

# Community-Based Angler/Aquatic Education Programs

## Table of Contents

Definitions.....	3
Partnerships.....	4
Community Selection and Partners.....	4
School selection .....	4
Fishing Retailers .....	4
Service Clubs .....	4
Role of DFG.....	5
Communities with pre-existing programs.....	5
Steps in Creating an FIC program. ....	5
Stage 1: Initial interest and information gathering .....	5
Stage 2: First meeting of potential partners .....	6
Stage 3: Planning the event(s).....	6
Stage 4: The Initial Event .....	6
Stage 5: Follow up .....	7
Stage 6: Planning the next event.....	7
Equipment.....	7
Rod and reels.....	7
Tackle Boxes.....	7
Acquisition of tackle.....	7
Program Elements.....	8
Fees .....	8
Prizes.....	8
Role of parent at events.....	8
Target audience at community events.....	8
Advertisement of events .....	8
Reporting.....	9
Carrying Capacity .....	9
Fish cleaning.....	9
Safety .....	9
Credit.....	10
Rod Loaner programs. ....	10
Advertising at events.....	10
Types of Clinics .....	10
Public or community based clinic.....	10
School based programs .....	11

Fish.....	11
Fish supply .....	11
Netted enclosures .....	11
Catch rate .....	11
Fish planting.....	12
Stocking Permits .....	12
“No Waste” fish policy .....	12
Volunteers .....	12
Role of Volunteers .....	12
Volunteer recruitment .....	12
Volunteer/participant ratio .....	13
Volunteer Training.....	13
Expectations of volunteers .....	13
What volunteers can expect .....	14
Documents attached: .....	14

# Creating Community Based Programs

**Goal of Central Coast Region (CCR) Fishing in the City (FIC) programs:**  
*Working under the guidelines of the DFG 5 year aquatic education plan, create sustainable, community-based programs that teach skills to allow for a repeatable experience at a local fishing spot.*

## ***Definitions***

*Sustainable program* means that the program will continue for many years to come. FIC creates programs that will occur once or more a year for many years rather than one time events. Sustainable also means that there is no one partner who is so critical that should they leave the partnership for any reason, the partnership would fail.

*Community-based* means that there are several organizations that work together to create the program, each giving to their best ability. Parameter for Partners (attached) is used as a guideline for what each individual agency provides. Parameters are meant as a starting point. Each community program may be slightly different based on the needs, desires and resources of the particular community.

*Repeatable experience* means that after going through the program, participants have the skills, knowledge and access to equipment and other resources to continue the activity on their own.

*Local fishing spot* means a lake, beach or pier that is in an urban area, preferably near where the target audience lives or goes to school and may be accessible by foot, bicycle or public transportation.

*Clinics* are organized events that systematically teach basic fishing skills and aquatic education concepts. While most programs offered have been beginner level lake programs, the principles can apply to any type of fishing at any level. Volunteers “teach” skills and “assist” participants to learn. The focus is on volunteers empowering participants to accomplish tasks for themselves rather than have volunteers do it for participants.

CCR FIC sponsors learn-to-fish clinics.

*Derbies* are defined as events where fish are planted and existing anglers are encouraged to fish. While some Derbies may include a “learn-to-fish element as a part of the event, it tends to be a small component. CCR FIC does not sponsor derbies.

## ***Partnerships***

Each program relies on the creation of a partnership to reach mutually agreed upon goals. While the documents “Community Based Fishing Programs” and “Parameters for Partners” are used as guidelines, programs seek to accomplish the combined goals of all partners and not just the goals of DFG.

In some cases, DFG FIC may determine that it meets the goals of the FIC program to support a community even though the community demonstrates a lower level of community support (e.g. San Francisco or Oakland).

### ***Community Selection and Partners***

Communities are selected based on the level of community support toward building these programs. Minimum partner interest includes

- 1) A viable fishing location (stockable lake, bay or ocean area) with public access.
- 2) A lake management agency (i.e. park district) willing to support the program per the Parameters for Partners.
- 3) A service club willing to support the program per Parameters for Partners

Other potential and desirable partners include:

- Schools
- Local tackle retailer
- Storm water pollution prevention programs
- County F&G commissions
- Local fire or police departments
- Any other organization interested in youth, clean water and fishing.

