

Project Description

The Bowfishing Association of Mississippi (BAM) plays an active role in introducing youth to the sport of bowfishing throughout the State. This project, "The BAM Youth Bowfishin' Mission" will focus on using the sport of Bowfishing to help get more youth involved in the great outdoors. Bowfishing is the best of hunting, fishing, and archery all combined into one great sport. Our proposed project consists of multiple events where youth will experience demonstrations, instructional training, and hands-on bowfishing opportunities.

The cornerstone of this project is a mobile shooting tank/platform system that allows youth to practice shooting rubber tipped arrows at targets submerged in the water. Shooting at submerged targets is substantially more difficult as refraction alters the true position of the target. This results in a challenging activity that is also quite fun. The Bowfishing Association of Mississippi has hosted a youth event of this nature for the past three years at the Mississippi Wildlife Extravaganza. In the past, BAM members have paid travel and lodging expenses for a group to travel from Oklahoma with the mobile shooting tank/platform system that makes this event possible. Although this relationship has been extremely successful, BAM has missed many other opportunities around the State to host this type of event due to a lack of equipment (i.e. shooting tank/platform). This project proposal requests funds to purchase the material and equipment needed to host youth bowfishing events.

These events will offer instruction on proper use of equipment and safety while in the field or on the water. The mobile shooting tank/platform system will be used to allow youth the opportunity to gain firsthand experience with the sport of bowfishing in a controlled, safe environment. Project BAM Youth Bowfishin' Mission will also use these events to actively educate Mississippi's youth about the importance of bowfishing as a conservation tool and how it can be used to help control the many non-native fish species that invade our waters. This program will use the action packed nature of Bowfishing to help increase the number of youth that are involved in the outdoors. Once educated on the growing sport of bowfishing, children of all ages will be able to enjoy both hunting and fishing.... at the same time.

Project Objectives/Deliverables

The overall objective of this project is to provide a means for the recruitment, retention, and education of youth to the sport of bowfishing while introducing concepts of sportsmanship and outdoor life. The mobile shooting tank/platform system provides an interactive opportunity to give youth a "hands on" opportunity even when events are held indoors. The action oriented event is fun to the youth, which prompts interest and attention resulting in a forum where an educational aspect can be incorporated. Throughout the process, youth will be educated on the safe handling of archery equipment along with important conservation issues such as the impacts of non-native invasive fish species. Given these goals and objectives, project deliverables are listed below:

1. Fabricate a mobile tank and platform system that will allow BAM instructors to teach youth correct and safe techniques involved with bowfishing.
2. Purchase four complete sets of youth bows, reels, line, arrows, and blunt rubber safety tips.

3. Develop a safety protocol for instructors and youth to follow as the system is being used.
4. Set up and operate the complete system at (a minimum) of two events:
 - I. The Mississippi Youth Bowfishing Day and Tournament in June 2011.
 - II. The Mississippi Wildlife Extravaganza in August 2011.BAM members will instruct youth attending the event the skills needed to safely operate bowfishing equipment.
5. Set up and operate the complete system at additional events throughout the State as opportunities present. These locales may include Mallard Manor Youth Camp in Drew, MS; Outdoor Extravaganza in Louisville, MS; National Hunting and Fishing Day at Enid Lake, MS.

Project Implementation

Although project oversight will be provided by the BAM Board of Directors, much of the implementation will be conducted by BAM members. To fully understand the capabilities of BAM, a brief history of the organization is necessary. BAM was formed in 2008 by a group of individuals with a common passion and cause, that being bowfishing. One of the primary purposes of this formation was to provide an organized means of recruiting and educating more people about the sport of bowfishing. BAM membership has grown to around 60 individuals from every part of Mississippi. It is led by a 5 person Board of Directors consisting of a President, Vice President, Past President, and two Board Members at large. Although relatively small in size, the passion and drive of each individual member has resulted in this organization being successful in all its ventures. The most noteworthy venture being the youth event held at the Mississippi Wildlife Extravaganza where thousands of youth have been introduced to the sport of bowfishing over the past three years.

