

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Celebrating the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program

75 years of Conservation and Partnership Success



Boating-Related Revenues Pack a Powerful Funding Punch for Aquatic Conservation and Boating Infrastructure Programs

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The effort to expand funding for the Sport Fish Restoration Program began more than 30 years ago. The genesis of how this expansion would eventually be funded started innocently enough on a fishing trip on Pennsylvania's Juniata River, which included a member of Congress and the head of a respected fishery conservation organization. Today, the legislation and subsequent amendments and bills that came about thanks to a conversation between a couple of anglers power not only aquatic resource conservation efforts but also programs designed to increase recreational angling and boating opportunities on America's waterways.

The member of Congress on that long ago fishing trip was then-Representative John Breaux of Louisiana and his angling partner was Gil Radonski, president of the Sport Fishing Institute (SFI). An avid boater and angler since childhood, Breaux was seeking an alternative source of funding to dramatically expand the original 1950 Sport Fish Restoration Program funded under Dingell-Johnson. He wanted to contribute more to the sport he loved. As Radonski recounts, Congressman Breaux lamented that the bill he had introduced to capture revenue from an excise tax on boats and their motors, to be used to provide additional monies for the Sport Fish Restoration Program, was not getting any support from his Congressional colleagues. He asked



Motorboat fuel tax is a major source of funding for the Sport Fish Restoration Program. Credit: RBFF

Radonski and the SFI to help.

With SFI's help, as well as support from other conservation organizations, Breaux endorsed an alternative funding concept: gas tax revenues on the portion of fuel used in motorboats would be used to fund the expanded Sport Fish Restoration Program. Representative Breaux and his Senate colleague, Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming introduced and shepherded the legislation through Congress. The Wallop-Breaux amendments, enacted in 1984, were designed to dramatically increase the amount of available funding for aquatic resource conservation programs

and for greater recreational opportunities for anglers and boaters. Subsequent revisions created additional funding sources to support this country's aquatic resources and provide better fishing and boating opportunities for the American people.

Boating-related revenues pump up conservation funding

In the broadest sense possible, Wallop-Breaux was critical because it brought boaters and the revenues they generated into the Sport Fish Restoration Program fold. For more than 30 years, Sport Fish Restoration

had been funded through excise taxes on sport fishing equipment. However, this funding model did not take into account the fact that many anglers fished from motor-powered boats. It was a natural fit to bring recreational boaters into the Sport Fish Restoration community.

Aside from the alliance it created between anglers and boaters, perhaps the most important aspect of the Wallop-Breaux legislation was that, in its first year, apportionments were made under the provisions of the legislation and funding apportioned to the States increased from \$35 million in 1985 to almost \$110 million in 1986. The newly-created Boating Access Program directly benefited recreational boaters because it provided a dedicated funding source States could use to build and maintain boat ramps and associated infrastructure. The legislation also enabled States to use funds for Aquatic Resources Education programs. Finally, the

tion of boating infrastructure, such as docks and sanitary sewage pumpouts, as well as the promotion of boating safety.

The 1988 Wallop-Breaux reauthorization and amendments not only supported boater safety education, but also funded much-needed research to verify the actual percentage of fuel taxes collected each year directly attributable to recreational boaters, since this would determine the revenues available for use by the Sport Fish Restoration Program. In 1990, Congress expanded the portion of fuel taxes deposited in the program, increased funding by adding taxes from small gasoline engines and funded coastal wetlands protection and restoration programs.

In 1992, Congress enacted the Clean Vessel Act, which provides grants to States to install and maintain sanitary sewage pumpouts for use by recreational boaters, and also increased

created and funded the National Outreach and Communications program. The most recent major enhancements to the program occurred in 2005, when Congress expanded the Sport Fish fund by approximately \$110 million by capturing all remaining fuel taxes attributable to motorboat and small engine use that was being diverted for other purposes. (American Sportfishing Association; National Marine Manufacturer's Association, 2005).