### ***School selection***

See “Parameters for Partners”

Any school is eligible for the program. Schools with a pre-existing watershed study program tend to have highly motivated teachers who are most willing to work within the parameters of the program. However, schools lacking this program, but with teachers and an administration willing to fully support the program, can work well. This later group will require additional attention in locating appropriate training and will require assistance in starting a course of study. The sponsoring service club can be asked to provide funds for teacher training and materials.

### ***Fishing Retailers***

Local tackle retailers have demonstrated a greater willingness to serve the community than the larger chain stores. The locally owned stores tend to have staff with greater knowledge of local fishing conditions and are more predisposed to assist new anglers with gear selection and fishing tips.

### ***Service Clubs***

Rotary International has been the mainstay in the creation of FIC programs in the Bay Area. This is attributed to many factors, but highest among them is the role that Brian Allen (Rotary of San Jose, Downtown).

Brian is instrumental in linking CCR FIC (and other FIC programs) to Rotary Clubs in other communities. It is most successful when approaching a new club to have a member of an existing club “open the door”.

The role of the service club is defined in Parameters for Partners. The primary resource needed from the club is the hours of their members. They are expected to pay some expenses but this is secondary to their time. The other resource they provide is access to local business and local political support.

### ***Role of DFG***

DFG maintains the role of coordinator and generally is responsible for:

- Setting and facilitating meetings
- Following up to insure commitments are being made
- Ordering tackle
- Insuring each partner has the resources to honor their commitments.

The suggested model that has worked well (e.g South Bay Fishing in the City) is a public/private partner committee with equal voting partners and a fiscal agent nonprofit. DFG FIC offer expertise and experience in the development of these programs, but play the role of a partner, perhaps even facilitator, but not the final decision maker. This is left to the group.

### ***Communities with pre-existing programs***

The most successful programs have been new ones that are created under the partnership model discussed herein. Folding FIC into existing fishing programs has not been successful in most cases.

## ***Steps in Creating an FIC program.***

6 months lead time is desirable for the creation of a new program.

It is most efficient to hold two events in one weekend, as this makes best use of the resources and effort of setting up an event (fish plant, setting nets, obtaining equipment): A school event on Saturday followed by a community event on Sunday. This requires a separate service club to sponsor each event and is generally more than most communities can start with.

It is best to start with one or two events per year and build from there. Starting with a pilot event and gradual program/event buildup as the partnership gains momentum has proved to be an effective method of building on-going and sustainable programs.

### ***Stage 1: Initial interest and information gathering***

Community contacts FIC coordinator expressing an interest in program or the FIC coordinator identifies and unmet need through outreach..

Coordinator discusses program and outlines partnership model, needed resources and desired partners. (See list of desired partners).

Coordinator contacts other potential partners (obtained in part from discussion above) to discuss program and ascertain interest. Initial contact is done over the phone with follow up face-to-face meetings.

### ***Stage 2: First meeting of potential partners***

When all needed partners have expressed a preliminary interest, a meeting is held. DFG generally fulfills the role of organizer and facilitator. Each participant introduces themselves and tells who they represent and what they are doing to support youth, fishing and clean water.

- DFG provides an overview of the FIC program.
- Each participant then is asked to discuss what a watershed Education/learn-to-fish program could look like for this particular community.

The following should be discussed at preliminary meetings.

- Which partners will participate
- Using Parameters for Partners as a guide, what role each partner will play.
- Will the initial event focus on community or school-based program
- Set a tentative date for the event
- Event location
- Set a next meeting date.

All comments are recorded and notes distributed following the meeting.

### ***Stage 3: Planning the event(s)***

Regular meetings are held to continue working out the details of the event. Equipment must be purchased or borrowed, tackled ordered, teachers trained, site logistics confirmed.

### ***Stage 4: The Initial Event***

Fish are planted one to two days in advance of the event.

If a net is to be used, this is placed one day prior to the planting.

The service club is responsible for providing volunteers

Volunteers are generally managed by the lake management agency

Training is provided to volunteers in advance of the event. For a school based program, instruction in the classroom portion (Fishing 101)(available at [Fishinginthecity.org](http://Fishinginthecity.org)) is provided.

