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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends and Industry Colleagues:

As I sit down to write this message in North Alabama snow is falling outside and I recall a reporter mentioning that Madison Wisconsin has broken the annual snowfall record this year (100 inches to date) (God bless you Steve Miller). It is hard to believe that spring is almost upon us, and shortly boats will be removed from dry storage, and boaters throughout the U.S. will be looking for and using boating access sites. While it may never cost them a thought as to what it takes for these sites to exist, let me take this opportunity to thank you for all the work you do that often doesn’t get the recognition it deserves.

The SOBA Board and its current task forces have been very busy since our last newsletter and I would like to take a moment to update you on this work:

- **The Build a Better Access DVD Task Force** (Co-Chaired by Terry Boyd and Gary Iles) has been very active since the annual conference last October. They have developed an outline of what is to be included on the newly designed DVD, have appointed each task force member with filming assignments, and have developed a draft RFP that will be used to hire the production company who will eventually produce the DVD. This Task Force plans on having a draft product to show during the SOBA Members Meeting at the 2008 Annual Conference, and a final product by 2009. If you have any video footage featuring boating access site construction, or if you are interested in becoming involved in the project, please contact Terry or Gary (terry.boyd@dcnr.alabama.gov or gary.iles@illinois.gov).

- **The Awards Task Force** (Chaired by Steve Miller) has worked extremely hard to update the awards scoring criteria and the submittal guidelines for each of the SOBA Awards. These updates are intended to provide better guidance for anyone wishing to submit an application for a SOBA award, and offer more specific

(Continued on page 2)
scoring criteria for the awards committee to judge these submittals. (Awards forms and criteria can be downloaded at www.sobaus.org)

- The 2009 SOBA Conference Task Force (Co-chaired by Bernice Mc Ardle and myself) has worked with Texas Parks and Wildlife, and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) to finalize the location and dates for the 2009 SOBA Conference. The 2009 conference dates will be September 28 – October 1, 2009 in Corpus Christi, Texas at the Omni Hotel Marina Tower. These dates will overlap with NASBLA’s 2009 annual conference that is also being held in Corpus Christi, and SOBA is excited about the possibilities of having joint activities with this respected organization.

- The 2008 Annual Conference in Norfolk, Virginia (Hosted by the Virginia Department of Inland Fisheries with James Adams serving as Conference Coordinator) scheduled for October 13th – 16th is taking shape. The preliminary agenda is filled with topics that relate to all facets of boating access. If you have not marked your calendar, do so now because I believe it will be a conference you don’t want to miss. Log onto www.sobaus.org for more information, and for a full registration package.

The 2008 SOBA 22nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The SOBA Board, The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and Virginia Department of Health invite you to attend the 2008 SOBA 22nd Annual Conference. The Conference will be held at the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel in Norfolk, Virginia from October 13th through 16th 2008. The conference theme is “Launching for Success – Building on Traditions.”

Conference information is now available on the States Organization for Boating Access web site, www.sobaus.org. Go to the Conference tab on the left of the Home page and select “2008 Conference”. The 2008 Conference page provides information for Sponsors and Exhibitors and has the Registration Forms, Hotel details, Day Trip options and how to access the City of Norfolk.

Also look for details for the 2008 Awards Nominations and available forms.

You may correspond by email to soba2008conference@dgif.virginia.gov or contact James Adams, State Host Conference Coordinator at 804-367-0183.
When the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency started talking about a water trail through the state in 1999, they weren't thinking about canoes, kayaks and cartop boats. They were thinking big.

Big, as in 800 miles of designated rivers and waterways. Big, as in accommodating vessels up to 100 feet and longer. And BIG, as in the federal Boating Infrastructure Grant program.

With the announcement last year of a BIG grant to build dedicated transient facilities for cruisers at Harpeth Shoals Marina on the Cumberland River, the agency declared the Tennessee Boating Trail complete.

Harpeth Shoals Marina joins six more BIG-funded projects built in partnership with private marinas, state parks and municipal governments in Tennessee to create the water trail over the past eight years. The development is the first new marina to be built on the river since 1976 and the $125,000 transient dock is a key feature.

By incorporating existing BIG projects in Mississippi and Alabama, which share some stretches of the Tennessee River, the Volunteer State has created a comprehensive network of sites. Transients now have more access to the region's river towns, boating services, visitor attractions and just plain beautiful cruising country than ever before.

With a total of 11 BIG-funded transient projects on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers now complementing the commercial marinas already available, boaters have tie-up facilities that are never more than an easy day's cruise apart, about six hours, max'um, at typical trawler cruising speeds.

**Rolling on the Rivers**

"Boaters cruising these two rivers now have a series of stopovers, almost like 'rest stops' on interstate highways, designed exclusively to suit their needs," reports Edward Poolos, who administers the program for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. "Beginning at Knoxville, which is the major city farthest east on the trail, boaters can cruise down the Tennessee River to Chattanooga, through the top of Alabama and across a corner of Missippi and back into Tennessee at Pickwick Lake, with six BIG projects to help them enjoy the trip."

Turn south at Pickwick, Poolos explains, and the trail connects through Yellow Creek to the Tenn-Tom Waterway that continues south via the Tombigbee River, and then the Black Warrior River, to Mobile, AL, and on to the Gulf of Mexico.

Turn north at Pickwick to stay on the Tennessee Boating Trail and the cruise takes you through some 200 miles of largely undeveloped rural countryside and into a bit of the Blue Grass State via Kentucky Lake. That's the route north that connects with the Ohio River and the Mississippi eventually, but a 20-mile jog up Kentucky Lake leads to a canal that links to Lake Barkley to the east. From there boats can enter the Cumberland River system and cruise south again, back into Tennessee.