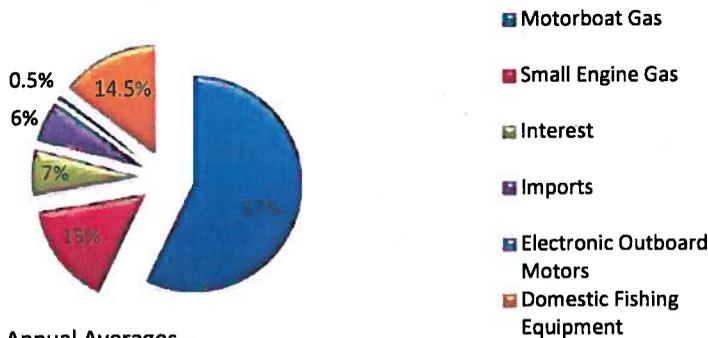
Case Studies: Examples of benefits to the angling and boating public

Sport fishing is serious business in Florida and, as so many anglers attest, when it comes to sport fishing, the largemouth bass reigns supreme. Largemouth bass, the Florida subspecies, grows faster and larger than its bass cousins elsewhere. Therefore, it puts up quite a fight and poses a greater challenge to anglers.

In 2002, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission started planning to transform an old hatchery, the Richloam State Fish Hatchery, into a modern state-of-the-art rearing facility. Five years later, the state unveiled the Florida Bass Conservation Center (FBCC) with a mission "to conduct and utilize essential research to optimize production, stocking and recruitment of Florida largemouth bass to facilitate integrated conservation management of Florida's freshwater fisheries resources."

A significant portion of the project was funded through the Sport Fish Restoration program and came from revenues collected from a special excise tax on fishing tackle and motorboat fuels. In essence, it is the anglers who so enjoy Florida's waters who pay for the upkeep of those very waters - and the FBCC promises great returns on their investment. Today, the FBCC is the state's major freshwater fish production hatchery, supplying largemouth bass and other fish

Sport Fish and Boating Trust Fund Revenue Sources



Based on Annual Averages

law called for equitable funding between saltwater and freshwater projects.

Building on success: Program Expansion Benefits Anglers, Boaters and Aquatic Resources

Building on the successful 1984 legislation, Congress passed subsequent laws expanding both program funding and support for the improvement and/or construc-

funding available for improving boating access facilities. Also, in 1998, the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program was enacted. It funds grants to States and the private sector to provide docks and other boating infrastructure for non-trailerable boats. Congress also further enhanced boating safety programs, increased funds available for boating access, captured more gas tax for use by the program, and

such as crappie, catfish, bream, triploid grass carp, striped bass, and sunshine bass. Thanks to the Center, Florida anglers still enjoy their stature as members of the "Fishing Capital of the World," as they wrestle to reel in home-grown trophies.



*Angling skills passed on to a new generation.
Credit:USFWS/Lori Bennett*

Aquatic resources education in Minnesota helps develop future conservationists

Minnesota has a rich fishing heritage, with more than two million people fishing its waters and contributing approximately \$2 billion each year to the state's economy. Recognizing that recreational fishing and hunting can create strong connections to the environment, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) developed the Fishing: Get in the Habitat! MinnAqua Leader's Guide for use by educators in formal and non-formal educational settings. The guide aims to increase students' understanding of Minnesota fish, aquatic resources, and resource management; involve students in water-related service learning projects; and connect students to their local aquatic resources through the recreational activity of angling.

Lessons and activities provide angling and environmental education opportunities for schools, web-based education programs, non-traditional schools, community park and recreation programs, youth program leaders, nature centers, museums, sporting groups, environmental learning centers, state agencies, watershed districts, fisheries resources and management educators, and any organization conducting academic, standards based, science, outdoor, environmental, natural resources, conservation and/or outdoor recreational education programming for children. The program accommodates multiple learning styles through the differentiation and diversity of lesson activities.

Through funding from the Sport Fish Restoration Program, Minnesota and other States are actively engaging the public in order to raise awareness of the importance of conserving our nation's aquatic resources.

