an additional 3.3M impressions. Through our partnership with DCR, banners promoting the Top 10 List were featured on all Massachusetts campsite web pages on the Reserve America platform. Because Reserve America is used by all campers making a reservation for a state campsite, this gave our Top 10 List great exposure to our target audience of campers. Reserve America accounted for 37% of all visits to the Top 10 List we created for organic traffic. Our Top 10 List was also featured on the Department of Tourism's website.

PARTNERS

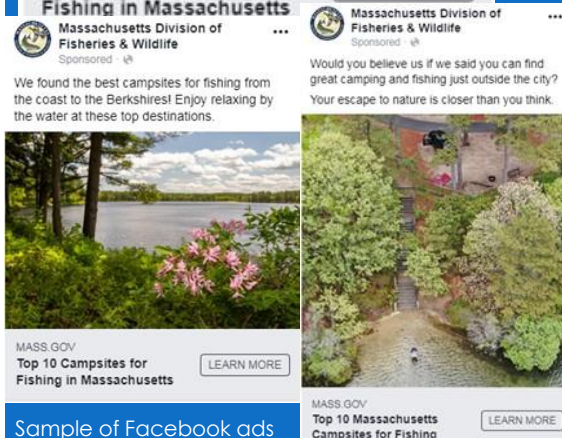
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

SUPPORT

"This pilot expanded upon our successful marketing efforts with a new initiative to recruit campers into fishing. By strengthening our partnership with the state parks, we engaged a new audience and introduced them to fishing."
— Mark Tisa, MassWildlife Director

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Sample of Facebook ads



METHODOLOGY

We began this pilot with a review of current research to determine which outdoor activities would be best to target for angler recruitment. We focused this effort on campers, because camping is the top outdoor crossover activity to fishing and participation in camping is growing. With input from our fisheries staff and DCR, we curated a list of Top 10 Campsites for Fishing. We photographed all 10 sites and wrote up descriptions showcasing each site's unique camping and fishing opportunities, with links to purchase a license. View the list at: [mass.gov/campsites-for-fishing](https://www.mass.gov/campsites-for-fishing)

From June 17 through July 21, we ran paid ads to drive traffic to our Top 10 Campsites for Fishing List using Facebook, Instagram, Google Search, and Google Display. On social media, we targeted 3 main audiences: Massachusetts outdoor families, Boston young adults, and Massachusetts outdoor generalists. On Google Search, we used Google's Keyword Planner tool to create our keyword list of camping-related terms. On Google Display, we targeted Massachusetts residents with an interest in the outdoors. In depth information on target audience profiles are available upon request.

BENEFITS

The results of this campaign will translate directly to improvements in our efficiency and proficiency in promoting fishing to a diverse audience. Through in-depth evaluation, we learned which types of fishing ads drove the highest levels of engagement from campers. We plan to use the customer trends we learned from this effort, including our audience's interests and demographics, to fine tune future efforts and use our marketing dollars most efficiently.

One of the greatest benefits of this pilot was the opportunity to build our partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. This partnership amplified the impact of our paid campaign by promoting fishing and camping on the Reserve America campsite reservation platform and through joint press releases. By breaking down agency silos, we were able to reach a new audience of campers and introduce them to fishing. The partnership may have provided the extra clout needed to be featured on the Department of Tourism's website. We hope to continue to grow this relationship in the future and find other ways to partner in promoting outdoor recreation.

This grant program was conducted in 2019 and partially funded by the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) through a USFWS financial assistance award (#F18AC00145). For more information on RBFF's State R3 Program Grants, please visit www.takemefishing.org/r3.

Best MA Waterfront Camping | Top 10 Fishing & Camping Areas

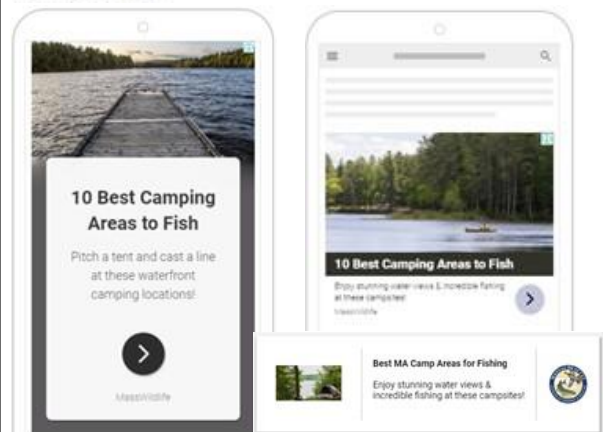
Ad www.mass.gov

Enjoy fishing and beautiful water views at these top camp sites across MA. Plan a day trip or camp overnight. Fish, camp, relax. Visit top sites in Massachusetts.

Top 10 MA Camping Areas | Best Campsites for Fishing | Escape to Nature

Ad www.mass.gov

Camp, fish, and relax at top destinations in Massachusetts. Day trip or camp overnight. Your escape to nature is closer than you think!



Sample of Google Search and Display ads.

LESSONS LEARNED/FUTURE PLANS

This spring, we continued to utilize enhanced tracking capabilities implemented last year to evaluate ad performance in real time. By understanding which types of ads generated the highest levels of engagement, we can better target future campaigns. Paid ads on social media, Google Search, and Google Display met their intended goal of increasing awareness and interest in fishing, as evidenced by high levels of exposure in terms of reach and impressions and high levels of engagement in terms of clicks and time spent on our Top 10 List. Likely due to their visuals, social media ads tended to perform best at driving engagement, web traffic, and license sales for a modest ad budget. As budget allows, we will continue incorporating content showing opportunities for fishing at campsites into our social media strategy. Additionally, because our efforts to drive organic and earned media also provided great results for free, we will continue to promote fishing to new audiences like campers using our regular communication channels, including press releases, our newsletter, and organic posts on social media.