

Research reveals national fishing trends

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If you want to get people interested in the outdoors, fishing is one of the most effective ways to do that.

Keeping people - especially teens - fishing can be tough, though.

Those are some of the findings of new research done by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation and The Outdoor Foundation.

The 2010 Special Report on Fishing and Boating recognized fishing "as the top 'gateway' activity, spurring involvement in other outdoors interests.

The report also noted that while participation in fishing overall is down from 2008, participation in freshwater fishing - by far the most popular type of fishing in the country - is actually up over last year.

The study also revealed some differences in who fishes where. Freshwater fishing is most popular among young people, with more than 22.5 percent of those taking part being younger than 18. Salt water fishing, meanwhile, is an older man's game, with 48.1 percent of participants being older than 45.

Fly fishing appeals to other groups. A total of 25.2 percent of fly anglers are women; 21.5 percent are minorities.

The study also showed, though, how tough it is to keep teenagers fishing.

There are 11.2 million fishing participants ages 6 to 17 this year. That's unchanged from 2008.

As kids age, however, they can be pulled away from fishing. Participation drops from 25.4 percent among those ages 6 to 12 to 19 percent among those ages 13 to 17. Time, other sports/activities, schoolwork, TV and video games are cited as barriers.

Teenage girls tend to fall away from fishing more than three times faster than do boys, the study found.

The two foundations met with 500 youth delegates in New York City's Central Park this summer to discuss ways to get and keep kids involved in the outdoors. Among the ideas debated were making outdoor classes a requirement in schools, promoting free outdoor activities and changing the culture to make kids less reliant on technology for companionship.

GRANT MONEY

All of those Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation banquets held across the state last year are paying benefits.

The Foundation returned \$115,580 to the state for various conservation projects.

Among the projects receiving funding are the Armstrong County Sportsmen and Conservation League's annual youth field day, the Fayette Gun Club's youth shooting day and the Mercer County 2010 youth conservation camp.

A number of Washington County groups got money, too. Funding was provided for Allenport Rod and Gun Club's childrens' fishing contest, Roscoe Sportsmen's Association's junior trap league and youth day and California Hill Gun Club's scholastic clay target program.

The Western Pennsylvania Wounded Warriors also got money to provide hunting and fishing opportunities for veterans.

ACCESS OPEN

The Mill Creek access on the Clarion River in Clarion County is again open for boaters.

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission had closed it for emergency repairs on the launch ramp. The ramp now extends an additional six feet into the water at normal pool and four feet when drawn down.

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