



**Remarks by Gregg Wollner  
ASA Board of Directors Chairman and EVP, Rapala  
State of the Industry Breakfast  
July 10, 2013  
Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nevada**

GOOD MORNING, everyone.

It's my pleasure to welcome you to Las Vegas for the 56th International Convention of Allied Sportfishing Trades, better known as ICAST.

I'm Gregg Wollner, Executive Vice President for Rapala and the Chairman of the Board for the American Sportfishing Association.

I'm honored to kick off this year's State of the Industry Breakfast with our special guest speaker Baseball's Hall of Fame member, Mr. Johnny Bench.

Although Rapala is a long-time member of our industry's trade association, this is my first ICAST as Chairman. And I follow in the footsteps of 35 others who have held this position since 1933 when the association was formed.

For 80 years, we've been working together for our common business interests.

Even staunch business competitors know that by working together we can accomplish so much more than as individual companies. A strong sense of community is undeniable anytime we are together under one roof.

And we ARE a community. Just look around. We are bound together by our love of fishing. Of the outdoors. By our desire to keep our passion for fishing alive and growing through our work in this industry. It's what inspires our creativity and ingenuity.

What's also kept us together over the past eight decades is the willingness of our association's members to step up and contribute their time and expertise to develop and guide our collective business future.

Having said that, I'd like the board of directors and committee members to stand up and be recognized for all you do on our behalf.

APPLAUSE

I also want to recognize Mike Nussman and the ASA staff for their dedication and support to our association and our industry. Thank you, everyone!

My thanks also go to the Trade Show Committee, chaired by Carey Graves of Shimano, and Trade Show Director Ken Andres, for all their hard work in pulling together the world's largest fishing trade show.

And is it ever! With the full support of both boards of directors, for the first time the International Fly Tackle Dealer show is co-locating with ICAST. Co-locating ICAST and IFTD has had a positive impact on attendance numbers which illustrates that it was a business investment.

In 2014 and 2015 we're taking the trade show to Orlando where we expect to see continued growth in attendance, particularly in the international and marine markets. Business-wise – it's another good investment for us.

And investing in our future is what our association does for us.

And it's not just ICAST. It's KeepAmericaFishing. It's the annual Sportfishing Summit. And it's the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation.

Advocating with Congress and policy makers for strong, healthy fisheries and open access to fishing is at the core of our association. ASA launched KeepAmericaFishing to engage anglers in helping us advocate with state and federal policy makers for the sport we love.

KeepAmericaFishing supporters have helped pass major legislation such as the RESTORE the Gulf Act, the Billfish Conservation Act of 2012 and extending funding for the Sportfish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. Across the country, our advocates continue to act regularly on state-based issues affecting fishing in their backyards.

But it's not just about writing letters and emails. We want anglers to put their money where their SEND buttons are.

We have 60 million anglers in this country. We now have more than 1 million of them in the KeepAmericaFishing database. We can genuinely claim that KeepAmericaFishing is the largest angler advocacy organization in the U.S.

So, how do we get a dollar? Two dollars? Twenty dollars from each of those folks? One way is through an aggressive \$20 membership campaign which launches this week during ICAST. You'll be hearing a lot more about this during ICAST and in the weeks and months to come.

Each October, our association hosts the Sportfishing Summit, our annual business meeting, where each and every one of you in this room has an opportunity to participate in our collective future. I cannot stress to you enough the incredible ROI you get from attending the Summit.

The business information and the networking opportunities are phenomenal. John Doer from Pure Fishing, Dave Pfeiffer from Shimano and other industry leaders come every year. There is a Save the Date card on the table. If you've never been: You need to go!

Before Frank Peterson, president and CEO of the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, comes to the stage, I want to give you a 30 second history of RBFF. In the mid-1990s, fishing participation was stagnant or declining. The American Sportfishing Association saw a need for an organization dedicated to growing the sport.

ASA convinced a lot of people, including state resource agencies and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to agree to the plan. The Secretary of the Interior approved the plan and RBFF was launched. ASA moved heaven and earth to make that happen. Thank you, ASA, for that amazing accomplishment!

Thank you everyone for being here this morning and at ICAST.

Let's all pledge to do our part to keep America fishing!

And now I'm going to turn the stage over to Jim Klug, founder and director of Operations, for Yellow Dog Fly Fishing Adventures and the chairman of the board for the American Fly Fishing Trade Association.