Event organizers are usually expected to arrive on site at least 90 minutes prior to the event and volunteers are expected an hour the event.

The clinic generally starts at 8 AM.

The final clinic begins at about 10 AM or 10:15. This allows the group enough time to finish the clinic portion and still have an hour to fish.

The event generally ends at noon.

Volunteers are expected to stay to help clean up.

Volunteers are provided with morning refreshments when they arrive, drinks throughout the event and lunch following the event. This is part of the volunteer recognition necessary to make it successful and keep volunteers motivated to come back.

### ***Stage 5: Follow up***

Within 2 weeks of the initial event, a debriefing meeting is held with all partners for review. A system of recording positive attributes and things to change for next year is implemented. It is also advisable at this time to plan to attend a meeting of the service club. Rather than making a presentation, DFG, the lake manager and other partners may request 2-3 minutes to give an overview and thank the sponsors for their support. It is advisable to attend meetings of other partners as well (City Councils, Fish and Game Commissions) for the same purpose.

### ***Stage 6: Planning the next event***

Approximately 6 months following the event, a meeting is set to plan an upcoming event.

## ***Equipment***

### ***Rod and reels***

It is desirable to have participants use rods provided at the event rather than using their own equipment. This ensures all the equipment is in working order and makes it wavier for volunteers to assist every child. As the focus of the event is on the child, parents may not fish even if they bring their own equipment.

Participants are expected to return equipment clean with all tackle removed, the line out of the guides, with the line tied off to washer and wound to the reel. Participants are advised in advance they will be expected to pay retail cost (\$30) for any equipment lost or damaged.

A driver's license is held as a security deposit for borrowed rods. A maximum of two (2) rods may be lent per driver's license.

### ***Tackle Boxes***

Each participant receives (free of charge) a fully stocked tackle box once they complete the clinic. The cost of these boxes covered by an event sponsor (usually the Service Club). The label on the box should contain the following:

1. A blank line for the name of the participant
2. The name or logo of the funder
3. A message (i.e. a non-point source pollution message, how to tie a knot or a list of rod loaner sites.
4. A pledge of stewardship the child signs.

DFG may produce camera ready labels for reproduction. To assure quality and durability under outdoor conditions, the labels should be professionally printed rather than produced on an office printer. The cost of a roll of 1000 labels runs about \$80.

### ***Acquisition of tackle***

DFG is usually able to purchase most tackle at a significant discount through a variety of manufacturers. Local tackle stores maybe able to supplement this, although they are rarely able to do so at a lower cost. Some communities prefer purchasing locally regardless of the cost saving. Local tackle stores are generally able to obtain samples of bait at no cost.

Tackle is purchased in bulk and the tackle boxes must be filled prior to or at the event..

## ***Program Elements***

### ***Fees***

All programs are offered on a free or reasonable fee basis. A reasonable fee is usually defined as \$10 or less per participant with the monies collected being used to directly support the program and not as a fundraiser for the organization or another purpose. It is recommended that parks to waive entrance fees for participants when possible.

### ***Prizes***

Prize for catching fish are highly discouraged as this places too high an emphasis on the catch. The goal of the event is to teach fishing skills, emphasize the importance of aquatic stewardship, and allow participants to fish. Participants who catch a fish already have their “prize” and really do not need further rewards. Each participant is to receive instruction, a tackle box, use of a rod and reel, bait, assistance, and the opportunity to fish in a specially stocked lake.

### ***Role of parent at events***

Parents are expected to act in a support role for their child.

Community events –Parents are expected to participate in the clinic with their child. They are encouraged to be attentive and learn the skills and information presented in order to assist their child. Parents are not allowed to fish with DFG (or partner) equipment or with equipment of their own as the focus is on teaching and supporting youth angling development..

School based – Parents and siblings may attend school fishing events, but they are there in a support role for their child and are not allowed to fish.

### ***Target audience at community events***

Community events target family participation. One adult may register up to 2 children. Organized groups are not encouraged, but may attend if they meet the adult/child requirement.