Boating Access: Recovering from Disaster

In September, 2003, Hurricane Isabel roared up the Chesapeake Bay leaving havoc in its wake. One of the casualties it left behind was the boating access facility on the York River in Gloucester Point, Virginia. The facility, which was 90 percent destroyed, had been a key point of access for recreational boaters and anglers for not only the York River but also the wide-open waters of the lower Chesapeake Bay. However, thanks to core funding of \$685,282 from the Sport Fish Restoration funds matched with \$228,428 from other sources, a \$913,710 facility was constructed and was ready for the 2006 prime boating season. Two accessible piers were constructed as well as a 9,237 square yard parking lot capable of handling 69 car/trailer combinations. Other amenities including restroom facilities and walkways – all handicapped accessible – were added. To protect the environment, erosion and

sediment control devices were installed and sensitive submerged aquatic vegetation established. "Most weekends, the facility is filled to capacity," said James Adams of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, "and during certain fish migration times the facility is filled to capacity for several weeks at a time." The Boating Access provisions included in the 1984 Wallop-Breaux legislation made this and other boating access projects possible.

Access for Transient Boaters: Boating Infrastructure Grant Program

When the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency started talking about a water trail through the state in 1999, it was not thinking about canoes, kayaks and cartop boats. It was thinking big, as in 800 miles of designated rivers and waterways; big, as in accommodating vessels up to 100 feet and longer; and BIG, as in the federal Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program. After a series of BIG-funded projects along its route, to build dedicated transient facilities for cruisers, the agency declared the Tennessee Boating Trail complete. Seven BIG-funded projects built in partnership with private marinas, state parks and municipal governments in Tennessee helped create the water trail. With a total of eleven BIG-funded transient projects on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers now complementing the commercial marinas already available, boaters have tie-up facilities that are never more than an easy day cruise apart—about six hours, maximum, at typical trawler cruising speeds. These BIG projects are at a major crossroads for boaters cruising the Great Loop—the increasingly popular water route around the entire eastern United States via inland rivers, the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean, major coastal tributaries, and the Great Lakes—and provide critical boating facilities along the way.

GOT CLEAN WATER?



Thank a hunter, angler, boater, or recreational shooter.



KEEP OUR
WATER CLEAN—
USE PUMPOUTS

Posters and postcard images designed by USFWS to convey WSFR program benefits and partners. Credit: RBFF

Clean water needed: Clean Vessel Act Protects Alaska's Coastal Waters

Juneau, Alaska's Aurora Harbor marina faced a dilemma common to many other marinas in the United States. Pumpout equipment had been installed in years past; however, its location on the fuel dock meant that boats only used the service when re-fueling. Often, boaters not needing fuel either were reluctant to occupy that space or did not want to wait for access to the pumpout.

Using a \$100,000 Clean Vessel Act grant, Juneau installed a new system powered by a single pump, which provided five new connections along the harbor's main float, every 140 feet. Today, boat owners with assigned slips near the main float are able to pump out their holding tanks without ever leaving their slips. Other boaters, including transients, are able to temporarily moor in specially designated zones to service their holding tanks

without blocking the fuel dock or other boats. With installation of the new pumpout equipment at the new location, boaters can properly dispose of their sewage, thereby reducing discharge of untreated sewage into Alaska's coastal waters.

A Successful and On-Going Legacy

All Americans have reason to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program. Since passage of the original legislation to expand funding for the Sport Fish Restoration Program and subsequent program revisions, funding apportioned to the States for the program has grown from roughly \$35 million in 1985 to more than \$400 million in 2009. Critical not only to the future of aquatic resource conservation, the funding also supports improved recreational opportunities for boaters and anglers. Programs like CVA, BIG and Boating Access have provided

real benefits to the angling and boating public through the installation of approximately 3,800 coastal pumpout facilities and more than 2,200 inland pumpout facilities. Some 3,500 facilities have been maintained through the CVA program to ensure boaters can do their part to maintain clean water. Since the inception of the Boating Access provisions of the Sport Fish Restoration Program, new boating access construction has taken place at more than 3,800 sites and renovation or improvement of boating access at more than 7,400 sites.

By uniting the economic resources generated by the recreational endeavors, conservation leaders such as John Breaux, Malcolm Wallop and Gil Radonski created a conservation legacy that is still paying dividends to not only anglers and boaters, but to the entire American public.