



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LAKE RAY ROBERTS TO HOST BASS PRO SHOPS US OPEN REGIONAL QUALIFYING EVENT & FAN VILLAGE ON APRIL 17

Grandest tournament in fishing history comes to Texas with 250 amateur teams competing for shot at \$1 million prize

Proceeds benefit conservation with fans of all ages invited to enjoy FREE outdoor activities and weigh-in ceremony featuring fishing legend Roland Martin

SANGER, Texas – The path to the [Bass Pro Shops U.S. Open National Bass Fishing Amateur Team Championships](#) – a first-of-its-kind amateur fishing tournament offering the biggest payout in freshwater fishing history – continues on Texas’ legendary Lake Ray Roberts on Saturday, April 17. With proceeds benefiting local fisheries conservation and the future of fishing, the fan-friendly event is a true celebration of bass fishing being held exclusively for amateur anglers with a guaranteed purse value of \$4.3 million.

One of 8 regional qualifying events being held nationwide, the Lake Ray Roberts event will feature 250 two-person amateur teams competing for a first place \$50,000 prize, with the top 40 teams qualifying for the National Championship. The Bass Pro Shops US Open National Championship, held this November at Big Cedar Lodge on Missouri’s famed Table Rock Lake, will be internationally broadcast and offer a \$1 million cash prize to the winning team.

“In Texas, everything is a little bigger and bass fishing is no exception,” said noted conservationist and Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris. “We’re excited to welcome everyday anglers, friends and families to Lake Ray Roberts on April 17, all while raising money for local conservation and the future of fishing.”

Families and Veterans Among the Amateurs Competing for \$1 Million

The Lake Ray Roberts qualifying event will feature anglers ranging in age from 6 – 84 years old. The amateur field of 250 two-person teams consist of a cross-section of families and active military/veterans adding to the fun of the tournament including:

- 59 military veterans
- 3 active military
- 35 father-son teams
- 10 mother-son teams

- 14 husband-wife teams
- 11 brother-brother teams
- 2 father-daughter teams
- 20 female anglers

The stakes are high, with teams competing for life-changing cash and prizes. A fish-friendly weigh-in will score teams by the official weight of each team's catch (five bass limit) to determine winners. Prize breakdown for the regional qualifier is as follows:

- First place team wins \$50,000 with a payout to 40th place
- Top 40 teams qualify for the National Championship and compete for \$1 million cash prize
- \$1 million prize if a team breaks the Texas state record for a largemouth bass (record of 18.18 pounds set in 1992)

Benefiting the Future of Fishing in Texas & Beyond

The Lake Ray Roberts event benefits local fish habitat with proceeds supporting [The National Fish Habitat Partnership](#). Thanks to Bass Pro Shops and Toyota, 100 percent of all entry fees – over \$1 million throughout the tournament – will benefit conservation.

Under the visionary conservation leadership of Johnny Morris, Bass Pro Shops has made significant contributions to the future of the outdoors in the Lone Star State as a longstanding conservation partner of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD). From fisheries management to restoring Eastern wild turkey and cutting-edge bobwhite quail research, Bass Pro Shops and TPWD are working together to find solutions for critical conservation needs including the restoration and enhancement of native wildlife, public education, and nationally-recognized research programs.

Johnny Morris and Bass Pro Shops are proud partners of TPWD's renowned [ShareLunker](#) program, a national model for trophy bass management that encourages angler participation in producing bigger, better bass for Texas lakes. Now in its 35th year, the program enables anglers to donate bass greater than 13 pounds to TPWD Inland Fisheries biologists for a selective breeding program and genetic analysis, spawning bigger, better bass that will enhance fishing in Texas lakes for years to come.

To honor Johnny's contributions and those of fellow conservationist Richard M Hart, TPWD established the [Richard M. Hart and Johnny Morris Conservation Center](#) at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens, Texas, which stands as a centerpiece of the campus and a lasting legacy of the partnership. The 14,000 square foot facility provides unparalleled educational opportunities for Texans and a place to celebrate Texas' rich fishing heritage.

"We are blessed with exceptional natural resources in Texas, but the quality of our outdoor recreation and wildlife we know today wouldn't be possible without the dedication of partners like Johnny Morris and Bass Pro Shops," said TPWD Executive Director Carter Smith. "We are particularly grateful for their continued support of our fisheries habitat enhancement efforts statewide and look forward to seeing our collective work come full circle for anglers at the Bass Pro Shops US Open qualifying event on Lake Ray Roberts."

In keeping with its longstanding commitment to conservation, Johnny Morris, Bass Pro Shops and TPWD will work together to help ensure all fish caught during the Bass Pro Shops US Open

regional qualifying event on Lake Ray Roberts are released responsibly following a fish-friendly weigh-in.

Fan Activities & Celebrity Guests

While anglers are competing on the water, the general public is invited to participate in the excitement taking place on the broad banks of Lake Ray Roberts with free socially distanced outdoor activities beginning at noon (address: [Ray Roberts Marina, 1399 Marina Circle, Sanger, TX 76266](#)):

- **Free Kids Activities:** Free interactive games, inflatable slides and more will create a festive atmosphere for families and fishing fans of all ages to enjoy.
- **Celebrity Guest:** Hosted by **legendary angler Roland Martin**, tournament weigh-in will begin at 2:30 p.m. Competitors will arrive at the weigh-in site in waves throughout the afternoon and are invited to stay for the final award ceremony, taking place at 6:30 p.m.
- **Live Music:** The Petersens, an American bluegrass band from Missouri's Ozark mountains, will also provide live music and entertainment throughout the day.
- **Outdoor Fun for the Whole Family:** Guests can learn about fisheries conservation with representatives from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and enjoy a Bass Pro Shops pop-up shop with exclusive merchandise and the latest gear from top outdoor brands, along with food and special activities.

Media Credentials

Media interested in covering the Lake Ray Roberts regional qualifying event on-site can register for media credentials [here](#).

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About Bass Pro Shops

[Bass Pro Shops](#) is North America's premier outdoor and conservation company. Founded in 1972 when avid young angler Johnny Morris began selling tackle out of his father's liquor store in Springfield, Missouri, today the company provides customers with unmatched offerings spanning premier destination retail, outdoor equipment manufacturing, world-class resort destinations and more. In 2017 Bass Pro Shops acquired [Cabela's](#) to create a "best-of-the-best" experience with superior products, dynamic locations and outstanding customer service. Bass Pro Shops also operates [White River Marine Group](#), offering an unsurpassed collection of industry-leading boat brands, and [Big Cedar Lodge](#), America's Premier Wilderness Resort. Under the visionary conservation leadership of Johnny Morris, Bass Pro Shops is a national leader in protecting habitat and introducing families to the outdoors and has been named by Forbes as "one of America's Best Employers."

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