These two lakes, part of the massive Tennessee Valley Authority water management projects of the 1930s, form a major crossroads for boaters cruising the Great Loop. That's the increasingly popular water route around the entire eastern U.S. via inland rivers, Gulf and Atlantic waterways, major coastal tributaries and the Great Lakes.

Poolos says an estimated 5,000 boats, cruising all or portions of the Great Loop, pass through Tennessee each year. Uncounted numbers of local boaters in the four-state region use the two river systems for shorter trips and vacation cruises as well.

Boaters on extended cruises - snowbirds running between the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico, for example, or really serious cruisers circumnavigating via the Great Loop - already have a whole lot of waterways open to them but they tend to stick to the beaten north-south path. Now, thanks to the BIG program and projects like the Tennessee Boating Trail, these added facilities give transients the services they need to explore what veteran cruisers Ron and Eva Stob call "the blue highways" of the Heartland.

For boaters, the Great Loop is like the interstate highway

*(Continued on page 4)*
BIG BLAZES BOAT TRAIL  
(Continued from page 3)

system, say the Stobs, who cruised the entire 6,300-mile route aboard their 40-foot trawler, Dream O'Genie, in 1994. Inspired by that trip, which is documented in their book “Honey, Let's Get a Boat,” they formed the America's Great Loop Cruisers Association from their home on the Little Tennessee River in 1999.

"Now we want to encourage boaters to explore waterways off the Great Loop and projects like the Tennessee Boating Trail provide the infrastructure to help them do just that," Ron Stob says And that, of course, is just what Congress had in mind when it created the BIG program in 1998 at the urging of BoatU.S. lobbyist Michael G. Sciulla who shepherded the project through the legislative maze.

BIG Background  
The Boating Infrastructure Grant program (BIG) uses federal gas tax monies paid by recreational boaters to add facilities specifically for transients. A good example is Mermaid Marina on the Tennessee River. As the first BIG project in the state, funded in 2000, this BoatU.S. Cooperating Marina installed 200 feet of floating docks and other amenities at Decaturville, TN.

BIG funds can also be used to build new facilities, dredge out channels and install up-to-date utilities, which the Cumberland River city of Clarksville did with a 2006 grant. Now boats headed to or from Nashville, an increasingly popular river destination, have a stopover where no access to shore existed before.

"It was the boaters who put on the pressure to get transient docks at Clarksville," Poolos reports. "Before this, you cruised right through the downtown and there was no place to pull in if the weather was bad, no way to go ashore for supplies and certainly no safe place to tie up for the night."

Part of the rationale behind BIG is that increased transient traffic will also benefit local waterfront economies. Cities like Chattanooga have made BIG projects key elements in their waterfront redevelopment plans.

That city, ancestral home of the South's iconic confection, the Moon Pie, has completed two BIG projects, one in 2001 and a second in 2005. An 1,800-foot transient dock with water, electric and sewage pumpout equipment now in downtown Chattanooga is part of the city's 21st Century Waterfront plan. This $120 million revitalization project expanded the waterfront and provided access from the transient docks to major tourist attractions, shopping and services that have blossomed from the redevelopment.

The Stobs, who have cruised nearly 9,000 miles by trailered boat on waterways off the beaten path for their new book, Great Loop Side Trips, call Chattanooga "the best urban waterfront redevelopment in North America."

For natural beauty, the next 200 miles of the Tennessee River to Knoxville are outstanding, in the Stobs' estimation, and boaters en-route to the home of the University of Tennessee have new facilities along the way at Concord Marina, thanks to a 2002 BIG grant.

Another one of the goals of the BIG Program is to connect boaters with shoreside visitor attractions. Facilities constructed at Pickwick Landing State Park in 2004 as part of the trail make Shiloh National Military Park accessible to cruising boaters. While it's a short rental car ride, the stopover to visit this historic Civil War site is an increasingly popular side trip.

The Tennessee Boating Trail, while complete, is not necessarily finished, Poolos says. Now the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency will be developing promotional materials, maps and signage for the trail. In addition, the agency will conduct assessments and talk to boaters who use the BIG facilities. The goal is to determine who is using the trail, where they come from, how to improve it and where cruising boaters may need future transient facilities.

(Continued on page 5)
BIG BLAZES BOAT TRAIL
(Continued from page 4)

For more information on the BIG program, and to suggest locations in your state that could benefit from this grant program, visit BoatUS.com/gov/big.

Kindly provided by Ryck Lydecker
Assistant Vice President for Government Affairs,
BoatUS and Associate Editor BoatUS Magazine

Tennessee Boating Trail Resources
Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency:
www.tnwildlife.org
America’s Great Loop Cruisers Association:
www.greatloop.com
BoatUS Cooperating Marina program:
www.BoatUS.com/marinas

CALL TO SOBA ALUMINI
PLEASE HELP US STAY IN TOUCH
WITH PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN OUR MISSION.

If you know of anyone who used to belong to SOBA, but is now retired or no longer has that job function, and would be interested in staying informed of our activities, please email their name and contact details to:

INFO@SOBAUS.ORG

“BUILD A BETTER BOAT RAMP“ DVD REVISED AND UPDATED

Efforts are underway to update SOBA’s “Build A Better Boat Ramp” DVD. The task force is currently collecting still photos and video footage of projects for inclusion in the project, and will accept video footage or photos of completed, or soon to be completed projects from either state agencies or vendors.

A preview of the revised “Build A Better Boat Ramp” will take place at the 2008 SOBA Annual Conference in Norfolk, VA. The final DVD is anticipated to be revealed at the 2009 SOBA Annual Conference.