### ***Advertisement of events***

Events are advertised locally rather than on a large scale basis. As most events have a maximum capacity of 150 participants, it is critical to consider advertising carefully. Generally it is best to announce through schools or in local papers rather than in larger regional papers (San Jose Mercury News, San Francisco Chronicle). Events are posted on DFG and other partner web pages.



### ***Reporting***

All programs offered through FIC require Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) documentation for volunteer hours, matching hours and matching dollars. This is necessary to support the federal funds used to support the purchase of fish, DFG program staff, supplies, and materials. Forms are provided by the FIC coordinator.

Groups or municipalities which fail to complete and return forms will be given a warning and sent a second set of forms. Failure to complete forms may result in being dropped from the FIC program since federal support may be jeopardized.

### ***Carrying Capacity***

This is determined on a variety of factors including:

- Available shoreline (5 feet per angler)
- Number of volunteers
- Number of rods available.
- Length of time clinics will be offered.

It is desirable to be able to focus enough time on participants so they learn the skills that are being presented rather than have them feel they are being rushed through a process. Likewise, it is critical for volunteers to enjoy themselves and feel they are doing a “good job”. Burning out volunteers at a specific event does not work toward the goal of creating a sustainable program. When in a rush, volunteers tend to “do things for the participant” rather than taking the time to allow the participant to learn the new skill.

### ***Fish cleaning***

Fish cleaning is provided at each event by trained volunteers. DFG may be able to provide a portable fish cleaning station where needed. Volunteers experienced in cleaning fish are needed as there are dangers inherent in this task. It is essential that the fish cleaning area be monitored to insure knives are not left unattended. Under no circumstance are participants allowed to handle knives or be allowed to clean fish.

Once cleaned, the fish are placed in plastic bags with ice. For school events, the name of the student is written on the bag and placed in an ice chest which is given to the teacher. For community events, the bag is immediately given to the participant. Copies of the handout “After the Catch...” are made available at all events.

At some events, a BBQ is set up and a volunteer can immediately cook the clean fish for participants.

### ***Safety***

3-5 feet of shoreline space per angler is required to insure adequate space for safe casting. It is recommended that paid staff from one of the host or sponsor agencies who are certified in first aid will be on site at all events. Up to date first aid kits need be available and a pre determined line of communication should be established prior to the event.

Local fire departments paramedic units may be invited to set up on site. This provides public outreach and insures that in the event of injury, proper help will be readily available.

### ***Credit***

It is essential that each partner is recognized equally with other partners. It is desirable for the program to be given an overarching name that describes the geographic area of the FIC program rather than the name of an particular partner For example, “South Bay Fishing in the City” is preferred over “DFG fishing programs” or “Rotary Fish”. Partners are discouraged from putting their name on any particular part of the program (except tackle boxes). Banners for all partners are displayed equally and in print logos should all the same sizes.

It is the role of DFG to insure these guidelines are followed.

### ***Rod Loaner programs.***

While these have great appeal as a selling point to local communities, they are mostly not functional. Demand for the service is low and it is difficult to maintain the equipment in the long run. While there have been a few successful sites, these tend to be the exceptions rather than the rules

### ***Advertising at events***

Advertising of products or companies is not allowed. Tacked manufacturers are encouraged to donate or sell tackle at a discount to the program, but commercial banners will not be hung.

## ***Types of Clinics***

### ***Public or community based clinic.***

A clinic consists of a series of learning stations completed in order with the goal of teaching skills.

A volunteer group leader guides the group through the stations while a station leader teaches the specific content. (See “Clinic Outline” for more specific information)

### **Learning Stations**

- Welcome and Overview
- Safety/Ethics
- Knots
- Casting
- Rigging

- Non point source pollution/urban runoff

Participants must complete the entire clinic in order to borrow equipment, receive tackle, bait or fish in the reserved area.

Teaching of fishing skills generally begins at 8 AM and the last clinic begins at 10 AM. Participants are allowed to fish until noon.

### ***School based programs***

See “Parameters for Partners” for school based programs

Schools are selected on their willingness to follow the guidelines in “Parameters for Partners”. It is desirable to have an entire grade level participate.

