

PA Fish & Boat Commission



pennsylvania
FISH & BOAT COMMISSION

AFWA Multi-State Conservation Grant

Overview

The PA Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) conducted a digital marketing campaign from March to August 2020 with three major goals:

- Develop means to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of tactics in converting a purchase.
- Develop a more robust multi-channel digital marketing effort to increase license sales.
- Positive influence on license sales in the summer months (July and August).

The PFBC first modified their license system to enable better tracking and higher-level analytics. Aspira (PFBC's license system vendor) added additional code to track customers through the license purchase process online.

The campaign consisted of Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Facebook ads, and display ads based around messaging to promote the trout season opener and family fun. Due to COVID, the PFBC updated their creative to include messaging about social distancing and to communicate the delay in their trout season opener. The PFBC monitored their campaign and adjusted the budget to better performing tactics.

Results

Before their campaign launched, the PFBC successfully updated their license system to allow for better tracking of license purchases. This update was necessary to be able to evaluate marketing campaigns which they were not able to do previously.

PFBC spent a total of \$27,500 on ads. Revenue by type of ad is as follows:

- Trout SEM- \$ 1,284,580.50
- Trout Facebook ads- \$ 248,620.75
- Trout display ads- \$ 22,673.50
- Family Fun SEM- \$ 335,744
- Family Fun Facebook ads- \$ 47,360

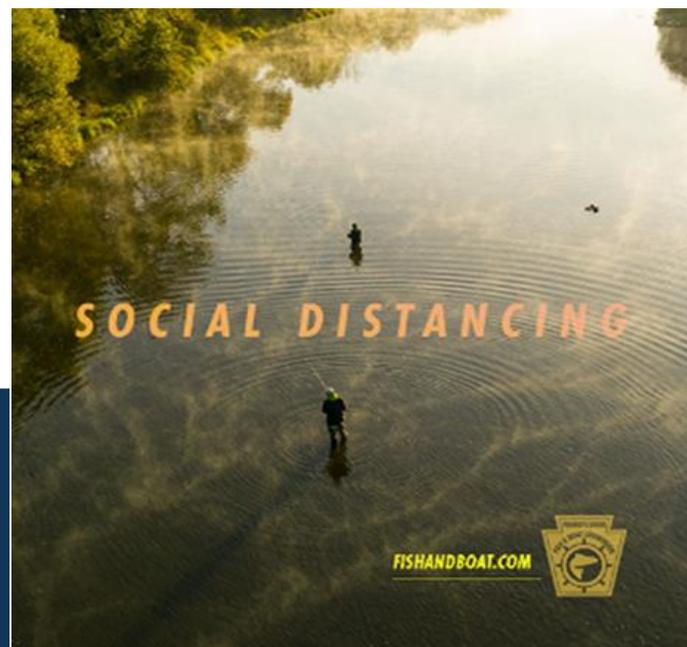
The campaign saw a total revenue of \$1,938,978.75!

Partners

- Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation
- Association for Fish & Wildlife Agencies
- Gavin Advertising
- Aspira

Support

"This generous grant funding from RBFF and AFWA enabled us to expand our digital marketing efforts beyond general brand awareness to drive fishing license sales and strategically position our marketing campaigns to bolster participation in traditionally slower sales months. Through this grant, we were able to advance our digital marketing efforts in 2020 by focusing on R3-related campaigns, strategically transitioning our investments to the campaigns with the greatest returns on investment and expanding our digital marketing from brand awareness and education to license sales and conservation initiatives." – Tim Schaeffer, Executive Director, PFBC



Sample imagery

Benefits

The agency's automated license system was first developed in 2007, and had limited functionality in terms of tracking, recording, and reporting on purchases made through digital marketing. The lack of this information had previously limited their ability to optimize results of individual campaigns, and associated elements, as well as determine revenue generated. This project provided an opportunity to make necessary changes to that system and for the ecommerce vendor to enable features of Google Analytics, Ad, and Tag Manager.

The PFBC focused on long-term (2-3 years) strategies to help create continuity. This continuity allowed for the campaign effort to build on results from the previous year to increase and evolve the agency's cumulative efforts. Because progress has been incremental, the PFBC was realistic in establishing goals and objectives for their efforts.

An accurate understanding of the theory, as well as the operations of the campaigns (and especially metrics!) is important. The PFBC benefited from providing leadership with streamlined explanations about the mechanics of the campaign and regular updates to gain their understanding and support.

Methodology

The ad campaign ran from March to August, but the PFBC and Gavin Advertising took time before that to plan an effective campaign. The PFBC and Gavin first took time to discuss campaign themes and develop creative material based on the results of RBFF's market segmentation study. Gavin recommended an initial split of media expenditures for various tactics.

Gavin was given access to the PFBC's social media accounts. They placed ads directly, managed the ads, and monitored the results. Gavin built a dashboard to display campaign metrics from multiple sources.

The initial messaging was updated to include information on social distancing due to changes that occurred from COVID.

While monitoring ad performance, the summer "family fun" campaign was modified to shift funds from display ads to other tactics due to poor results of display ads in the trout campaign.



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Social media ad

Future Plans/Lessons Learned

The PFBC learned in mid-April that some of the changes to the licensing system eliminated certain sections of tracking. They knew a license privilege was purchased but were unable to determine which privilege(s) and the total value of that transaction. A new automated license system will be in place in January 2021. This new system will allow better tracking and will provide more accurate analytics to allow for greater optimization and evaluation.

The PFBC also learned that creating/maintaining strong relationships with staff responsible for the automated licensing system is very important. They may be vital in providing information to the marketing team and license vendor.

SEM offered the best return on these campaigns. In the future, the PFBC will direct more funding to SEM for the promotion of license sales.

Social media and display ads were effective in reaching large numbers; however, click-through and conversion rates were low. These tactics will be used to build awareness in future campaigns.

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This grant program was conducted in 2020 and partially funded by the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) through a USFWS financial assistance award (#F18AC00145). Additional funds were from the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies' Multi-State Conservation Grant Program through the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs of the USFWS (#F20AP00170) and a match from the state agency.