Still photos and video footage should be submitted to Larry Killien at larry.killien@dnr.state.mn.us. Call with any questions: 218-999-7924.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE THROUGH SOBA

One of SOBA’s goals is to develop and provide tools for boating access professionals. One tool includes the publications that SOBA volunteers research, write and publish. Publications are provided to SOBA members on either a complimentary or discounted basis, and to non-members at standard rates.

Current offerings include:

- Operations and Maintenance Program Guidelines for Recreational Boating Facilities
- CVA Lifecycle Pump-Out Report (Available in Print and CD-Rom)
- Build a Better Boat Ramp DVD (currently being updated)

Don’t have any of these resources in your office? Order forms are available at www.sobaus.org.

If you have a suggestion on a needed resource, email us at info@sobaus.org
"Power Loading" (1) A method of loading a boat at a boat ramp using the engine to move the boat into position on the trailer. (2) A method of ruining a boat ramp by loading a boat on a trailer.

Tony Dean (www.tonydean.com), a South Dakota fishing guide, and host of an outdoors TV show, was at a boat ramp power loading his 20-foot boat on a bunk trailer when a South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks worker started yelling at him for the harm he was doing by loading the boat using the engine. Not wanting to cause a scene, Dean offered the SDGF&P fellow a chance to hand-crank the boat onto the trailer. He declined and drove away.

"Power loading," Dean would later say, "is a necessity because there simply is no other way to load a boat in this part of the country." Many Trailering Club Members would agree with Dean.

Garrett Little power loads his boat in Charleston, South Carolina. "I do it, but normally with the motor fully trimmed in the 'up' position," he says, "and a quick burst of the throttle will push the boat the necessary 2-3 feet to put the bow against the bow roller where the winch strap can be connected and secured. I haven't had anyone in our area say power loading is harming the ramp, but if they did, I would have to say that should have been taken into account when the ramp was built."

Harm to the boat ramp is at the center of any discussion about using the engine to drive a boat onto a trailer. The resulting prop wash can "dig out" the bottom causing (1) the end of the boat ramp to collapse because there is no longer any foundation to support the concrete or (2) a "hump" caused by the washed-out sediment, sand, gravel, and bottom within 10 feet of the end of the ramp, which results in boats (or props) to 'bottom out' when leaving or approaching the ramp from the water. It is this reason that a number of states are doing whatever they can to limit, if not ban, the practice of power loading.

Jordan Byelich is Michigan's Boating Access Site program manager and is responsible for the state's 1,300 boat ramps. "Although power loading is still happening today, the DNR has taken actions to lessen its occurrence," he notes. "The DNR instituted a land use rule that states it is unlawful to operate motors more than at idle speed unless the propeller is disengaged at boat ramps. This rule is posted at boating access sites." Michigan has had this rule since October 2001.

At the same time, Byelich's team has found a technique to repair (and protect) boat ramps from further damage by prop wash. Once the ramp's foundation has been replaced and secured, a large piece of fabric-reinforced rubber (similar to a conveyor belt) is placed along the bottom of the ramp's end with about 13 inches protruding out. When a boat is powered toward the waiting trailer, the conveyor material keeps any sediment from being pushed out from under the ramp. It has proven to be an effective solution.

Other states take a less active position at their ramps. Florida simply asks boaters not to do it.

The same is done in the Cape Cod community of Harwich, Massachusetts, where more than $42,000 was spent late last year to repair the Allen Harbor boat ramp damaged by power loading. The harbormaster says he urges boaters against such practices but there is no regulation on the books to prohibit power loading. But in the town of Howell, Massachusetts, there's a city rule banning power loading. On Lake Poygan, Wisconsin, Winnebago County officials spent $50,000 to extend a boat ramp farther into the water to prevent more damage. A longer ramp keeps the prop wash from undermining the gravel and sand below the ramp. Usually, there will be a prominently placed sign at the ramp letting you know if power loading is not allowed.

In Minnesota, DNR spokesperson Nancy Stewart says 300 of the state's 1,650 boat ramps were in need of repairs caused by boat engines and prop wash on---and near-boat ramps. "Power loading of motorboats and the subsequent effects it has on boat ramps has been an ongoing management issue in Minnesota for about the past 20 years," she notes. "In 2005, the idea of creating a law to prohibit power loading was reviewed; however, after lengthy discussion, it was decided not to pursue legislation." As a result, the state has set aside one million dollars to handle the necessary repairs. "DNR recognized boat and trailer technology and boater behavior had changed over time," Stewart says, "so instead of trying to change boaters' behavior, the DNR decided to address the damage by dealing with scour holes and lengthening ramps to accommodate the larger, more powerful boats."

Wisconsin takes a similar approach. "We do not encourage power loading because of the damage that it does to the ramps," says the state's DNR Boating Law Administrator Roy Zellmer. "We don't regulate it and we leave it to the local authorities due to there being certain circumstances where power loading may actually be appropriate or necessary. Local towns and villages around the state have enacted ordinances, which prohibit it."

But as Trailering Club Member Kelly McCoy observes from Texas, "There is power loading and there is

(Continued on page 7)
POWER LOADING AT THE BOAT RAMP...
(Continued from page 6)

POWER LOADING!! I've seen people run their boats up onto the trailer using lots of power and then throttle up to hold the boat against the bow stop while they hook up the cable. I drive my boat onto the trailer under power (very slowly). It's a 23-foot that weighs about 5,000 pounds, with a high freeboard. Sometimes I even bump up the throttles to get a little farther up the trailer. Then I shut down, climb over the bow and winch the boat up the last three to four feet."

