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## NEW HORIZONS

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As we navigate a course for the future, the American Sportfishing Association is staying true to the commitments that have defined us throughout the evolutions of our 80-year history. As our story demonstrates, we adapt and refine our efforts in response to both the urgent and long-term needs of the industry.

The most important results we're presently focused on achieving are:

1. A diversified and active member base
2. A resonating voice of influence to protect the sport and the industry
3. More anglers enjoying better quality fishing experiences

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## PRIORITY #1: A DIVERSIFIED AND ACTIVE MEMBER BASE

Our viability as an organization is grounded in representing the full cross-section of the industry. For many years now the American Sportfishing Association has united members from every industry sector, and there's still room to grow in these traditional areas. We're also fanning out from our core membership to bring in new, related businesses and organizations that give us a strategic advantage in advancing our other priorities described here.



But there's a lot more to growth than just numbers. Our effectiveness is dependent upon the trust and activism of our members. We earn trust by understanding and being responsive to your interests and needs. We cultivate that understanding by being good listeners and reaching out to gain from new perspectives. We respond by involving you in developing the best ways to apply what we learn. That's our general approach for continually refining our member services so that we not only retain members but also appeal to new ones. It's more a matter of quality than quantity.

We also recognize that a membership that is well-served is more likely to be active—the key to our organizational vitality and the strength of our collective influence. Particularly through the programs embedded in our other priorities described here, we're empowering every member with opportunities to take a substantive role in shaping our future.



The following are areas of targeted growth in the future, either by expanding our membership or strengthening our alliances—and in some cases, both:

- We're creating more formal ties to the fly fishing segment. The success of the first-ever combined trade show with the American Fly Fishing Trade Association in 2013 was a clear indication of the potential benefits of more unity.
- We're forging stronger alliances with boating businesses, especially through our respective industries' involvement in the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation. Boating companies have been joining our ranks in growing numbers, too.
- We're appealing to new members from businesses with broader consumer markets, such as accessory and apparel companies, and others whose products are commonly part of the outdoor experience. This in turn can help boost retailer representation.



- We're bridging the industry and sportfishing advocacy groups to give us more direct links to anglers and great potential to become an even stronger voice of influence in the future.
- We're gaining resonance from outdoor journalists and marketing firms that are increasingly joining our membership and participating in the ICAST trade show. They are vital parts of our growing community, with valuable roles in promoting our products, the sport of fishing, and fisheries conservation.
- We're taking part in broad partnerships among state fish and wildlife agencies, federal agencies that manage public lands and waterways, and non-profit conservation groups to advance mutual goals, such as encouraging outdoor recreation.

## PRIORITY #2: A RESONATING VOICE OF INFLUENCE TO PROTECT THE SPORT AND THE INDUSTRY

A diversified and active membership base is a fundamental aspect of growing our rallying power. Another is the American Sportfishing Association's new web-based advocacy campaign, KeepAmericaFishing™. It gives us the means to modernize our approach to public-policy advocacy and take it to a higher level.



Especially over the last decade, as the unfounded push for the establishment of coastal no-fishing zones demonstrated all too clearly, the impacts of public-policy decisions on sportfishing businesses have become far more direct and dramatic than they've ever been in our past.

At the same time, some recent policy decisions also seem to reveal that more and more of our political leaders may view the sportfishing constituency as expendable. A part of this seems to be a perception that our collective livelihood is a hobby rather than a profit-driven industry like any other, with significant impacts on jobs and the economy.

Meanwhile, longer-term issues such as a changing climate, growing demands on water supplies, and the worldwide animal rights movement have even more potential to fundamentally undermine the industry's prospects in the years ahead.

These kinds of trends are what prompted us to undertake an extensive effort to improve the industry's advocacy function. The ultimate goal is to create a vehicle to more effectively mobilize the industry and anglers together as a more formidable and influential force.

That's the concept that led to the development of KeepAmericaFishing™ to serve as the voice of the American angler. KeepAmericaFishing™ debuted in 2008 and was significantly refined and relaunched two years later. The website, [www.KeepAmericaFishing.org](http://www.KeepAmericaFishing.org), gives anglers the means to easily engage on specific issues that affect them and make their interests known to policy-makers. It also gives us a way to be more targeted in our advocacy



at the state and local levels of government. With business leaders providing crucial resources to get the effort off the ground, the network includes more than 1 million anglers so far.

We can be sure that those who oppose or undervalue sportfishing are going to make their voices heard. We need to make sure our voice is what resonates.

Our ventures into ownership of consumer shows in strong fishing markets provide another vehicle for publicizing KeepAmericaFishing™ and reaching anglers directly. Both the advocacy campaign and consumer shows can provide significant new revenue streams that strengthen our capacity to protect our shared interests, now and in the future.



*Over the last 15 years, the American Sportfishing Association has purchased majority interest or ownership in several consumer shows; we now have two in California, three in the Northeast, and one in Chicago. These are giving us new ways to engage with anglers and raise revenue for public-policy advocacy.*



“My number one priority as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the American Sportfishing Association is to establish and grow KeepAmericaFishing™. We must unite the anglers in this country to stand up for our rights and preserve our sport. We need to mobilize the 60 million anglers in this country and ASA is the only organization that can accomplish this on a national level.”

—Gregg Wollner, Executive Vice President, Rapala



## **PRIORITY #3: MORE ANGLERS ENJOYING BETTER QUALITY FISHING EXPERIENCES**

As the American Sportfishing Association's history shows, the times we've accomplished the most have been when we've brought people together and coordinated efforts that previously had been disjointed or unsystematic. KeepAmericaFishing™ is a good example of our latest effort to do just that.

Another example from our history is the Sportfishing Promotion Council's success in forging productive relationships among members of the industry and state fish and wildlife agencies to advance mutually beneficial goals. Those relationships are a big part of the success of the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation today.

The combined effect of the sportfishing industry, boating industry, and state agencies working together to promote good days on the water is what led to the uptick in participation we now see for the first time in more than two decades.

That could not have happened without our vigilance in recognizing the trend and taking the painstaking actions that led to the establishment of the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation and the major new sources of funding that support it. It now represents the most extensive and sophisticated undertaking focused on increasing outdoor recreation in the world.

This is yet another way we're maximizing modern approaches to improve upon longstanding objectives. The Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation is carefully discerning the customers of tomorrow and the best ways to reach out to them today.

We're particularly encouraged by new initiatives focused on engaging the Hispanic community. We will carry on our close work with the foundation, as we have all along, to keep moving forward.

Our legacy of leadership in conservation also will not waver. We will keep our commitment through our own FishAmerica Foundation as well as our collaboration with government agencies entrusted with ensuring the health of our fisheries and waterways. Our success is tied to theirs, and it's in our best interest to do all we can to ensure the effectiveness of government programs for both conservation and outdoor recreation.