Teachers receive training in teaching watershed education from DFG or an outside organization. They develop (independently or with assistance) a series of lessons highlighting the importance of clean aquatic habitat. It is desirable for this to include discussion of personal actions and responsibilities in maintaining these habitats.

A service club goes into the class to teach basic fishing skills (see Fishing 101 outline) a few days prior to the fishing event.

The students are brought to a local lake for a day of fishing; This generally is on a Saturday. When they arrive, students are greeted by service club members who “assist” them in rigging their rods. They then spend their morning fishing. A lunch is usually provided when the fishing is concluded.

## ***Fish***

### ***Fish supply***

Fish are generally supplied by DFG. In many cases, the local sponsor adds additional fish to the planting of the event at their own expense. DFG stocks program lakes periodically during the year to insure participants who return to the lake to fish have a reasonable chance of catching a fish.

### ***Netted enclosures***

Netted enclosures create a smaller lake within a lake. These can be quite useful in increasing the catch rate at a clinic. They require several hundred yard of net and a lake topography that will accommodate them. Lake Staff (with the help of volunteers) is expected to install, remove, clean and return nets.

Netted enclosures require overnight security to insure they are not illegally fished, that the fish are not released or that the fish are not taken.

### ***Catch rate***

The focus on the events is the fishing, not the catching. However – it is desirable to have a 50% catch rate – that is at least one out of every two participants catch a fish. The actual catch rate is determined by lake conditions, and the unpredictable aspects of the fish population movement and feeding patterns.

### ***Fish planting***

There is no consensus on when fish should be planted for an event. DFG will work with vendors to arrange planting for events at the date desired by the local partners, recognizing that this is not always possible. Most communities request the fish arrive 1-2 days prior to the event.

Generally 500-750 lbs of fish are planted based on the size of the lake and the fishing pressure. If a netted enclosure is used, it is posted “closed to public fishing” or “open to event participants only”. It is desirable to plant fish on both sides of the net when using an enclosure.

### ***Stocking Permits***

DFG does not require a private stocking permit if all the following conditions are met:

- The fish planted are for a CCR FIC clinic.
- The lake is one that is regularly stocked by DFG
- The fish arrive on the same truck as those provided by DFG
- The event is for children
- Rainbow trout or channel catfish are stocked

### ***“No Waste” fish policy***

FIC operates on a “no waste” policy. It is up to the individual angler to decide if they are to keep or release their catch. However, hatchery trout have a high mortality rate once hooked and are therefore poorly suited for catch and release. Therefore, catch and release is highly discouraged for an event with trout. Catfish have a much higher survival release rate for catch and release.

Regardless, if a participant keeps a fish, it will be cleaned and iced for them and they will receive a copy of “after the catch” which includes recipes for preparing fish.

## ***Volunteers***

### ***Role of Volunteers***

Volunteers “teach” skills and “assist” participants learn. The focus is on volunteers empowering participants to accomplish tasks for themselves rather than have volunteers do it for participants.

### ***Volunteer recruitment***

Volunteers are generally recruited through organizations rather than individual volunteers. Members of volunteer organizations are generally managed by the local park agency, but can be managed by DFG. In these cases, they fill out a Volunteer Service Agreement (VSA). High school service clubs may be used as well.

### ***Volunteer/participant ratio***

A 1:3 ratio of participants to volunteers is recommended to insure a high quality of experience for participants.

### ***Volunteer Training***

It is highly desirable to hold a volunteer training several days prior to the event. 60-90 minutes is usually adequate and it is ideal to do this at the fishing site if possible.

### **Fishing 101 (classroom)**

DFG provides training to all volunteers. For the classroom portion (Fishing 101), the handout Fishing 101 outline (available from DFG or at [www.fishinginthecity.org](http://www.fishinginthecity.org)) is used and the members of the club are briefed in the:

- Purpose of the training
- Their role (teach, don't do it for the students)
- Skills (knots, casting rigging)
- Safety overview
- How to handle the equipment
- How to return the equipment to DFG

### **Community clinic**

It is ideal to hold this training several days prior to the event to allow volunteers time to digest the information presented. Training the morning of the event is less successful, but can be done. Covered in the training are