Many Trailering Club Members echo Mr. McCoy's technique. "I always cut the engine as soon as the bow passes over the back of the trailer," observes Thomas Mulroney of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. "There's not a lot of noise, the ramp isn't damaged, and it works. I have no problem getting out and winching."

Others have said it's a matter of backing the trailer farther into the water (some say to the top of the fenders, although each boat and trailer and ramp are different), which allows the boat to float onto the top two-thirds of the trailer before being winched the remaining distance.

Recent drought conditions have actually increased the number of boaters using power loading at the ramps. Because water levels are lower, boat trailers need to use more of the ramp length in order to be positioned for boats to properly load. Because there is less water, the added boost from an engine can be the difference between getting the boat on the trailer or not. Since the engines are operating closer to the end of what was once an adequate length of ramp, prop wash has more of a chance to damage the end of the ramp.

If power loading is allowed and you're new to the practice, let this story be your reminder of how easily things can go wrong: In Galveston, Texas, a boater powered his twin outboard Sea Ray right onto the trailer, going past the winch post and stopping only after the bow went through the rear window of his SUV. By this time, the props were out of the water so the incident caught everyone's attention. Observers suggested to the man he may have used too much throttle but after shutting down the engines, he left the ramp and was never seen again.

And there are many stories about a trailer going off the end of a boat ramp because the end wasn't properly marked or because the boater never bothered to look at how far down the ramp he could back the trailer. Low water makes this all the more common (BoatUS Trailer Assist(r) will help you if the trailer goes off the back of the ramp and you are unable to lift the wheels back onto the surface).

There is no question that power loading of boats onto trailers has the potential to harm boat ramps. The good news is that the issue is forcing both boaters and boat ramp designers to make changes--boaters are using less throttle when approaching the ramp and designers are applying new ideas to accommodate the way boats are retrieved.

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BOARD MEMBER REPORT - by Wayne Shuyler

Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation Update

The Board of the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation held its quarterly meeting on January 29 in Fort Lauderdale. Thom Dammrich, President of the National Marine Manufacturers Association, chaired the meeting. Frank Peterson, RBFF's President/CEO represented RBFF staff and consultants. Major topics of the meeting included an update on FY 2008 programs and the FY 2009 Strategic Plan including budget review. The firms of Colle+McVoy and Rawle Murdy also made presentations on the various campaigns.

RBFF staff reported on the following six strategic initiatives for FY 2008:

States Initiative
- The Minnesota pilot program in spring 2007 resulted in 9,846 fishing licenses and $147,690 towards conservation.
- RBFF is developing a direct mail toolkit that states can use to implement a lapsed angler recruitment program.
- So far, 28 out of 50 states (56%) have committed to implement this program.
- Forty-four people from 27 state agencies participated in a two-day marketing workshop on January 16/17 in Grapevine, Texas to officially launch RBFF's direct mail marketing initiative for states.

Anglers' Legacy
- A total of 22,376 Pledges of the target 50,000 have been made.
- Of the targeted 125,000 Trial Experiences 88,306 actual trial experiences were conducted. Cabela's, Bass Pro Shops, North American Fisherman, and (Continued on page 8)

April 2008
BOARD MEMBER REPORT  
(Continued from page 7)
Dick's Sporting Goods have agreed to run Pledge drives that are projected to secure more than 215,000 Pledges.  
- Target audience awareness of Anglers' Legacy is only 5% of the targeted 25% but with the combined Anglers' Legacy and Take Me Fishing website, awareness is expected to soar.  
- Viewership of the “Protect the Legacy” web pages reached 835,000

Take Me Fishing  
- Take Me Fishing Centers: RBFF exhibited its “Take Me Fishing Center” at NMMA boat shows in San Diego, New Orleans, Chicago, Baltimore and Louisville.  
- New Creative for “Take Me Fishing”: The new look, feel, tone and attitude of the 2008 “Take Me Fishing” campaign blends the picturesque beauty of nature, the excitement of the sport and the idea of memories all into a single image. The 2008 campaign was used at the “Take Me Fishing Centers” and is being adapted for the states_lapsed angler direct mail campaign.

Education  
- RBFF generated 111,230 trial fishing experiences of the 65,500 targeted through PhyshEd and NRPA grants. RBFF’s goal for the long term is one million.  
- RBFF plans to achieve that goal through education task forces focusing on grant application guidelines, and the Passport product.

Stakeholder Channel Development  
- Added 142 of the targeted 225 new stakeholders as Anglers' Legacy Partners.  
- Added 63 new Strategic Partners – exceeding the target of 34.  
- Achieved a Stakeholder Satisfaction Rating of 75% for programs

Cost Share  
- Achieved 35% match for the total federal dollars received, accumulating around $2.5 million in advertising space equivalency (ASEV) from media partners.

Boating Committee Report  
Chair Fred Messmann (NV) reported that the committee would meet to discuss the following items:  
- Boating education grants  
- Boating and fishing involvement at Super Bowl pre-events  
- Boating Access Surveillance Indexing System – proposed change in MOU to allow use of data for regulatory purposes  
- Boating PSAs – developing a partnership with NMMA to promote boating  
- SOBA Conference – identify strategies to add “Grow Boating” content to conference  
- Broader involvement of boating community in RBFF  
- PR Hotline – resources to help states and industry respond to emerging issues

Other Boating Updates  
- NMMA had distributed more than 5,000 DVDs in response to requests at boat shows  
- Phase I of the BASIS project is complete and Phase II will begin soon  
- RBFF is conducting a pilot project with Oregon to target lapsed boaters and determine why boat registrations are not being renewed and what strategies might address declines  
- The grow boating partnership with minor league baseball has been expanded to 30 teams

