

# ARKANSAS MULTI-CHANNEL LICENSE AND PARTICIPATION MARKETING CAMPAIGN

## RBFF STATE R3 PROGRAM GRANTS

## OVERVIEW

The 2019 Arkansas Game & Fish Commission (AGFC) R3 Fish Natural promotion was a multi-channel marketing campaign designed to bring awareness, consideration, and interaction into five consumer engagement touchpoints. The goal of this effort was to utilize highly targeted marketing efforts to drive target audiences through the consumer life-cycle from increased consideration of fishing to a license purchase and ultimately to a fishing experience utilizing various forms of support and incentives.

The purpose of this highly integrated campaign was to coordinate programs that have traditionally operated in disparate functions to gauge the agency's ability to utilize different consumer touchpoints and programs to push a consumer through the adoption phases. The promotion was branded under the umbrella of the Fish Natural brand that is a companion to AGFC's state branding of "The Natural State" and had five separate promotions aimed at different stages of the outdoor recreation adoption model.

## RESULTS

### Increase in Fishing Event Participation

- For the 2019 fishing event season, AGFC has reported an increase in participation across all of the beginning and advanced angling events and programs which is attributed to an improvement in the targeted marketing efforts, greater financial investment in event promotions, better positioned events and a more cohesive statewide approach. By the numbers:
  - Over 19,800 participants in skills programs (over 50% increase in specialized skill program offerings since 2017).
  - Nearly 39,500 participants in AGFC hosted fishing events or derbies (25% increase over 2017).

### Combating the Decline in Fishing License Sales

- As AGFC entered the spring and early summer license sales season they continued to see steep declines in license sales despite the coordinated community outreach, fishing events, and license promotions. Staff attributed this continued downward trend in participation mostly to the massive flooding and poor weekend weather conditions throughout typical peak fishing season. AGFC was able to adjust the typical spring event and fishing license promotions to target lapsed and missed anglers from the spring to summer and early fall. From July to September, AGFC has seen a significant license sales increase year over year compared to the same time over the last several years. Staff attributes this transition in license sales to coordinated marketing promotions targeting existing and lapse angler, improved sales channels at events, increased adoption of hunting and fishing combination license and an overall improvement on the weather. By the numbers:
  - Resident fishing licenses from July to October are up over 11% over the same time last year and up almost 2% over the five year average after being down by more than 18% against the five-year average back in June.
  - Unique campaign reach exceeded over half of the state's population and resulted in engagements and conversion rates between two to four times higher than the industry averages across email marketing, paid social, display ads network and search engine marketing promotions.

## PARTNERS

### Funding Support:

- Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation

### Fishing Derby & Skills Seminar Partners:

- 263 Local Civic and Conservation Organizations Statewide
- 3 Additional State Agency Partners

### Media:

- Facebook
- Google
- 14 Local Print Publishers
- 6 Radio Networks
- Local Broadcast News Stations
- Univision and Telemundo Broadcast Stations

## SUPPORT

"Our agency believes that increased focus on R3 events and marketing promotions is one of the crucial investment our agency needs to remain relevant and to sustain conservation funding well into the future." Director Fitts

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## METHODOLOGY

AGFC sought to build a cohesive R3 angling campaign that aimed to increase overall awareness and consideration of fishing opportunities through (1) mass media promotion of fishing built into Arkansans lifestyle, (2) direct communications of fishing license renewals, (3) targeted digital promotions of angling content aimed at removing barriers and (4) community-based event and skills programs focused on new angler recruitment.

### Target Audience:

- Current Resident Fishing License Holders
- Lapsed Anglers (in the last 24 months)
- Active Angler Dads with kids 5 to 15
- Moms with kids 5 to 15
- Latino Community in Metro Little Rock and Metro Springdale
- African American Community in Little Rock

### Community Engagement Methods:

- AGFC Hosted Fishing Experiences at Family and Community Fishing Location
- AGFC Partner Hosted Fishing Experiences at AGFC Stocked Location
- AGFC Hosted Beginner Fishing Skills Programs/Seminars
- Professional Angler Hosted Advanced Skills Seminars Hosted by AGFC
- Tackle Loaner Site
- AGFC Hosted Fishing Experiences at AGFC Hatcheries

### Marketing Outreach Methods:

- Organic and Paid Social Media
- Niche Publication Print and Advertorial
- Radio and Limited Broadcast
- AGFC Newsletter and Email Marketing
- Search Engine Marketing and Display
- PR

### Creative and Messaging:

- Developed a high energy outdoor lifestyle creative thematic that was built off of the importance of connecting with others and the outdoors. Key motivators like targeted species, preferred methods, stocking alerts, fishing success, access, culinary benefits and where to fish were incorporated into the content.

## Benefits/ Lessons Learned/Future Plans

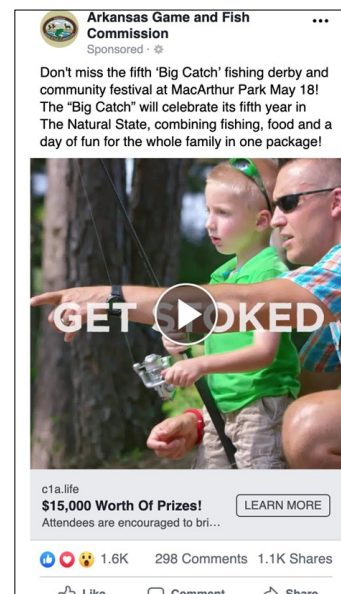
### Recognizing Influences and Shifting to Conditions for Greatest Success

- In 2019, the Natural State saw above average rainfall totals throughout the spring and early summer; including some of the heaviest river flooding along the Arkansas River in the state's history and a majority weekends during peak fishing license sales and participation being wet. Conditions made it difficult to convert license buyers at typical sales period; therefore, they shifted schedules and messaging to avoid investments against unideal weather conditions. The shift in timing required an adjustment to the approach and messaging for typical anglers. For example, targeted anglers through recreational boating season and upsell of seasonal hunting licenses.

### Identified Factors for Future Success

- **Cultivating Data Collection:** Over 25,000 people took part in beginner fishing events in Arkansas this spring and summer, to capitalize on this engagement and other events, AGFC is looking at incorporating a CRM to leverage for push/pull communications and tracking.
- **Best Bang for the Buck:** Email marketing was the single most effective tool for driving conversions on licensing and social media was the best media for event leads.
- **Aligning Good Weather and Great Opportunities:** Noted correlation between quality gains and time periods with good weather, license promotions and high volume events.
- **High Valued Targets:** AGFC intends to prioritize targets with a high churn rate and those flagged for cart abandonment in future campaigns.
- **Agency R3 Plan:** AGFC is developing a 5-year agency R3 plan. The goal of the plan is to create unified goals, objectives, strategies and actions for community outreach, education and communications centered around the recruitment, retention and reactivation of anglers, hunters, shooters and supporters of AGFC.

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](http://www.takemefishing.org/r3).



Paid Facebook ad utilizing demographic and geographic targeting.



Below: Sticker on the front of statewide newspaper.