



A NETWORK FOR BUILDING PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The most all-encompassing value of being a member of the American Sportfishing Association is also the most immeasurable one. How do you enumerate the sportfishing industry's collective clout? How do you quantify the trust between a buyer and seller that ensures you seal the deal? How do you determine the worth of inspiration that leads to a successful new business venture? All of our activities fortify the network in some way, with countless benefits coming back to us all.

For many years, the association hosted three main events each year with strong networking benefits; one focused on member relations, one primarily for government relations, and the other a trade show.

SPORTFISHING SUMMIT: GAINING PERSPECTIVE

Ever since 1933, the American Sportfishing Association organized membership meetings each year where the core business of the organization was discussed and future actions were decided.

Breaking nearly 70 years of tradition, in 2002 the purpose and format of the annual business meeting was revamped and it was given a new name more fitting with the times: the Sportfishing Summit.

The name change was purposeful, with the notion of a summit connoting a better vantage point for an expanded outlook. The main idea was to transform the annual business meeting into a more meaningful and productive venue for big-picture and long-term thinking—not just about the association, but also the broader universe in which we're all operating. These changes made the venue more relevant to our wide community of partners, too.

The Sportfishing Summit is the one time each year that the industry comes together not as competitors, but as peers and collaborators. For everyone in the sportfishing community, it's an opportunity for thought-provoking idea-sharing about our future. It's the time when we put aside the specifics of our organizations and focus on what we all have in common.

Resounding Success

In just its second year with a revised format, a full 100 percent of Sportfishing Summit attendees responded to a satisfaction survey rating the event's overall usefulness as "good" or "excellent." The positive response was attributable to a format that's conducive to the free-flow of ideas on relevant and timely issues and inclusive of partners outside the industry. Attendance has continued to grow each year since.





A Better Vantage Point

The Sportfishing Summit gives the Board of Directors, committees, association members, and partners the best opportunity for networking and strategic planning to support the long-term interests of the industry and the sport. Each one includes:

- General sessions, during which key players in the industry and sportfishing community tackle the most important issues affecting our livelihood, now and in the future. This includes topics such as trends in manufacturing, distributing, and retailing; the changing demographics of anglers; or new developments in fishing participation;
- Feature speakers from outside our community who illuminate national and global issues that affect us, inspire new ideas and perspectives, and help guide future ventures. For example, we've had experts on China's economy enlighten us on that country's development, and marketing pros who challenge conventional wisdom on what motivates consumers to buy products;
- Committee and Board of Directors meetings, where the activities and future direction of the association are discussed and decided; and
- Seminars that provide practical information in support of better business operations.

“I first attended the Sportfishing Summit in 2003. After being in the retail tackle business for 10 years I thought I knew a little about the fishing business but after attending I realized how little I really knew. My only prior exposure to the American Sportfishing Association had been the ICAST shows; however, having the opportunity to attend the various meetings at the Sportfishing Summit really opened my eyes to all the extremely positive things going on behind the scenes. I feel the whole experience of attending the sessions, talking with many of the attendees, and just absorbing the whole scene is extremely valuable and informative.”

—Ken Elie, President, Outdoor Pro Shop

WORKING CAPITAL

For many of our early years, as part of our Congressional relations efforts, the American Sportfishing Association organized fishing trips on the Chesapeake Bay for members of Congress and their staff and administration officials. This later evolved into a broader networking event on Capitol Hill held during National Fishing Week.



During a National Fishing Week event in 1989, President George H.W. Bush visited with Dana Pickup, Board of Directors chairman of the American Sportfishing Association's previous organization, and Senator Bob Kasten, who received an award from the association.

For many years we hosted an annual Congressional reception, including scores of industry members, policymakers, and partners, to shine the spotlight on sportfishing's values and celebrate our accomplishments. This not only helped solidify our relationships, but also raised awareness of the values our industry brings to America's economy and quality of life.

Although we continue to give high priority to Congressional relations, over the last decade we made the strategic decision to strengthen these efforts year-round and turn our event-networking focus toward improving our other annual gatherings, the Sportfishing Summit and the ICAST trade show.



Members of the American Sportfishing Association traveled to Washington, D.C., to help teach children to fish at Constitution Gardens during the 2003 National Fishing Week kickoff.

Our Way to Say Thanks

The American Sportfishing Association used its National Fishing Week Capitol Hill reception as a venue for awards presentations, such as the Norville Prosser

Lifetime Achievement Award (named for the association's long-time Vice President of



Government Affairs) and the Future of Fishing Award, both still given annually. We also annually award journalists for outstanding contributions to promoting sportfishing with the Homer

Circle award, named for an especially accomplished and respected outdoor journalist.

Pictured is President & CEO Mike Nussman with Senator John Breaux when he was given the lifetime achievement award in 2004 for three decades of leadership on fisheries and sportfishing policy, including co-sponsoring legislation that expanded investments in fisheries conservation and access.