Other  
- The new “Take Me Fishing” website will be unveiled on April 11 – RBFF would like to add location and information about pumptoms to the website  
- Board members Bob Menne of Premier Marine and Jeff Pontius of Zebco attended their last meeting  
- The Nominating committee re-elected the current slate officers for another year's term and recognized appointments from the following organizations to serve a three-year term:  
  1. Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies  
     - Dave Chanda, New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife (re-appointed)  
     - Lydia Saldana, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (re-appointed)  
  2. National Marine Manufacturers Association  
     - Doug Beachem, DJB Ltd.  
     - Jason Scruggs, Lowe Boats  
     - Mike Hebert, Texas Marine  
  3. American Sportfishing Association  
     - Ken Sarber, Dick’s Sporting Goods (re-appointed)  
  4. Sport Fishing & Boating Partnership Council  
     - Susan Whitaker, Tennessee Department of Tourist Development  
     - Charles Holmes, Boy Scouts of America (At-Large)  
     - Mike Hebert, Texas Marine
STATE WILDLIFE AGENCIES TO RECEIVE OVER $700 MILLION FOR WILDLIFE AND SPORT FISH RESTORATION

Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced February 21 the distribution of more than $700 million to 56 state and territorial fish and wildlife agencies to fund fish and wildlife conservation efforts, boat access, shooting ranges and hunter education. Kempthorne made the announcement at the Bassmasters Classic professional fishing tournament in Greenville, South Carolina.

The funding is made available to states and territories through the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration programs, which are administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Funds are generated by federal excise taxes on purchases of firearms, ammunition, archery and angling equipment, and boat motor fuels.

“Over the past 71 years, hunters and anglers have paid more than $11 billion through these landmark programs, providing critical support for wildlife conservation efforts across North America,” said Kempthorne in making the announcement. “Many of our most important wildlife success stories would not have happened without the commitment of sportsmen and women and industry leaders, who anticipated serious conservation needs and shouldered the burden of meeting those needs.”

The Wildlife Restoration apportionment for 2008 totals nearly $310 million, with more than $61 million tagged for hunter education and shooting range programs. The Sport Fish Restoration apportionment totals more than $398 million. Federal Assistance funds pay up to 75 percent of the cost of each eligible project of which the states are required to contribute at least 25 percent.

The Sport Fish Restoration Program is funded through the collection of excise taxes and import duties on sport fishing equipment, motorboat and small engine fuels, and pleasure boats. These funds are allocated to the states on a formula that involves the land and water area, inland waters and the Great Lakes and marine coastal areas if applicable, and the number of fish license holders. States use the funds to pay for the stocking of fish, acquiring and improving sport fish habitat, providing aquatic resource education and conducting fisheries research. The funding is also used for construction of boat ramps and fishing piers, and for acquiring and maintaining public access facilities for recreational boaters.

Since the inception of the Sport Fish Restoration program, states have acquired 351,000 acres in fee simple, lease agreements, or easements, and have supported the operation and maintenance of more than 15.5 million acres. States have stocked over 6.5 billion fish and developed more than 2,600 boating-related facilities and renovated or improved over 6,200 boating access sites. More than 11.3 million people have taken part in aquatic resource education programs.

For additional information and a comprehensive list of state-by-state funding allocations, please visit: http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov

UPDATE FROM THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Courtesy of Brian Bohnsack

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced changes in staff assigned to boating grant programs recently. Judson Spicer is the new Clean Vessel Act coordinator for the USFWS in the Denver regional office and will be overseeing CVA grants for many Midwestern and Rocky Mountain states. Judson is a native Kansan and received his M.S. degree from Emporia State University in Kansas.

Judson’s most recent duty station was with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge in Colorado. In addition to his new position, Judson remains available as the Fish and Wildlife Service’s specialist for tranquiliizing bison that are found on the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Refuge. While this task may not sound daunting, the chemicals used during for this task require special skills and training and the use of chemical protection suits!

Jill Wright is the new coordinator for the Boating Infrastructure Grant and Clean Vessel Act grant programs, as well as Sport Fish Restoration boating access grants in the newly named Region 8 of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This region oversees the states of California and Nevada. Jill is a long-time Service employee who most recently served in our Ecological Services-Federal Projects Division in the Sacramento office. Jill’s previous experience with the federal government includes serving as a wildlife inspector for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife in Hawaii, as well as a stint with the National Park Service at Channel Islands National Park in California. She raises

(Continued on page 10)
UPDATE FROM THE US FISH & WILDLIFE...
(Continued from page 9)

miniature horses in her spare time.

Bob Anderson has returned as the Sport Fish Restoration boating access and Boating Infrastructure Grant program coordinator for the Service’s Albuquerque office. He will be working with the states of Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Arizona on issues associated with these programs. Bob has worked for the Service for several years and has previously served as the BIG coordinator for the Albuquerque office. His previous work experience includes working for the island of Guam for many years.

And finally, the Service proudly recognizes Jerry Novotny and his continued efforts with the boating community. Jerry was honored by SOBA for his work with the boating community.

Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs Name Announced
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Federal Assistance has changed its name to the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program. The process of completing this name change will take a while and many Service documents will still indicate the previous name of the Division of Federal Assistance. The name change is one of the Service’s many efforts to comply with the Federal Aid Improvement Act of 2000.

Service Strengthens Relationship with BoatUS and Boating Groups
The Fish and Wildlife Service continues to work closely with BoatUS and other boating organizations to promote articles on boating access projects and boating issues. These efforts have resulted in frequent articles on state projects and efforts in magazines such as BoatUS magazine. A recent example includes a feature article on the Tennessee Boating Trail that was awarded one of SOBA’s projects of the year at their 2007 annual meeting. The Fish and Wildlife Service is constantly seeking boating access and boating program success stories to share with our constituents. If you have a project or story idea that you would like to be promoted by the Fish and Wildlife Service, please contact your regional Service BIG, CVA or Sport Fish Restoration boating access coordinator or regional Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Chief.