To specifically address how this project will be implemented, the purchase of materials and fabrication of the mobile tank and platform system will be conducted by BAM Board Members. Local fabricators have agreed to provide necessary materials and labor at minimal expense to help reduce the overall cost of this project. The design of this system will be based off an existing system owned and operated by a group from Coweta, Ok. This group has traveled to Mississippi for the past three years to assist BAM in conducting the youth event at the Mississippi Wildlife Extravaganza. Photographs of the complete system and booth of which this project will be modeled are attached. Purchasing equipment (i.e. bows, arrows, etc.) and development of a safety protocol will be coordinated by the BAM Board of Directors. Set up and operation of the system at various events will be implemented through voluntary efforts of BAM members. These members not only donate their time but also their travel, lodging, and food expenses for the purpose of providing the manpower it takes for these events to be successful. Sign-up sheets will be provided to BAM members prior to each event assigning specific responsibilities and duties to ensure events are carried out successfully and safely.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Project evaluation is relatively straight forward. Deliverables 1-3 are tangible items and completion is easily documented through photographic and written documentation. Deliverables four and five will be

documented photographically and by proof of registration at each event. To provide further information for the evaluation of this project BAM and MDWFP should collaborate to develop a method of collecting basic information to track the number of participating youth (bearing in mind the large numbers of youth that will participate).

Estimate of Participation

Participation can be estimated based on information gathered from three years of youth events at the Mississippi Wildlife Extravaganza. 2008 participation was estimated at 3,500 youth, 2009 participation was estimated at approximately 3,800, and 2010 participation was estimated to be over 4,000. The success of BAM's efforts at these events has been overwhelming. With very few exceptions, there is generally a line of youth waiting to participate in this event for the duration of the three day Wildlife Extravaganza.

Participation at additional events is more difficult to estimate as BAM has never had the capacity to coordinate youth events at other venues. However, an additional 500 youth would be a very conservative estimate. The combined estimated total is very likely to exceed 4,500 youth in 2011. However, one unique aspect of this project is that the benefits will continue far into the future. The service life of this mobile tank and platform system should exceed ten years, which would allow this project to continually achieve YPI Program objectives in years to come.

Project Budget

The following table (Table 1) reflects itemized project needs and documents in kind matching funds provided by BAM membership. Material and equipment costs are relatively self explanatory. Fabrication costs are comprised of metal and labor (for cutting and welding) required for the construction of each component.

In-kind matching funds do require additional explanation. Estimated match is based on actual time and expenditures accrued by BAM members for successful implementation of the youth event at the 2010 Mississippi Wildlife Extravaganza. Time is calculated on a man/hour basis. It requires a minimum of six people to staff the event at all times, set up and break down times are included in the estimate. Mileage expenses are based on the average number of miles our members traveled to support this event. Hotel expenses are based on two rooms for three nights which usually accommodates our needs. This in-kind match does not account for food, registration, or any other expenses incurred by members supporting this event. This does not account for other events to be hosted throughout the year as an accurate estimate would be difficult to produce at this time.

Table 1. Estimated Project Budget.

Budget Item	YPI Funds	BAM In-Kind
Equipment		
Shooting tank	\$ 600.00	
Single axle trailer	\$ 1,200.00	
Platform Fabrication	\$ 550.00	
Trailer Fabrication (to accommodate components)	\$ 400.00	
Equipment Storage Box	\$ 350.00	
Genesis Bows (4)	\$ 480.00	
Reels, line, arrows, points	\$ 300.00	
Personnel		
Friday Extravaganza (84 man hours @\$18/hour)		\$ 1,512.00
Saturday Extravaganza (60 man hours @\$18/hour)		\$ 1,080.00
Sunday Extravaganza (42 man hours @\$18/hour)		\$ 756.00
Travel		
20 members, averaging 60 miles/day @ 0.48/mile		\$ 1,728.00
Lodging		
2 hotel rooms for 3 nights @ 66.42/room/night		\$ 398.52
Total	\$ 3,880.00	\$ 5,474.52

Project Timeline

Timeline for completion of deliverables 1-3 is dependent on timing of funding. There are two events in the fall of 2010 (September and October) in which BAM has the opportunity to hold youth events if a mobile tank and platform system were in place. In short, deliverables 1-3 would be complete within 30-45 days of project award date. Deliverables 4 and 5 will be implemented throughout 2011 and beyond as opportunities present. This official project would end August 31, 2011. However, the project objectives would be continually achieved in years to come.

2009 Mississippi Wildlife Extravaganza, BAM Youth Event. The tank and platforms are transported on a specially designed trailer to facilitate the set up of this event in almost any location.



A snapshot of activity during the 2009 Extravaganza.

