

The American Sportfishing Association

75 years of advocating for more fish, more anglers and more business

In 2008, the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) celebrates 75 years of serving the sportfishing industry. The trade association was created in 1933 as a result of government pressure to create a body to oversee the industry. Since then the association has evolved from representing the interests of just tackle manufacturers to championing the entire sportfishing community.

As the nation's leading recreational fishing trade association, ASA supports the interests of hundreds of businesses, agencies and organizations and is *the* resource for protecting the sportfishing industry.

ASA's members include sportfishing and boating manufacturers and their representatives, independent and chain outdoor retail stores, state fish and wildlife agencies, conservation organizations, federal land and water management agencies, angler advocacy groups, outdoor media groups and journalists.

Through advocacy, outreach and special programs and events, ASA, and its conservation and habitat restoration arm, the FishAmerica Foundation, safeguards and promotes the economic and conservation values of sportfishing, keeping the nation's fisheries and waterways healthy and accessible to America's most popular outdoor activity.

ASA also represents the nation's 40 million anglers who generate more than \$45 billion in retail sales with a \$25 billion impact on the nation's economy creating employment for 1 million people.



75 YEARS
1933 - 2008

History in the Making

1933 – The Associated Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Founded on Unconstitutional Grounds

On June 16, 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). As part of the New Deal to help the United States out of the Great Depression, the NIRA legalized cartels and created the National Recovery Administration (NRA).

Within two weeks the Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association and the Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Institute assembled in Washington, D.C. These organizations were not rivals: many companies belonged to both groups.

The Association and Institute dispatched a joint committee on June 29, 1933, to meet with NRA officials who wanted a code for the fishing tackle industry. "Go back to the Mayflower Hotel and amalgamate your associations into a truly representative organization and return here tomorrow for serious business with the NRA,"

NRA Deputy Administrator A.D. Whitesides told the group.

That evening the committee worked until 4:00 a.m. drafting bylaws for the new organization. The next day the Associated Fishing Tackle Manufacturers (AFTM) was founded. AFTM drafted and adopted the industry code the NRA had called for. President Roosevelt signed the final version of it in August 1933, making AFTM responsible for administering the Code of Fair Competition for the Fishing Tackle Industry.

On May 27, 1935, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the NIRA unconstitutional, eliminating it—and AFTM's original reason to exist. However, its members chose to remain a functioning organization. Seventy-five years later, AFTM, now called the American Sportfishing Association, still continues to represent its members.

1941 – The Value of an Advocate Becomes Apparent

Thomas Shipp advocated for AFTM in the late 1930s (he also was employed by Standard Oil). In 1939, AFTM cut his services, believing the \$1,800 it paid him was too expensive.

Eighteen months later AFTM re-hired him after the House of Representatives passed the first excise tax on fishing gear.

