

SUCCESS STORY



Business rebounds for Ohio Lake Erie Fishery and the local community with the help of Paylt



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Like many industries, local fish processors and for-hire anglers and guides saw a dramatic decrease in business due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel and business restrictions. In fact, in 2020, the [Washington Post](#) reported that due to the pandemic fisheries across the US reported sales slumps as high as 95%.

The 2020 Ohio Division of Wildlife non-resident license sales reflected the industry's decline during that period of time: March 2020 saw a nearly 50% drop in license sales compared to 2019, and April fell even shorter, at just 17% of the 2019 volume.

The Ohio Lake Erie Fishery procured a grant and chose PayIt Outdoors to help reinvigorate demand by promoting Lake Erie as a go-to destination for anglers. The year-long campaign was aimed at boosting the fishing industry on Lake Erie, especially businesses economically affected by the pandemic.

The teams collaborated to promote the Ohio Lake Erie Fishery through a mix of marketing channels, leveraging data to ensure that the campaign was both effective and cost-efficient, inviting more people to make lifelong memories on the lake.

Storytelling for anglers, by anglers

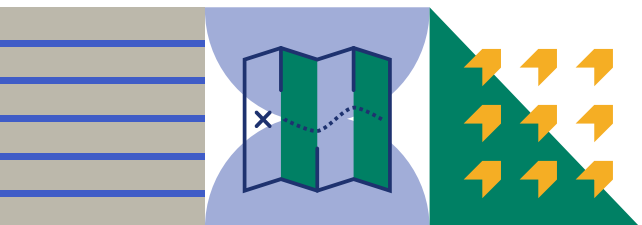
Quality content was the cornerstone of this project. The PayIt Outdoors team created a website that provided engaging information about the industry and the fishery. Along with consumer-focused content, the team incorporated a trip planner and captains' resources page into the customer experience to help for-hire captains reach maximum occupancy for every trip.

The team wrote articles and created videos related to fishing and outdoor activities and curated reports on Ohio Lake Erie fishing conditions (all published to the digital hub of the project). They also partnered with brands such as Field & Stream and Outside Magazine to run creative advertisements, surfacing relevant digital, print, and podcast ads to the target audience.

Partnering with creators in the content ecosystem

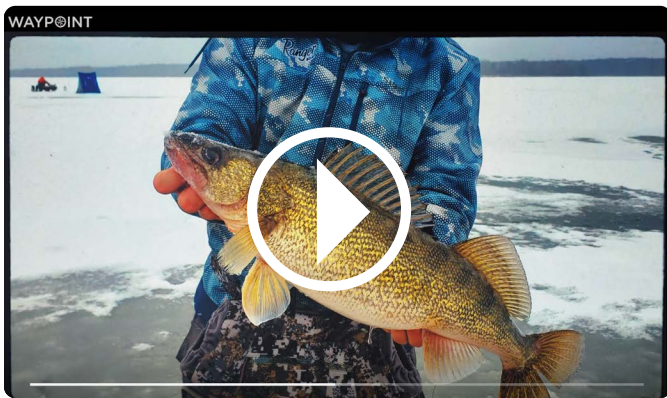
Our relationships within the conservation community and deep understanding of outdoor economies enabled us to partner with well-known brands to promote the Ohio Lake Erie Fishery. By publishing custom videos and articles, a digital trail was created to strategically position and promote Ohio Lake Erie sport fishing opportunities and commercially harvested fish.

Waypoint TV, GoWild, Ross Robertson and Big Water Fishing, The Outdoor Sportsman Group, Outdoor Life, and Outside Magazine were key partners in this project.



Highlight reel: The benefits of a powerful video

In April 2023, Waypoint TV streamed [“Walleye Fishing Lake Erie – The Time is Now,”](#) a short film featuring professional charters, the Fisheries’ Biology Supervisor, and a local “Hook-&-Cook” restaurant owner.



The 6-minute film highlights the memories created by walleye fishing on Lake Erie, the health of the fish population, and how the fishing industry impacts the local economy – from charter businesses to restaurants. From Waypoint TV traffic alone, the film was viewed **111,702 times**.

In-Fisherman and Game & Fish also streamed “Walleye Fishing Lake Erie – The Time is Now” on their digital platforms and featured the film in dedicated social media posts, emails, and targeted ads.

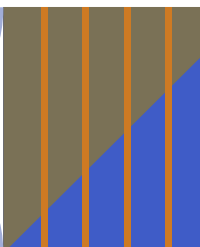
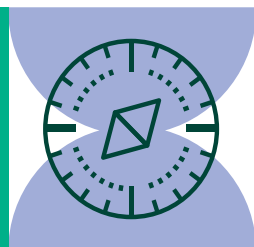
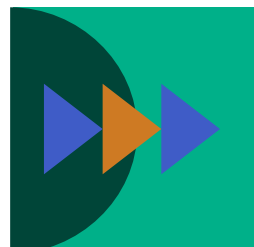
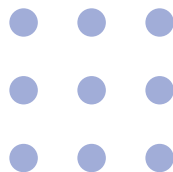
Writing with a hook

For written content, the team partnered with prominent brands in the outdoors space that could provide long-term value and sustainable traffic.

