

Florida Fish Busters'

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Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration?

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The Federal Aid in Sportfish Restoration (SFR) program is one federal program that really lives up to its name. For more than half a century, it has been one of the best “user-pays, user-benefits” initiatives anywhere. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has received more than \$11 million each year from these matching funds to sustain and enhance public fishing opportunities that return a **\$7.5 billion** economic benefit to the state each year and provide 46 million days of recreational enjoyment.



Purchasing fishing tackle and fueling motor boats contributes to Sport Fish Restoration that ensure safe and sustainable recreational fishing and boating in Florida.

and fish agencies. The original Dingell-Johnson Act was expanded in 1984 through the Wallop-Breaux Amendment to include import duties on sport fishing equipment, pleasure boats and yachts, as well as tax revenue from motorboat fuel

In 1950, Congressmen Dingell and Johnson created the original program in response to a request from the fishing industry and angling public. Under this program, fishing tackle is assessed an excise fee at the manufacturers' level, and resulting funds are allocated to state game

sales. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determines how much of these taxes are returned to Florida based on the size of the state and the number of paid fishing license holders. Since we do not charge saltwater fishing license fees to resident shoreline anglers, nor require any youth under 16, or resident adult over 65 to purchase a freshwater or saltwater license, and many states do, we recover a somewhat smaller proportion of the funds than some other states.

SFR generated \$13.3 million dollars for Florida in 2008, of which 15 percent (\$2 million) provided for both fresh and saltwater boating access, including building and maintaining boat ramps,

courtesy docks and trailer parking. Of the remaining \$11.3 million, freshwater

fisheries conservation received \$5.3 million (based on the estimated number of resident freshwater anglers versus saltwater anglers), and saltwater attained \$6 million.

Florida freshwater fisheries' SFR funding is used primarily to support the many programs that ensure Florida remains the Fishing Capital of the World. This includes evaluating key fisheries to determine the appropriate regulations, fish stocking, habitat enhancement, aquatic plant management and infrastructure needs (e.g., boat ramps, fishing piers, fish attractors). The funds also support



SFR funding helped built and maintain over 200 boat ramps providing free angling access.

applied research, hatchery operations, outreach activities for youth, and communications programs to keep the angling public informed.



Meghann helps Luke select a fishing rod.

In turn, sportfishing not only provides millions of hours of healthy, relaxing enjoyment for anglers and boaters, it also provides a tremendous economic benefit to local communities and businesses. The angling public and fishing industry together serve as watch dogs to ensure that the user who pays into the system directly benefits.

“Put, Grow and Take” is an expression that fisheries biologists use for stocking a small fish into a healthy environment, letting it grow and then be caught by an angler as a much bigger fish. Sportfish Restoration works the same way with a little money being put into the system being returned and expanded to give the angler more than his or her monies worth.

The bottom line is that fishing tackle and boating industries pay these taxes up front and then pass the cost on to anglers and boaters. Each recreationist pays a minor share. However, the accumulated impact is one of the strongest forces helping ensure there will be fishing and boating access in the future, that aquatic habitats are protected and restored, and that our waters contain healthy and abundant sport fishes to

For additional information go to: MyFWC.com/Fishing/ and click on the Sport Fish Restoration link. The US Fish and Wildlife Services' WSFRprograms.FWS.gov Web site provides additional information.

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