



VT 2019 NONRESIDENT FISHING CAMPAIGN

RBFF STATE R3 PROGRAM GRANTS

OVERVIEW

Over the last decade, Vermont has seen two different trends with fishing license sales. While resident fishing has either been flat or declined, steady to increased interest has been occurring from out of state anglers. In 2018, non-resident license sales trends were generally positive with annual, one-day, and 7-day licenses leading non-resident sales. In addition, the churn rate for non-resident fishing license holders from 2017 to 2018 was 47%, as compared to 52% for resident anglers.

From these figures, Vermont identified the need to have significant, lasting increase in non-resident license sales. A digital marketing campaign was launched and ran from May through August to key demographic and geotargeted audiences in NY, MA, CT, NY, and Quebec. Avid anglers and visiting families were targeted and two different messages were created for these groups.

The goals for this campaign were:

1. Increase non-resident fishing license sales by 5%
2. Reduce non-resident license churn by 5%

RESULTS

In 2019, non-resident fishing license sales trends met the campaign goal with a **5.24% increase over 2018 non-resident sales, or \$62,069.00**. However, the campaign did not achieve its goal of reducing churn by 5%. Rather, **churn was reduced by 1%** (from 47% in 2018 to 46% in 2019)

- Digital placements generated:
 - 1,794,575 impressions
 - 77,927 clicks
- Web Traffic May 1 – August 31:
 - 473,890 sessions
 - 292,283 new users

Lapsed Angler emails saw a 19% lift on license sales.

METHODOLOGY

Firstly, a Google Analytics consultant was hired for back-end web development to improve the ability to track the user journey, behavior, and demographics. This was a necessity after finding out there was a significant handicap on tracking because the website was housed on four separate domains.

Creative assets (including video, digital banners, text ads, and bulk emails) were developed to:

- highlight fishing species and season for avid anglers
- highlight family time, fresh air, and fun to the family audience

PARTNERS

Recreational Boating & Fishing
Foundation

SUPPORT

"This program kick-started our long-needed web tracking efforts and increased our ability to share Vermont's fishing opportunities with avid anglers and families in surrounding states. We would not have been able to earn over 1.7M digital impressions, 292,000 new web visitors, and a lift of \$62,000 in non-resident license sales without this support from RBFF."

-Louis Porter, VT Fish & Wildlife
Commissioner

CONTACT INFO

Megan Duni
Communications Coord.
Vermont Fish & Wildlife
megan.duni@vermont.gov
(802) 595-1890

L. Champlain, May, 2019



Fish Vermont

Get into our top-notch bass fishing, reel in a trophy trout, hunt for brookies, catch yourself dinner. Just remember to watch your fingers when you land that giant pike...

conditions, licenses, local info at vtfishandwildlife.com



We provided trophy fish placements to our Avid Angler audience on On the Water digital magazine featuring both men and women.

Avid anglers were targeted based on zip codes that represented the top 2018 non-resident license sales. Families were also targeted based on Designated Marketing Areas (DMAs) that often visit or vacation in VT.

With audiences, messaging, and geographic locations determined, VT placed digital ads on Facebook, Google Search, YouTube, and in On the Water (digital fishing magazine), heavily front-loaded in May and June. In addition, lapsed angler reminders and bi-weekly fishing reports to 2019 license holders were issued through Constant Contact. UTM's and a Facebook pixel were implemented in all campaigns.

BENEFITS

This effort accelerated a long-needed upgrade to web tracking abilities. The Google Analytics consultant implemented cross-domain tracking and began adding goals and conversion values throughout the summer. We continue to enhance web tracking abilities and knowledge.

The campaign achieved the goal of increasing non-resident license sales by 5% over 2018. Although a 5% reduction in non-resident churn was not reached, tremendous exposure was gained along with a completely new audience visiting the website.

VT entered the re-marketing world by using Facebook pixels and generating a look-alike audience based on recent visits to the Fish Vermont landing page.

Enhancing email communications to existing license holders with bi-weekly fishing reports established a positive rapport with VT anglers. Anglers reported using the fishing reports for their own success stories and VT invited them to share these custom insights and tips for the next report.

LESSONS LEARNED/FUTURE PLANS

VT's campaign saw a high bounce rate and low time spent on the promoted Fish Vermont landing page. To address this, the following actions intend to be taken:

- Invest further in Google Analytics and create a dashboard for real-time insight into page and ad performance
- further separate the Avid Angler and Family audiences with separate landing pages
- implement A-B testing on ads as much as possible, and
- optimize landing pages for mobile

Creative assets should be utilized more, especially video. Google Display enables a lot of visual exposure for relatively low expenditure, and should be implemented in 2020.

In addition, the loyal Massachusetts audience should be marketed to, as well as a possible partnership with Vermont Tourism to enhance this effort. Re-marketing efforts should be implemented further throughout the fishing season on Facebook and Google.

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.



Bowfin: Vermont's meanest, hardest-fighting native fish for 150 million years.

Vermont Fish & Wildlife
Sponsored · 🌐

Summer may be waning, but the fishing definitely isn't. Experience fishing Vermont in August. Short-term licenses available.

[VTFISHANDWILDLIFE.COM/FI...](https://www.facebook.com/VTFISHANDWILDLIFE.COM/FI...)
Fish VT in August
When you Fish VT, proceeds fro... [LEARN MORE](#)

A month-long Facebook promotion in August highlighted late season fishing and short-term licenses.

- 86% of our users were on a mobile device
- 60% of our users were driven via a video placement
- 36% of our users came from MA
- 73% of our users were male
- Facebook generated the most traffic, followed by Google Search