Ryck Lydecker Announced as Chairman of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council
Ryck Lydecker was recently announced as chairman of the Department of the Interior’s Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council. In serving as chairman, Ryck will direct the Council’s efforts and will interact with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other Department of Interior agencies on boating and recreational fishing issues. The Council has played an important role in recent years with their efforts to review and evaluate the Service’s boating programs funded from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund.

Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council Completes Review of the Clean Vessel Act Grant Program
The Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council has completed their comprehensive review of the Clean Vessel Act grant program and provided their findings to Service Director Dale Hall in January. The Council found the program overall to be successful in meeting its objectives, but identified several areas of the program which they believed could be improved to increase the effectiveness of the program. The Council is currently working with several state agencies and SOBA members to get relevant case studies for their final report. The report will be distributed later this year.

Sport Fish Restoration Apportionments Reach All Time High- Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced the fiscal year 2008 apportionments from the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration program in mid February. The final apportionment for the program was $398,337,729. Accordingly, approximately $60 million of these funds will be spent on boating access projects by state fish and wildlife agencies. Funding for the program has increased substantially as a result of the SAFETEA-LU Act, which was passed by Congress in 2005. The apportionment for fiscal year 2009 is likely to decrease as increased fuel costs may result in a decreased demand for fuel. For more information on the Sport Fish Restoration Program or to view individual state apportionments from this program, please visit the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs web site at http://wsfprograms.fws.gov or contact your regional U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office.

Fifteen States Receive Boating Infrastructure Grant Program Tier Two Awards- Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced in mid February that 19 projects from 15 states were awarded funding from the Boating Infrastructure Grant Tier Two program. The awards totaled more than $13.5 million. The states of Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Wisconsin received their first ever Tier Two awards.

(Continued on page 11)
UPDATE FROM THE US FISH & WILDLIFE...
(Continued from page 10)

total of 29 states have now received Tier Two awards since the program’s inception. In addition, approximately $3.7 million of Boating Infrastructure Grant program Tier One funding was awarded to 38 states in fiscal year 2008. For more information on the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program, please visit the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs web site at http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov or contact your regional U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office.

Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Web Site Updated

The Fish and Wildlife Service’s Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (formerly known as the Division of Federal Assistance) has re-designed and updated its web site. The web site is an excellent source of information on many of the Service’s grant programs. The address is http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov. The Fish and Wildlife Service appreciates any comments and recommendations on way to improve the usefulness of the site to our coopera-

tors and can be sent to the following email address: webmaster_wsfrprograms@fws.gov.

Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Releases Draft Strategic Plan for Public Comment

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program will be seeking public comments on its draft strategic plan this month. The draft plan is scheduled for release in mid March and the tentative deadline for public comments is mid April. The strategic plan is a critical component of the Service’s efforts to address concerns raised by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) during their PART (Program Assessment Rating Tool) review of the various Sport Fish Restoration grant programs that was completed in 2005. If you have not received a copy of the draft strategic plan and would like to review the document and provide comments, please contact your regional U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service BIG, CVA or Sport Fish Restoration boating access coordinator, or regional Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Chief.

DELAWARE FISH AND WILDLIFE UPDATE

Courtesy of Lacy Nichols

The Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife started construction on a new boating access facility on February 4, 2008.

This facility will be constructed on the Broadkill River, near Lewes, DE. This new facility will have six (6) deep “V” grooved concrete launch lanes; two full floatation courtesy docks and associated aluminum gangway systems connected to timber walkways; four full floatation boarding docks attached to concrete anchor piers; the paved parking area will accommodate 130 car/trailer units and 24 single cars spaces adjacent to the ramp complex; the ingress – egress parking areas will be properly lighted, and striped; the facility will have an approved stormwater system. The entire facility will be barrier-free and meets ass ADA regulations. The low bid to construct the project was $2.8 million.

CONNECTICUT REACHES NO DISCHARGE AREA GOAL

Everyone wants a clean Long Island Sound to enjoy for swimming, boating, fishing and shellfishing. The establishment of No Discharge Areas in Connecticut coastal waters is an important part of the DEP’s long-term effort to improve water quality in the estuary. A No Discharge Area is a designated body of water in which the discharge of both treated and untreated boat sewage is prohibited. At a celebration on July 26, 2007, Governor Rell announced completion of OLISP’s five-year effort to win federal EPA approval of No Discharge Area (NDA) designation for coastal waters statewide. With federal approval of the NDA, it is illegal to discharge any sewage from any vessel anywhere in Connecticut’s coastal or inland waters.

Since its inception, the federal Clean Water Act has prohibited the discharge of untreated sewage from vessels within all navigable waters of the U. S., which include territorial seas within three miles of shore. All of

(Continued on page 12)
CONNECTICUT REACHES...
(Continued from page 11)

Long Island Sound is landward of the baseline from which the three mile territorial sea is measured, that being an imaginary line drawn from Watch Hill in Rhode Island to Montauk Point on Long Island. Therefore, federal law has long prohibited the discharge of untreated sewage from vessels in all of Long Island Sound.

Within an adopted NDA, discharge of certain treated waste is also prohibited. Specifically, boats with Type I and Type II Marine Sanitation Devices (MSDs) - known as “treat and discharge” systems - may not discharge treated effluent in a NDA. Only Type III marine sanitation devices (i.e. holding tanks) can be used legally in a NDA. Portable toilets with integral holding tanks (not technically MSDs because they are not "installed") may also be used on vessels in a NDA. These combined prohibitions of untreated and certain treated discharges are intended to provide the greatest possible protection for Connecticut’s water quality.