**The Associated Fishing Tackle Manufacturers
Washington D. C.
June 30, 1933**



THE ORIGINAL AFTM -How many of these faces do you remember? Organization Meeting of the Associated Fishing Tackle Manufacturers, June 30, 1933, Washington, D.C. (Asterisk indicates deceased) *Charles Krenrich, Cortland Line Company; *Charles Heddon, James Heddon's Sons; *William Shakespeare, Jr., Shakespeare Company; *A.J. Crandall, Ashaway Line & Twine Company; *E. A. Pflueger, Enterprise Mfg. Company; *Karl Kinnear, American Fork & Hoe Co. (Now True Temper Corporation); E. D. Ibbotson, Horrocks-Ibbotson Company. Second Row: Stenographer; *Edward McMahan, Bronson Reel Company; Julian Crandall, Ashaway Line & Twine Company; *J. Howard Butts, Rome Specialty Company; E.P. Hoyle, Richardson Rod & Reel Company (Now of Cortland Line Company); R.H. Balch, Horrocks-Ibbotson Company; Paul Johnson, Ocean City Mfg. Company. Third Row: *Edward McMahon Jr., Bronson Reel Company; Paul B. Kelly, Newton Line Company; A.R. Benson W. W. Mildrum Jewel Company; *L.W. Griffiths, Enterprise Mfg. Company; *H.C. Kans, Tennessee Line & Twine Company; Dwight Wyre, Marathon Bait Company. Fourth Row: William Harrison, Shakespeare Company; Oscar Weber, Weber Lifelike Fly Company; James Dix, Bevin-Wilcox Company; *W. B. Pimie, Montague Rod & Reel Company; *Carl Heinzlarling, Creek Chub Bait Company; *George M. Schulthess, Creek Chub Bait Company. Fifth Row: *W. E. Gallup, Bevin-Wilcox Company; *Edward O'Connell, Newton Line Company; *C.P. Brown, Brown Silk Braid Company; *Harold Meyer, W. H. Meyer & Son; *Orville Cullerton, W.J. Jamison Company; *Harry Gephart, Gephart Mfg. Company. Back Row: H.W. Whittemore, H.A. Whittemore & Company; *Ed Simon, Ed Simon Company; *John McDonald, San Francisco, California; *C.R. Riley, Horton Mfg. Company; *David Comstock, U.S. Line Company; *L.H. Kimbrough, Ideal Fishing Float Company; C.T. Treadway, Horton Mfg. Company. Also present but not in picture: R. F. Smith, Cortland Line Company; *John Dittenheffer, Cortland Line Company; *Earl Angell, B.F. Gladding & Company; Ivar Hennings, South Bend Bait Co. (Now South Bend Tackle Company, Inc.); *Fred Arbogast, Fred Arbogast & Company, Inc.; *S. A. Jones, Norwich Line Company.

This photo of the Associated Fishing Tackle Manufacturers organizational meeting was taken the day the association was founded, July 30, 1933.

**1944, 1959, 1994 –
ASA's Headquarters Moved
from Washington, D.C., to
Chicago and Back Again**

In 1944 AFTM hired a part-time Secretary-Treasurer who represented one of its members in Washington, D.C. For the next 15 years, AFTM's Secretary's office was in the nation's capital.

AFTM hired a new Executive Director in 1959, however, and relocated to Chicago. While in the Midwest, though, the association regularly discussed the need to be more involved in the legislative process.

Thirty years later, The American Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association (AFTMA) renewed its presence in Washington, D.C., when it opened a satellite office there for its government staff. By 1994, the association had moved all of its offices to Alexandria, Va.

<u>Budget for year 1942-43</u>	
Secretary's Salary	\$2000.00
Sec'y. Travel Expense	150.00
President's Salary	100.00
Pres. Travel Expense	175.00
Reporting	100.00
Meeting Expense	150.00
Telephone, Telegraph and Printing	400.00
Spec. Meetings & Misc.	100.00
University of Michigan	500.00
Izaak Walton League	300.00
Expenses - industry Comm.	725.00
Skish Promotion	\$5200.00

The Associated Fishing Tackle Manufacturers' 1942-1943 budget totaled \$5,200.



In March 1953, the *SFI Bulletin* included its first picture of then Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay reading a previous issue.

1949 – Sport Fishing Institute Established to Promote Fisheries Conservation and “Feed the Cow”

As part of the United States’ post-war boom, the fishing tackle market exploded with sales jumping from \$35 million in 1939 to \$130 million in 1947 and the number of anglers increasing just as dramatically.

But AFTM realized increased interest in fishing necessitated more fishing facilities and more fish. As one member said at the time, “You don’t get milk unless you feed the cow.”

In April 1948, AFTM created its Fish Restoration Committee, which quickly allocated \$9,000 to finance AFTM’s first fish



restoration project. And in June 1949, AFTM approved the creation of the Sport Fishing Institute (SFI).

Six months later, on August 4, 1949, SFI was incorporated as a national non-profit organization to:

- Promote conservation of recreational fisheries
- Advance fishery research and management
- Publish information to advance fishery science and sportfishing
- Train personnel about fisheries science and management
- Encourage participation in sportfishing
- Foster cooperation between conservation organizations

Forty-four years later, SFI merged with ASA.

