

Nonprofit Organization Grants:

Coast Guard Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety
Recreational Boating Safety

Federal Grant Title:	National Non-Profit Organization Grant Program
Federal Agency:	United States Coast Guard
Funding Opportunity Number:	DHS-USCG-2021-001
Type of Funding:	Cooperative Agreement
CFDA Numbers:	97.012
CFDA Descriptions:	Boating Safety Financial Assistance

Grantee: Water Sports Foundation

Grant Number: 3321FAN201130

Grant Title: Strategic Search Engine Content Marketing Targeting America's Highest-Risk, Most Difficult-To-Reach Paddlers

Period of Performance: 1 year grant

Award Amount: \$90,000.00

Summary:

The Water Sports Foundation (WSF) proposes a safety education campaign specifically targeted to these high-risk, difficult-to-reach paddlers, using state-of-the-art content search marketing techniques. This powerful marketing tool harnesses a person's own online search queries to deliver information they're seeking at the moment they're most engaged.

The proposed program, Strategic Search Engine Content Marketing Targeting America's Highest-Risk, Most Difficult-To-Reach Paddlers, is a national-in-scope, quantitative, and results driven outreach campaign. It will produce a minimum 12 million search engine query results, 12.3 million targeted impressions, and 2.51 million targeted safety messages consumed. The program will use proven search engine optimization strategies to deliver this messaging to novice paddlers, who comprise the most difficult-to-reach paddling population and are also the most at-risk.

<https://www.watersportsfoundation.com/>

The Water Sports Foundation, Inc.

The Non-Profit Educational Arm of the Water Sports Industry Association (WSIA)

A One-Year (15 month) Project for the
United States Coast Guard Office of Auxiliary & Boating Safety

STRATEGIC SEARCH ENGINE CONTENT MARKETING TARGETING AMERICA'S HIGHEST-RISK, MOST DIFFICULT-TO-REACH PADDLERS

3321FAN201130

FINAL REPORT

Period July 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022

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Strategic Search Engine Content Marketing Targeting Paddlers

3321FAN201130 FINAL REPORT

The *Strategic Search Engine Content Marketing* campaign was a 15-month nonprofit outreach grant project employing state-of-the-art search marketing techniques to deliver safety messages to beginner paddlers, the most at-risk subset of boaters. The project’s goal was to deliver a minimum of 5.5 million search engine query results, 5.6 million targeted impressions, and 1.24 million targeted safety messages consumed.

U.S. Coast Guard incident data show that despite a sustained decline in the overall number of paddlesports deaths in the United States, fatalities among new paddlers have been increasing. Outreach strategies that have proven effective with experienced paddlers have been less useful in influencing beginners, who are typically less attuned to paddling media and lack access to skilled and safety-conscious peer groups.

As a result, some recreational boating safety (RBS) professionals refer to beginner paddlers as the *Unreachables*. To reach this vulnerable group, the Water Sports Foundation (WSF) contracted with Rapid Media to create and publish 60 search-optimized articles about entry-level kayaks and paddling gear, with safety messaging woven into each article. Sophisticated search engine optimization techniques ensured each piece of content attracted and retained traffic from the targeted audience of new paddlers by providing answers to their queries on Google, YouTube and other search engines.

Campaign Highlights

The campaign produced 9,480,993 media impressions, of which 68.6 percent were website page views generated by inbound search.

Total Impressions – Quantitative Measurement	9,480,993
Editorial website page views:	6,506,984
Editorial eNewsletter article impressions:	2,793,535
Website display ad impressions:	180,474
Safety landing page unique views:	105,882

Metrics provided by Rapid Media for the period July 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022

Quality Outreach

More than two-thirds (68.6 percent) of campaign impressions came via editorial web-page views initiated by user search queries. These are not passive advertisements. They are articles providing information the target audience is seeking when they are seeking it. For this reason, website editorial impressions generated by inbound search are among the most desirable type of media impressions. The balance of this program’s outreach comes primarily in the form of editorial eNewsletter impressions, which marketers also regard as a high-quality outreach tool.

Embedded Safety Messaging

The WSF executive director and content director identified 19 paddling-specific safety messages to be embedded in the search-optimized online articles using html quick codes. This technique presents the safety messaging prominently within the article, in much the same way as a magazine pull quote.

Sixty (60) search-responsive articles were drafted for the program. The first tranche of 45 articles was published online in March 2022, allowing time for search engine web crawlers to index the content. As each article was published, Rapid Media used sophisticated software to “learn”

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which content-relevant search terms are most popular. Rapid was then able to fine-tune each article for maximum responsiveness.

Links to the 60 online articles are listed at the end of this report.

The Evergreen Effect

Because the program's primary traffic driver is the target audience's own search actions, the WSF anticipates the articles will continue to deliver safety messages, even though the project has ended. The WSF expects this so-called *evergreen effect* will continue to support paddler safety indefinitely, as the program content continues to attract organic search traffic.

Re-Allocation of Video Production Resources

The program originally called for 45 narrative articles and five videos. However due to Covid-related supply chain issues and increased consumer demand, manufacturers were unable to provide review kayaks to Rapid Media in time to film the videos. As a result, Rapid Media agreed to produce 15 new narrative articles in place of the five videos. This second tranche of articles was published in August 2022.

Project Management

The WSF executive director and content director worked with the Rapid Media team to ensure all program milestones were met on time and on budget. The WSF employed a financial compliance consultant to assist in program management and reported regularly to the WSF Board of Directors. Rapid Media returned a Certificate of Completion attesting to its successful delivery of all program components. All planned activities were accomplished, and the project was completed on September 30, 2022.