As early as 1977, DEP requested that EPA designate near shore areas of LIS as no discharge zones. That informal application, and a second more limited proposal in 1980, were both rejected due to the lack of existing pumpout facilities. The state Legislature weighed in on this issue in 1990 and 1991 with the passage of Public Acts 90-173 and 91-333 establishing state No Discharge Zones in several harbors along Connecticut's coast. However, without federal approval, enforcement of this prohibition of vessel discharges within these zones was questionable.

The department endeavored to remedy that insufficiency by developing a pumpout plan and, in 1993 and each year since, applying for and receiving funding through the federal Clean Vessel Act (CVA) Program to establish pumpout facilities. Federal CVA funds are contributed by boaters and anglers through payment of federal excise taxes, import duties and tariffs. By 2003, a sufficient number of pumpouts were installed to qualify for designation of our initial federally approved NDA off of Stonington (see Issue No. 12 of Sound Outlook at www.ct.gov/dep/lis). With approval of the final NDA segment from Branford to Greenwich we now celebrate NDA status for all Connecticut waters.

The more recent push to establish NDAs in Connecticut started with the recognition that Rhode Island had received federal approval of NDA designation for all of its coastal waters. It made little sense to have a line drawn down the Pawcatuck River at the state boundary with Rhode Island, on our side of which treated sewage could be discharged legally, while on theirs it could not. That situation is now reversed in a sense, as Connecticut is encouraging the managers of New York state environmental programs to pursue extension of the Connecticut NDA to their side of the Sound.

For further information about No Discharge Areas or the Clean Vessel Act Program, contact Rick Huntley at 860-424-3609 or by email at rick.huntley@po.state.ct.us.

Reprinted from the Connecticut February 2008 Sound Outlook newsletter, with kind permission from Rick Huntley

NEW LOOK FOR SOBA NEWSLETTER

SOBA members have lots to talk about, and lots of stories to communicate. We all benefit from the experiences of each other’s successes and failures, so please share some news from your state or facility with your fellow SOBA colleagues. We publish three newsletters annually, and the following is our newsletter schedule:

April Issue – Submit Editorial by March 11th
August Issue – Submit Editorial by July 13th
December Issue – Submit Editorial by November 10th

E-mail your information to info@sobaus.org

April 2008
The States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA) is happy to announce a call for its 2008 awards nominations. **NOTE:** Projects submitted in 2007 that were unsuccessful can be re-submitted in 2008 for consideration.

Each year SOBA requests nominations for the following awards:

- The William H. Ivers Award
- Outstanding Service Award
- Professional Service Award
- Special Recognition Award
- State Boating Access Program Excellence Award
- State Clean Vessel (CVA) Program Excellence Award and
- Outstanding Project Awards in Four (4) categories: 1) small, 2) mid-size, 3) large, and 4) marina and harbors.

The awards will be presented at SOBA’s annual conference, October 13-16, in Norfolk, Virginia.

**Your Nominations are Worth the Effort!**
Recognition of outstanding work is very important and all too often outstanding work goes unrecognized. The SOBA Awards Program allows us to help you by recognizing outstanding achievement of your staff, your peers, and the many cooperators and partners you work with. The SOBA Executive Board makes an extra effort to recognize outstanding work; a nomination in itself is a statement of recognition and definitely worth the effort!

**How to Nominate**
A complete description of award criteria for all awards and nomination forms is included with this newsletter, and is available on the SOBA website (www.sobaus.org). **Nominations should be forwarded to Steve Miller, by fax, mail or e-mail (see nomination form) no later than May 10, 2008.** All work initiatives should be completed when your nomination information is submitted, and if in rare circumstances this is not possible, please contact Steve Miller directly. (steven.w.miller@wisconsin.gov)

**Award Descriptions**
The **William H. Ivers Award** is presented to an individual who has contributed significantly over at least 15 years to the design, construction, management or administration of boat access facilities or programs. The nominee’s contributions will exemplify high standards of professionalism and outstanding achievement.

The **Outstanding Service Award** is presented to an individual or to an agency who have made either a one-time or continuing contribution to improved access on our nation’s public waters for boaters and anglers.

The **Professional Service Award** is presented to an individual SOBA member or to a group of SOBA members (most often a designated Task Force or Committee) for service on a special project or for ongoing efforts on behalf of SOBA’s mission.

The **Special Recognition Award** is presented to an individual, group, organization or political subdivision in recognition of activities that are singularly illustrative or supportive of SOBA’s mission.

The **State Boating Access Program Excellent Award** is presented to a state agency that has primary responsibility for boat access development, and which has excelled over time and provided outstanding service to its residents and visitors to the state.

The **State Clean Vessel Act (CVA) Program Excellence Award** is presented to a state agency that has primary responsibility for the state clean vessel act program, and which has excelled over time and provided outstanding service to its residents and visitors to the state.

The **Outstanding Project Awards** are presented to agencies, groups, local government, or corporations involved in boating access projects that are judged to be useful, high quality, unique, economical and/or innovative. There are four (4) project award categories: 1) small, 2) mid-size, 3) large, and 4) marina and harbors (includes BIG projects).
UPDATE FROM THE CAPITOL

THE CLEAN BOATING ACT 2008
Senator Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.)
Chairwoman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, and Senator Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) on March 13 introduced legislation honoring their pledge to ensure recreational boaters and anglers will not need a federal permit to operate their boats. If enacted into law before a court imposed September 2008 deadline, the bill, S. 2766, The Clean Boating Act of 2008, would fully and permanently restore a longstanding, commonsense regulation that excludes recreational boaters and anglers from the federal and state permitting requirements under the Clean Water Act designed for land-based industrial facilities and ocean-going commercial ships.