1950 – Donation to the Outdoor Writers Association of America Makes ASA the Group’s Oldest Supporter

In 1950, SFI earmarked \$500 for the Outdoor Writers Association of America (OWAA), a group of journalists dedicated to sharing the outdoor experience. SFI hoped its members would cover its conservation efforts, thereby encouraging people to fish.

Fifty-eight years later, that donation makes ASA OWAA’s longest continuous supporter. The

relationship SFI envisioned in 1950 still exists. “We’re just one conduit to get your message out,” said Kevin Rhodes, OWAA’s current Executive Director. “We are proud and grateful that ASA continues to support our association and what it represents.”



In 1979, AFTMA President Paul Mulready (left) accepted OWAA’s Oldest Supporting Member plaque from OWAA Past President Pete Czura.



“We have been encouraged by the increasing evidence of cooperation we have received from the membership during the past few months. We feel that the association is in a stronger position than ever before to perform its functions in behalf of this industry. We urge that you continue to work with us in your own best interests. These are tough times for business and only through cooperative and united effort can we maintain our position.”

—John Holmes, secretary of the Associated Fishing Tackle Manufacturers speaking at its semi-annual meeting, October 6, 1951, New York, N.Y.

Holmes’s was referring to the government’s allocation of materials to industry and raising the excise tax from 15 to 10 percent.

1961 – AFTM Incorporates and Changes Name

In 1961, AFTM incorporated as the American Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association (AFTMA). By incorporating, AFTMA became a distinct legal entity distinct.

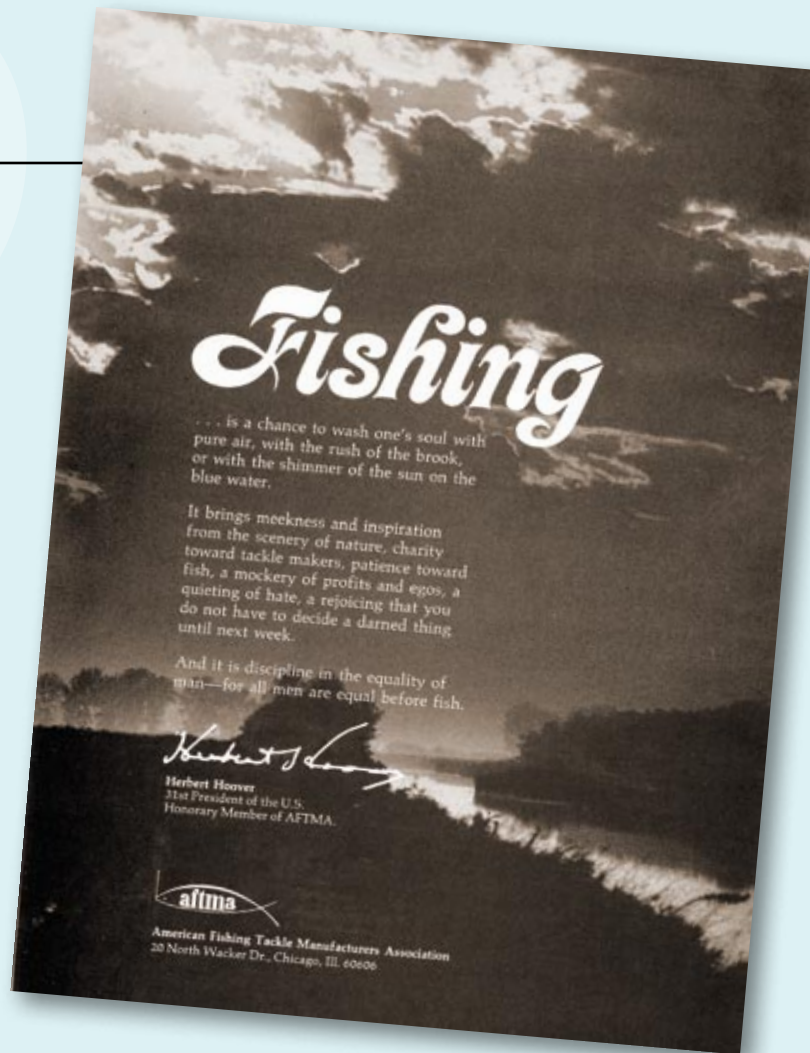
1976–1987 – AFTMA Center Houses Museum, Fishing Pond

In 1976, AFTMA bought land for its new headquarters in Arlington Heights, Ill., just outside of Chicago. The AFTMA Center had its grand opening during the first National Fishing Week in 1979.

