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Ladies, Let's Go Fishing sets sights on national efforts through partnerships with NMMA, RBFF

By Brianna Liestman

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Ladies, Let's Go Fishing recently announced partnerships with the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) and the Recreating Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF).

Ladies, Let's Go Fishing is an organization founded in 1997 dedicated to attracting more women to sportfishing and to promoting conservation and responsible angling. It is a no-yelling school that helps women become familiar with terminology and the skills of fishing before going out on the water. To date, the organization has produced over 8,000 graduates.



Photo Credit: Submitted by Betty Bauman

"This is basically a 'develop and teach the teachers' program," said Betty Bauman, founder and CEO of Ladies, Let's Go Fishing. "We're bringing in novices, exposing them into fishing, giving them the enthusiasm and the skills that they can teach to their friends and families."

Frank Peterson, president and CEO of the RBFF, said that while 34 percent of angling participants are women and 47 percent of new participants in the sport in 2014 were women, what is lacking is the availability of learning opportunities. However, he believes Ladies, Let's Go Fishing is meeting that need. In fact, Peterson sends all new staff at RBFF to a Ladies, Let's Go Fishing course.

"We just think it's time. We're hopeful that [Bauman] can continue the progress she's made and maybe even expand the program beyond the state of Florida," said Peterson.

The RBFF and NMMA will be able to help Ladies, Let's Go Fishing achieve those national efforts. Thom Dammrich, president of the NMMA, said that the Recreational Boating Leadership Council's question to answer is how to grow boating over the next decade, and he believes getting more women fishing will have a positive impact on that goal.

"We'd like to get more of everybody fishing, but this program is focused on ladies and I think that's an important sector [and] market, and I applaud the work that [Bauman] does," said Dammrich. "We all know that the women have a lot of influence on what the family does, and so getting women engaged in fishing, enjoying fishing and being out on the water can only help to get more families out on the water."

Bauman said that the whole industry has been working together to bring more women into the sport but that Ladies, Let's Go Fishing is in a unique position to help attract those consumers.

"We're all working together to bring females into the sport. The industry has been trying to approach females but I'm not quite sure they understand the market," said Bauman. "We know what they want, we know their constraints and we know what we can do to overcome them."

The importance of reaching out to women can be seen in the "multiplying factor" one woman has, said Bauman. Women are more likely to involve their friends in their activities, particularly in saltwater fishing.

"Saltwater fishing ends up being a team sport where everybody on the boat has a role, whether they have a rod or not," said Bauman. "We are working on programs to develop grassroots associations so the women can meet in their own communities and go fishing."

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Bruna Carincotte and Johana Reyes of Alexandria, Va., happy after catching their first fish ever. Photo credit: www.takemefishing.org

Teaching women to fish will also help bring in families. Bauman says there are a lot of great programs for kids, which is important because kids are so important to the future of the industry, but the parents need to be just as involved in the learning.

“By bringing the women in, we’re bringing in the whole family,” said Bauman. “They are going to be furthering their children’s fishing endeavors and also paying for their equipment, so the parents are a critical part of growing the sport.”

To that end, Ladies, Let’s Go Fishing recently opened up its courses so women can bring their spouses and teenagers and learn in a group environment.

“What we want to do is create a web of new anglers so that they can make other friends,” said Bauman. “Saltwater fishing is a sport that females in particular are not going to do alone, so they’re going to need to make friends that they can learn with together.”

Expansions like this and the desire to bring Ladies, Let’s Go Fishing to the whole country are possible through partnerships from organizations such as the RBFF and NMMA.

“Our program is dependent on sponsorships to keep the registrations low enough that women can afford them,” said Bauman. “It’s an incredible expense and the sponsors defray it so that the registration costs for the women are defrayed and we can keep it affordable.”

For more information about Ladies, Let’s Go Fishing and its programs, visit www.ladiesletsgofishing.com contact by phone at 954-475-9068 or email info@ladiesletsgofishing.com.

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