



# News Release

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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## **Public's Right To Access US Waters To Boat and Fish Taken To The US Supreme Court.**

For Immediate Release - Ponca City, Oklahoma – May 20, 2008

The Bass Federation, Inc. (TBF) announced today that together with the "Restore Our Water Access, Inc." a Louisiana fishing organization known as ROWA, that a comprehensive Amicus Brief has been filed with the U. S. Supreme Court in support of the public's right to fish and boat on the navigable waters of America, including the Mississippi River. Over 40 other national and statewide fishing and boating organizations have joined together with ROWA and TBF in support of the brief.

Mr. Artie Nevels, President of ROWA, stated, "In 1873, in *The Slaughterhouse Cases*, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that the public's right to boat and fish on navigable waters was a common right of all U.S. citizens. The arrest of the five Louisiana fishermen fishing the Mississippi River violated those men's rights of citizenship. The Amicus brief filed in this matter re-affirms our rights of citizenship. This is a national crusade to re-affirm the public's right to fish, hunt and boat on America's navigable waters. ROWA is proud to be the national leader in restoring America's access to public waters from California to Maine."

The five Louisiana fishermen arrested while fishing on the Mississippi River, filed their application for another appeal to the United States Supreme Court on April 15, 2008. On May 15, 2008, the coalition of 40 national and state-wide conservation and fishing groups. In this case, groups from twenty-five of the states, including all the states that border on the Mississippi River, have joined in the fight to re-affirm under federal law the public's right to use the navigable rivers of America up to normal high water. Also joining the Amicus are groups from Wisconsin, Connecticut, Colorado, New Mexico, California, Maine, Minnesota and Oregon. The group is led by ROWA and supported by such prominent groups as The Bass Federation (TBF), Planning and Conservation League, FLW Outdoors, Oklahoma Anglers Unlimited, Association of Northwest Steelheaders, Tennessee Wildlife Federation, and many others who have signed on to the brief in support of the Louisiana Fishermen in their defense of fishing on navigable waters.

The Amicus brief is a pleading used by persons who have a vital interest in the matter before the Court, and desire to support one side of the argument. The group which is made up of fishing, boating and conservation groups hired Emory Law School Professor, David Bedermen, to prepare the amicus brief for the U.S. Supreme Court. Professor Bedermen is an experienced appellate attorney, and legal expert on national water rights.

According to Robert Cartledge, President of TBF, "ROWA, is the leading Louisiana advocacy group that supports recreational use of all of Louisiana's public waters, and they are the moving force in organizing the national support for the Louisiana fishermen in this case. TBF has many members up and down the Mississippi river basin and access to public waters, as well as public waters being held for private use to the exclusion of America's citizens is a growing concern for TBF and our membership nationwide not just in Louisiana. TBF is proud to be partnered with ROWA on this endeavor. We urge all boaters, hunters and anglers to get behind this group and lend your support. If we do not do it today it may be in your back yard next time and "to late"."

Mr. Artie Nevels, President of ROWA, stated that "With the joining of these national fishing and conservation groups in common support of public recreational use of America's navigable waters, the legal stage has been set at the Supreme Court to re-affirm the public's right to use navigable waters of America.

\*\*At its 2007 annual meeting the National Wildlife Federal passed a resolution supporting public recreational use of navigable waters up to normal high water. In May 2008, the Louisiana Recreational Freshwater Fishing Taskforce under the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Department, also passed a resolution in support of public fishing in navigable waters. Public access to navigable waters for fishing and boating is a national movement"

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Artie Nevels, President of ROWA [velnev@aol.com](mailto:velnev@aol.com) or Paul Hurd at [paul@paulhurdlawoffice.com](mailto:paul@paulhurdlawoffice.com)

The Bass Federation Inc. (TBF) is owned by those it serves and is dedicated to the sport of fishing. TBF affiliated state federations and their member clubs conduct more than 20,000 fishing, youth and conservation events at the local level each year and have provided the foundation for the entire bass fishing industry for more than 30 years. For more information about The Bass Federation, visit [bassfederation.com](http://bassfederation.com) or call 580.765.9031

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