In-Kind Delivery

According to its 2022 annual single audit, the Water Sports Foundation negotiated with its media partners for in-kind media contributions worth \$677,790, which added substantial value to its recreational boating and paddling safety projects including this project.

Project Monitoring – Qualitative Measurement

Since 2016, the WSF has conducted annual surveys as part of its *Increasing Awareness of Paddle Sports Safety* grant program to gauge paddlers' attitudes and behavior. The surveys provide a qualitative metric of progress in boater and paddler attitudes toward life jacket wear, paddler education, weather awareness, avoiding impairment, and other paddling safety priorities. One survey of 2,185 respondents was conducted during the program period. When compared to earlier surveys, results of the survey taken at the conclusion of this project show measurable improvement of paddling safety awareness among the target audience.

Conclusion

The one-year project's outcome achieved the project objective to produce a *more informed and aware* boating public. Based on measured results, the Water Sports Foundation concludes that the recreational boating public is more informed and aware of the inherent risks associated with boating and boating is a safer American leisure time activity as a result of the efforts provided by the *Increasing Awareness of Paddle Sports Safety* project. For more information contact Info@WaterSportsFoundation.com.

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Search Content Marketing Project - Article Titles and Weblinks

Article Title	Live Link
Best Day Touring Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/day-touring-kayak/
Best Recreational Kayaks / For Lakes	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/recreational-kayaks/
Best Cheap Kayaks (Under \$500)	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/cheap-kayaks/
Best Kayaks For Beginners	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/beginner-kayak/
Best Walmart Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/walmart-kayak
Best Inflatable Kayaks at Walmart	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/inflatable-kayak-walmart/
Best Bass Pro Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/bass-pro-kayaks/
Best Costco Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/costco-kayak/
Best Dunham's Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/dunhams-kayaks/
Best TSC Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/tractor-supply-kayak/
Best Dick's Sporting Goods Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/dicks-sporting-goods-kayaks/
Best Sam's Club Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/sams-club-kayak/
Best Academy Sports Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/academy-kayaks/
Best Kids Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/kids-kayak/
Best Inflatable Canoes	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/canoes/inflatable-canoes/
Best Cheap Canoes	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/canoes/cheap-canoes/
Best Canoes For Family	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/canoes/best-canoes-for-family/
Best Cheap Inflatable Paddleboards/Under \$400	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/paddleboards/cheap-inflatable-paddleboard/
Best Kids Paddleboards	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/paddleboards/kids-paddleboard/
Best Ascend Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/ascend-kayak/
Best Pelican Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/pelican-kayaks/
Best Lifetime Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/lifetime-kayak/
Best Sun Dolphin Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/sun-dolphin-kayak/
Best Emotion Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/emotion-kayaks/
Best Intex Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/intex-kayak/
Best Lifetime Sit-On-Top Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/lifetime-sit-on-top-kayak/
Best Sevylor Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/sevylor-kayak/

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Best Pelican Sit-In Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/pelican-sit-in-kayak/
Best Pelican Canoes	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/canoes/pelican-canoes/
Best Coleman Canoes	https://paddlingmag.com/skills/buying-advice/coleman-canoes/
Best Grumman Canoes	https://paddlingmag.com/skills/buying-advice/grumman-canoes/
Best Lifetime Paddleboards	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/paddleboards/lifetime-paddleboard/
Best Body Glove Paddleboards	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/paddleboards/body-glove-paddleboard/
Pelican Bandit NXT Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/pelican-bandit-nxt-100-kayak/
Lifetime Wave Youth Kayak Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/lifetime-wave-youth-kayak/
Perception Swifty Deluxe 9.5 Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/perception-swifty-deluxe-9-5-kayak/
Intex Explorer K2 Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/intex-explorer-k2/
Sun Dolphin Bali 10 SS Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/sun-dolphin-bali-10-ss/
Wilderness Systems Tarpon 100 Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/wilderness-systems-tarpon-100/
Ocean Kayak Frenzy Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/ocean-kayak-frenzy/
Wilderness Systems Pungo 120 Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/wilderness-systems-pungo-120/
Sun Dolphin Aruba 10 Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/sun-dolphin-aruba-10/
Sevylor Colorado Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/sevylor-colorado/
Pelican Trailblazer NXT Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/pelican-trailblazer-nxt-kayak/
Intex Challenger K1 Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/intex-challenger-k1/
Intex Challenger K2 Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/intex-challenger-k2/
Pelican 15.5 Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/canoes/pelican-15-5-canoes/
XX Mistakes To Avoid When Buying A Kayak On Craigslist	https://paddlingmag.com/skills/buying-advice/craigslist-kayak/
XX Mistakes To Avoid When Buying A Kayak on Ebay	https://paddlingmag.com/skills/buying-advice/ebay-kayak/
Sun Dolphin Journey 12 Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/sun-dolphin-journey-12-ss-kayak-review/
Lifetime Tamarack Angler 100 Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/lifetime-tamarack-angler-100-review/
Sun Dolphin Journey 10 Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/sun-dolphin-journey-10-ss-review/
Pelican Mustang 100x Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/pelican-mustang-100x-kayak/
Ascend 10t Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/ascend-10t-fishing-kayak-review/

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Ascend 12t Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/ascend-12t-fishing-kayak-review/
Ascend 128t Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/ascend-128t-kayak-review/
Ascend FS10 Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/ascend-fs10-fishing-kayak-review/
Sun Dolphin Boss 12 SS Review	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/sun-dolphin-boss-12-ss-fishing-kayak-review/
Best Beginner Fishing Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/beginner-fishing-kayak/
Best Lifetime Fishing Kayaks	https://paddlingmag.com/boats/kayaks/lifetime-fishing-kayak/