The facility included an International Sport Fishing Museum and a one-acre fishing pond. In addition to association meetings, the AFTMA Center hosted 200 people for the Take a Kid Fishing Derby in 1981. It

hosted 500 students and 200 adults in the Welcome to the World of Fishing classes in 1983.

In 1987, AFTMA sold the building to the Italian-American Sports Hall of Fame and the museum's exhibits were donated to the Hunting Island State Park in South Carolina. The building currently houses U.S. offices for the Tanita Corporation, a Japanese company that markets body composition and weight-management monitors.



President Herbert Hoover, a lifelong angler and honorary member of AFTMA, lent his name to this promotion in 1973.



Ground was broken on the AFTMA Center, located in Arlington Heights, Ill., in 1977.



1979 – AFTMA Logo Designer Saves Association \$1,399,600

AFTMA unveiled a new logo in January 1979 consisting of marine life in a circular field of green and blue divided by the horizon, representing clear blue water and green landscape.

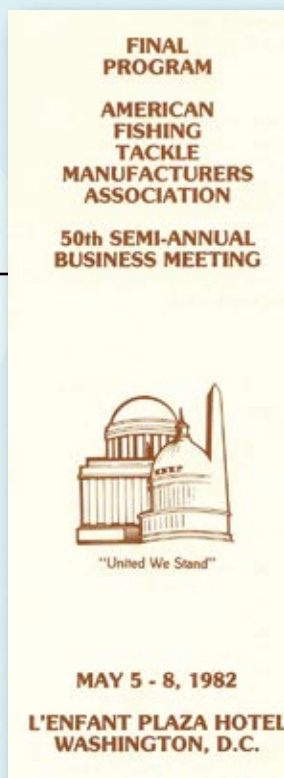
Creating it cost the association \$400.

Four years later, AT&T debuted a similar logo of stylized blue lines in a circle (albeit without the marine life attributes). Its development cost?

\$1.4 million.

1982 – AFTMA Celebrates 50th Semi-Annual Business Meeting – by Deciding Not to Have Another Semi-annual Meeting

