

Recycling Online



Lining Up to Recycle

by Roger Guttentag

Monofilament fishing line (MFL) is a classic example of a product whose growing popularity also was accompanied by significant unforeseen consequences. DuPont's motivation to develop MFL in the late 1930s was simply to find another marketable use for nylon. After undergoing some important modifications to improve its performance, MFL started to achieve wide commercial success starting in the early 1960s. Yet, as the consumption of MFL grew, so did the incidence of abandoned, or cast-off, line as well. This led to a growing rate of freshwater and marine wildlife injuries and mortalities (this includes fish, mammals, birds and reptiles) due to MFL entanglement. Fortunately, many sports anglers began to realize that this was an unacceptable situation and this has led to the development of MFL recycling programs throughout the U.S. In this column, I will review some of the Web resources that are available on this topic.

Berkeley Pure Fishing (BPF)

BPF is a leading developer and manufacturer of fishing tackle equipment including MFL products. Their website provides

a brief description of their MFL recycling program including what products are made from the waste MFL they receive at their Spirit Lake, Iowa facility.

Florida Monofilament Recovery & Recycling Program (MRRP)

The MRRP is a Florida-based MFL program sponsored by a variety of local, state and federal agencies along with educational and non-profit associations involved in recreational boating or fishing. The two key sections of this site are its frequently asked questions (FAQ) and educational materials. The FAQ provides a good overview over why MFL recycling is needed and the various actions that anglers should, or shouldn't, take. When you go to the educational materials section, download first the MRRP Program Guide document. This 21-page manual describes how to develop a MFL recycling program and goes over such important issues as how to get volunteers and sponsors, locating MFL collection sites, promoting MFL events and determining how effect your MFL efforts are. There are other educational materials that can be

downloaded, as well, such as pamphlets and posters.

Going Coastal (GC)

The principal resource on the GC site is a PowerPoint presentation on the reasons for conducting MFL recycling as well as going over some of the important features of these programs.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)

The NFWF is a nonprofit foundation that was established by Congress in 1984 to promote wildlife and habitat conservation. The NFWF has a grant library that can be searched in multiple ways such as project type, year funded or by keywords. My recommendation is to use a keyword search involving the terms "fishing line recycling" or "monofilament recycling." These will yield search results that can be clicked on for further information. Each record provides a brief summary of the project along with a link to the project's final report. The report provides a more detailed account of the activities undertaken by the project along with the results that were achieved.

Reel In and Recycle – BoatU.S. Foundation (RIR)

RIR is one of the MLF projects that were funded by the NFWF as well as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program. Probably the most useful resource on this site is their three minute YouTube video that goes step-by-step on how to construct an effective MLF recycling container. All the materials that are shown can be obtained through lo-

Web Address Directory

Berkeley Fishing – Line Recycling	http://tinyurl.com/BerkleyMFL
Florida Monofilament Recovery & Recycling Program	http://mrrp.myfwc.com/
Going Coastal – Fishing Line Recycling	http://tinyurl.com/CoastMFL
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Grants Library	http://tinyurl.com/NFWF-MFL
Reel In and Recycle – BoatU.S. Foundation	http://tinyurl.com/BOATUS-MFL
Responsive Management – Monofilament Recycling Survey Report	http://tinyurl.com/ResponsiveMFL
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries – Fishing Line Recycling	http://tinyurl.com/Vir-MFL

cal home improvement or plumbing supply vendors.

Responsive Management (RM)

RM conducted, for the BoatU.S. Foundation, a telephone survey of licensed anglers located in California, New Jersey and Virginia to determine the reasons for why they did or did not participate in their RIR program. The report, “Angler’s Knowledge of and Attitudes toward Monofilament Line Recycling,” discusses what the survey found and some of the reasons for their findings. This includes determining that while most survey respondents were very aware of the need to recycle, they generally did not know that MFL could be recycled or how it could be done. In exploring some of the outreach strategies that could be employed, the report recommends using messages that emphasize the need for avoiding harm to wildlife and the environment.

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VADGIF)

The VADGIF illustrates how Google Maps can be used to show the location of MLF collection sites. This makes me wonder why more MLF programs don’t use the same approach for their online collection site listings. In addition, there are two documents that can be downloaded on MFL collection containers. One shows the actual components that are needed for constructing one. The other provides instructions on MLF recycling bin assembly and installation.

Some final thoughts

It is clear that MFL recycling is pretty easy to do. It doesn’t require complicated methods to collect the material, the amounts that need to be recovered are rather small and MFL is not hazardous to handle. The key element that makes MFL recycling work is simply an ethical one. As long as sport anglers believe that allowing wildlife to be harmed or killed by cast-off MFL is simply wrong, MFL recycling will succeed. Let us hope that angler education programs continue to make this point especially to those who are just being introduced to the sport.

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