- Purpose of the event
- Their role (teach, don't do it for the students)
- Skills (knots, casting rigging)
- Safety overview
- How to handle the equipment
- How to handle difficult participants, injuries or other problems
- How the day ends
- Expectations of volunteers

### ***Expectations of volunteers***

- Arrive on time and ready to go
- Stay for the entire event
- Wear a DFG or club vest that identifies you as a volunteer
- Complete all forms as required
- Help participants, don't do it for them
- Teach only the skills and methods you are taught

- Refer problems or injuries to a paid staff member
- Be here to help.
- Children of volunteers are welcome at events ONLY if they register and participate with another adult
- No smoking
- Volunteers are expected to stay for the entire event and assist with clean up.
- Always be in line-of sight of event coordinator when with a child.

***What volunteers can expect***

- A well organized event
- A meaningful job assignment
- Clean equipment in good working order
- Training
- Assistance and mentoring
- The opportunity to serve the community
- Morning snacks
- Lunch
- Drinks
- Bathroom breaks

***Documents attached:***

Community Based-Fishing Programs

Parameters for Partners – Community based programs

Parameters for Partners – School based programs







## ***Lake Managers***

- Prepare the site for events.
- Provide first aid equipment and qualified staff.
- Provide staff for event.
- Waive fees for the event.
- Complete and submit information form (will be provided) on agency's participation.
- Coordinate all onsite activities.

## ***The Department of Fish and Game***

- Recruit and coordinate service club, school and municipality.
- Provide expertise in development of the fishing program.
- Provide training to service club members.
- Facilitate meetings, as needed.
- Provide biological expertise to lake, as needed.
- Help secure fish for the event.
- Provide "Kids Book of Fishing" and other publications or displays.
- Make the Mobile Fish Exhibit available, if possible.

## ***Other event partners***

- Provide fully contained displays.
- Provide banner for display.
- Arrive one hour prior to event for setup and orientation.
- Complete and submit information form (will be provided) on agencies participation.

Other partners can include local science and nature centers, tackle retailers, water districts, storm water pollution prevention programs, County Fish and Game Commissions, fishing clubs or anyone else with an interest in kids, fishing and clean water.

***If you have questions or would like more information on creating a Fishing in the City program in your community, please contact Ethan Rotman, Fishing in the City Coordinator for the San Francisco Bay Area at (415) 892-0460 or [erotman@dfg.ca.gov](mailto:erotman@dfg.ca.gov)***



## ***Service club***

- Assign an Event Coordinator to work with other partners.
- Provide volunteer mentors to teach "Fishing 101" in the classroom.
- Recruit volunteers to assist students at the lake (1:3 adult/student ratio).
- Secure rods and reels for the event and rod loaner program.
- Cover costs of tackle; tackle boxes, bait, volunteer refreshments (morning snack and lunch) and other incidentals.
- Check all fishing rods following the event.
- Display a banner to identify their organization.
- Provide lunch for the school children.
- Provide transportation for students from the school to the fishing site.
- Complete and submit information form on club's participation.
- Participate in an evaluation process for the program.

## ***Lake Managers***

- Prepare the site for events.
- Provide first aid equipment and qualified staff.
- Provide staff for event.
- Waive fees for the event.
- Complete and submit information form on agencies participation.
- Coordinate all onsite activities.
- Participate in an evaluation process for the program.

## ***The Department of Fish and Game***

- Recruit and coordinate service club, school and municipality.
- Provide expertise in development of the fishing program.
- Provide training to service clubs in "Fishing 101"
- Facilitate meetings, as needed.
- Provide biological expertise to lake, as needed.
- Help secure fish for the event.
- Provide "Kids Book of Fishing" and other publications or displays.
- Assist the teachers in development of watershed study program, as needed.

## ***Other event partners***

- Provide fully contained displays.
- Provide banner for display.
- Complete and submit information form on club's participation.

Other partners can include local science and nature centers, tackle retailers, water districts, storm water pollution prevention programs, fishing clubs or anyone else with an interest in kids, fishing and clean water.

***If you have questions or would like more information on creating a Fishing in the City program in your community, please contact Ethan Rotman, Fishing in the City Coordinator for the San Francisco Bay Area at (415) 892-0460 or erotman@dfg.ca.gov***