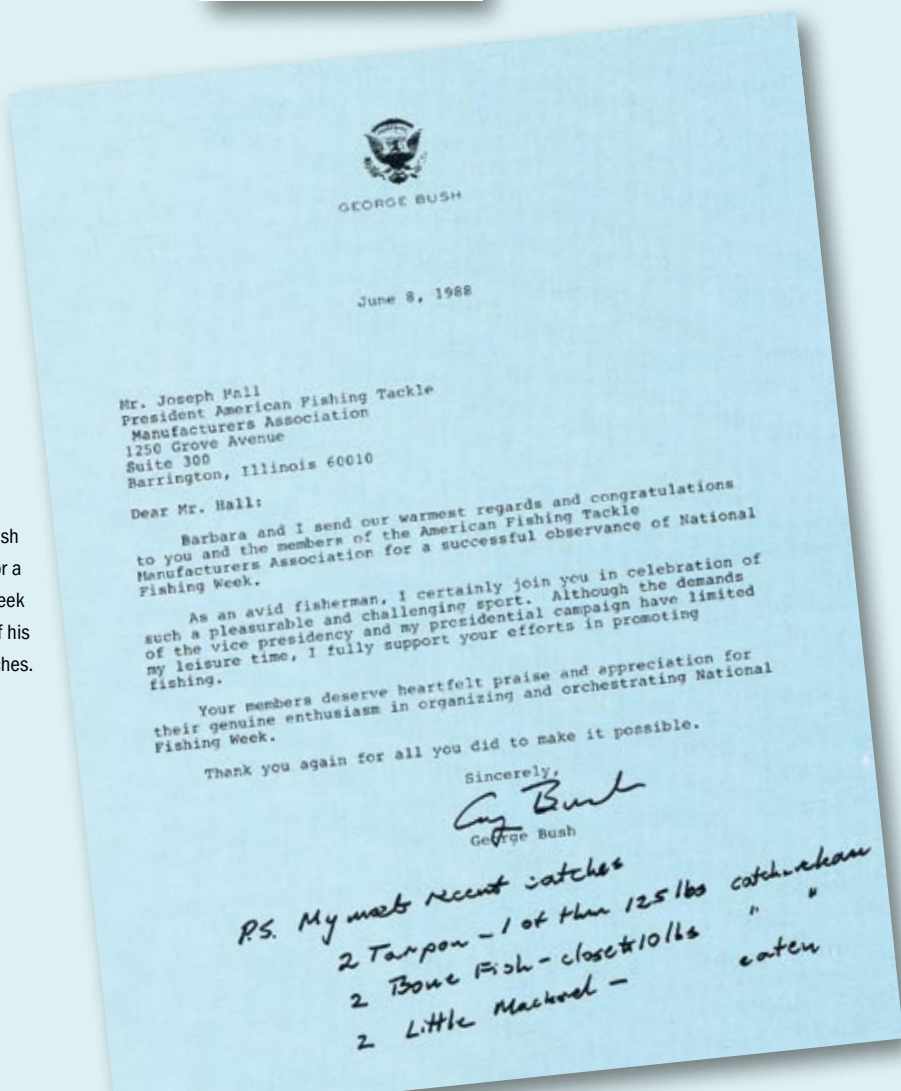
In addition to passing resolutions about the federal manufacturers excise tax and trade show at the 50th AFTMA Semi-Annual Business Meeting, members voted not to have any more semi-annual business meetings.



1993 – Name Change Reflects Broader Scope

AFTMA became the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) in 1993 as part of its new mission of serving the entire sportfishing community.

Then Vice President George H.W. Bush congratulated AFTMA in 1988 for a successful National Fishing Week and passed along news of his most recent catches.



*P.S. My most recent catches
2 Tarpon - 1 of them 125 lbs catch
2 Bone Fish - close to 10 lbs " "
2 Little Mackrel - eaten*

Arthur Benson: ASA's George Washington

Arthur Benson, then-president of the W.W. Mildrum Jewel Co., was the man most responsible for the success of the fledgling Associated Fishing Tackle Manufacturers (AFTM) and Sport Fishing Institute (SFI). Benson's contributions and honors include:



- AFTM co-founder and its longest-serving president (1936 to 1953).
- SFI co-founder and its first president (1949 to 1959).
- President Emeritus of American Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association (AFTMA) and the first honorary member of SFI, in part for being "the principal and successful salesman to industry of the Dingell-Johnson Act."
- Father of AFTMA president Ted Benson (1981-1982), the only father-son duo to lead the Association.
- Member of the Sporting Goods Industry Hall of Fame; Benson was the first person inducted who did not invent or develop a piece of sports equipment.



1994 – ASA and SFI Merged as Part of Industry Organization Consolidation

On May 1, 1994, SFI merged with the organization that had created it 45 years earlier. "The previous goals of the SFI are embodied

in the primary goal of the ASA: ensuring a healthy and sustainable fishery resource," according to the first post-merger *ASA Bulletin*.

2002 – Annual Business Meeting Evolves Into Sportfishing Summit

From 1933 through 2001, ASA held an annual business meeting to review its accomplishments, budget and plans for the upcoming year.

In 2002, the Sportfishing Summit replaced the business meeting, creating a forum for ASA members to conduct the

association's business activities as well as address issues that impact the sportfishing industry. Members of the larger sportfishing community began attending the meetings.

In 2007, more than 140 industry leaders attended the event.