Fieldandstream.com published two articles. [“The Best Walleye Fishery on the Planet”](#) touted the incredible walleye fishing on Lake Erie (as well as the local wineries, ice cream shops, and other activities for families). To boost reach, each article was accompanied by dedicated newsletter content and social posts – delivering more than 5 million views.

And while Outside Magazine may bring to mind hiking, camping, or rock climbing, it proved to be a smart avenue to explore, extending the program’s reach beyond anglers into a broader demographic of outdoors enthusiasts. A custom article in the May/June print and online issues of Outside Magazine brought the story of what sets the Ohio Lake Erie Fishery apart to a unique audience.

Additionally, GoWild (a social media and gear platform for outdoor enthusiasts) published four articles on their blog, bringing even more attention to the walleye fishery and charter industry on Lake Erie in Ohio.



Successful audience targeting with digital advertisements

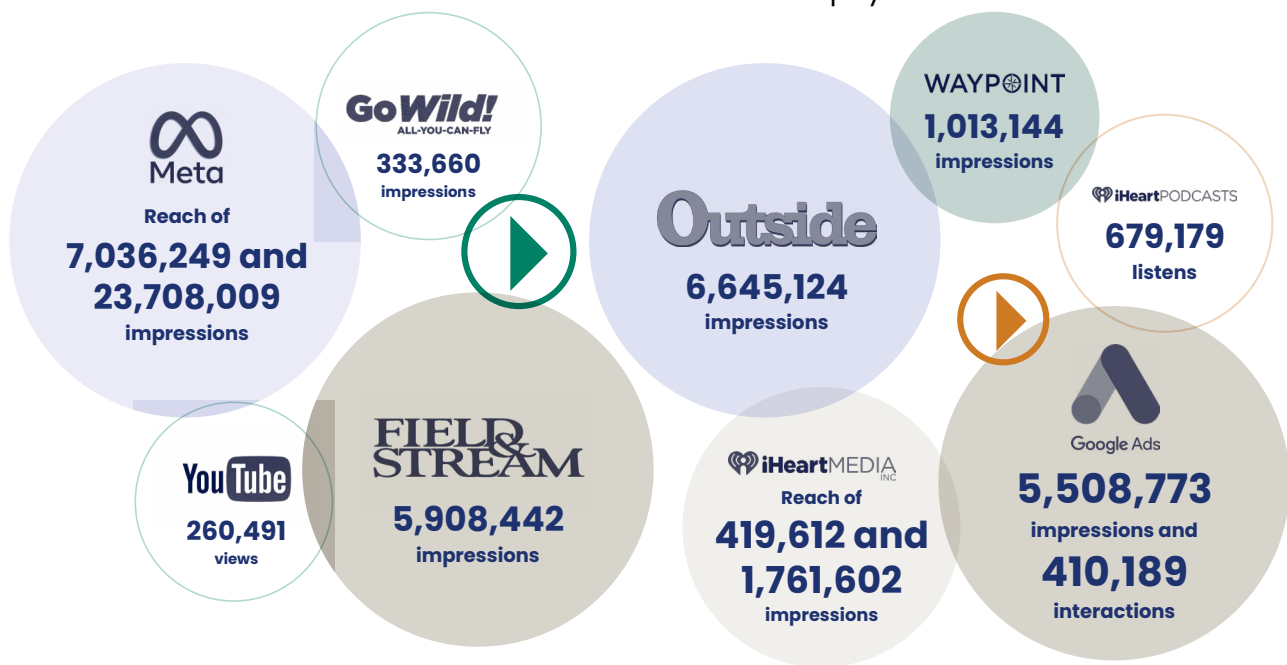
Facebook, Google Ads, YouTube, and platforms like Hulu and iHeartMedia also played a crucial role in the success of this project. These channels make it simple to automate advertising, which allowed the team to create and target ads to specific audiences more efficiently and effectively.

Static, video, and search ads were all used. The team also created podcast ads and streaming trailers. Collectively, the advertisements reached more than 8.5 million people (about half

the population of New York) and generated more than 32.5 million impressions or views.

Maximize reach, not spend

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission and the Ohio Division of Wildlife enabled the team to effectively reach outdoors enthusiasts through long-term creative content and cost-efficient advertising. And at about half of the typical cost of paid content programs, the campaign made excellent use of taxpayer funds.



* Impression is a measure of the approximate audience size reached by a piece of content such as an advertisement, social media post, or article.

Great results (for a great lake)

The campaign helped drive a much-needed increase in non-resident fishing licenses month over month from 2022 to 2023 (non-resident purchases totaled **nearly 20% of Ohio's 678,000 sales**) – establishing the Ohio Lake Erie Fishery as a premiere walleye fishing destination. In the end, the collaboration between the Fishery and PayIt Outdoors helped to create larger, more stable markets for fish processors and for-hire anglers.

About PayIt

PayIt is the solution state and local government agencies use to take the friction out of resident transactions. Our composable customer experience platform enables agencies to collect revenue faster, improve efficiency and sustainability, and give people the smooth digital experience they have come to expect online. PayIt integrates into any back-office system, launches in about 90 days, and provides residents with a single GovWallet™ to store digital licenses and registrations, transaction history, receipts, and payment methods for multiple agencies. Serving more than 100 million residents in North America, we have received awards from Fast Company, StateScoop, and have been listed in the GovTech 100 for 7 years and counting.