It is in the best interest of everyone involved in the boating industry and the recreational boating community to support S. 2766, the Clean Boating Act of 2008. If this bill does not pass before September 2008, all 18 million recreational boats will have to get federal or state permits for everyday, water-based discharges like weather deck run-off and engine cooling water. Recreational boats and large container ships are different, and shouldn’t be treated the same.

- These costly permits—intended for commercial ships and supertankers that have brought harmful invasive water species into U.S. waters—are being developed right now to tax your boat’s engine cooling water, bilge water, and even deck runoff.

- Unless Congress acts quickly, you will not only need these expensive new permits but may be subject to citizen lawsuits for these incidental discharges. It will take an act of Congress to fix this problem before boaters across the country will be required to wait in DMV-style lines for multiple, complex, costly permits.

Senators Boxer and Bill Nelson have introduced a bill in the U.S. Congress to solve this problem. It is suggested that you contact your congressional delegation and urge them to support this legislation. Full information on the Clean Boating Act can be viewed at www.boatblue.org

CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON WORKING WATERFRONTS BILL
The Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans Subcommittee of the House Natural Resources Committee held a hearing last month on H.R. 3223, the Keep Our Waterfronts Working Act of 2007. Introduced by Rep. Tom Allen (D-Me.) and Rep. Lois Capps (D-Calif.), the bill would protect working waterfronts that provide coastal access to support commercial and recreational boating, fishing and a variety of other water-based coastal businesses. It would do so by providing coastal states with federal matching grants through the Coastal Zone Management Act to purchase development rights and make improvements to working waterfronts.

Previous working waterfronts in the past have dealt exclusively with commercial interests and excluded recreational interests. Through the combined lobbying efforts of NMMA and BoatUS, members of the Water Access Alliance, the definition of "working waterfronts" in this legislation includes recreational boating interests for the first time. Committee members during the hearing expressed their support for H.R. 3223 and the goal of preserving working waterfronts and water-dependent commercial uses. NMMA strongly supports this important legislation that, if passed, would ensure the economic health of waterfront communities through the protection, preservation and expansion of the nation’s working waterfronts. [http://www.wateraccess.org]

CALIFORNIA LAKE CACHUMA TO STAY OPEN TO BOATERS AND ANGLERS
The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors on March 25, despite intense pressure from the Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board (COMB), resisted calls to close Lake Cachuma to recreational boaters and anglers.

(Continued on page 15)
UPDATE FROM THE CAPITOL
(Continued from page 14)

 anglers due to fears of a quagga mussel infestation. Instead, Santa Barbara County will open its new boat launch ramp on March 28 and is introducing new inspection, treatment, and quarantine protocols for boats prior to launch at Cachuma Lake County Park to help prevent the possible introduction of Quagga or Zebra mussels into the lake. NMMA applauds the county for taking a reasoned approach to address this issue and using boaters and anglers to help solve the quagga issue rather than implementing punitive closures.

This decision to keep Lake Cachuma open follows the one-year closure of another Lake Casitas, one of the premier bass fisheries in the nation. NMMA is working to encourage the state to become more active in addressing the quagga mussel threat while preserving access. NMMA and a broad coalition of national, state and local partners—including the United Anglers of Southern California and the Southern California Marine Association, which followed-up at public hearings—sent a letter to Santa Barbara County urging it to maintain access to the lake while implementing measures to minimize the risk of a quagga mussel infestation.

FLORIDA WATERFRONT ACCESS FUNDING INITIATIVE TO BE HEARD
A proposal will be heard by the Florida Senate Environmental Preservation Committee that would designate $33 million be made available to counties and cities applying for grants to purchase or develop boater access in the state. The $33 million would be available every year for 10 years, for a total of $330 million to enhance and increase Florida boater access. An exact wording of the proposal was not yet available at press time; NMMA is monitoring the legislation and will report further details.

REALISTIC TAX ASSESSMENT FOR FLORIDA’S WORKING WATERFRONT GAINS KEY APPROVAL
A tax break for Working Waterfronts in Florida moved a step closer to being on the ballot next fall when the Florida Taxation and Budget Reform Commission tentatively approved the measure. The exact language of the measure is expected to be developed and resubmitted for final approval on April 24. Voters would be asked to approve a constitutional amendment providing for a tax evaluation process allowing marinas and other water-dependent businesses to be assessed at their current use, rather than “highest and best” use. The amendment must be approved by 60 percent of voters to amend the state constitution and go into effect. For more information, visit [http://www.floridatbrc.org/pdf/CS6_8_34.pdf]

NEW JERSEY CONSIDERS EXEMPTION OF MARINAS IN PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAM
A bill recently introduced in the New Jersey legislature would curtail a state Department of Environmental Protection proposal for mandatory unlimited public access to marinas. The bill, which has bipartisan support, follows strong opposition from marina owners and news reports in the state, and would require marinas to provide unlimited 24-hour public access as a condition of new waterfront development permits. The Public Access & Marina Safety Act, S. 1553 and A. 2601, respectively, would restrict public access to any area of a marina after hours, when needed to protect business or privacy needs or where access would pose a risk to a person’s safety. The text of the bills is not yet available online.

Contact Duncan Neasham for further information on any of these updates. dneasham@nmma.org

Updates kindly provided by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) Washington DC office.

SOBA 2008 MEMBERSHIP

Membership invoices for 2008 were mailed in mid-February.

If you have not received your invoice, please let us know (info@sobaus.org) or call 312-946-6283. SOBA Membership Certificates will be mailed upon receipt of payment.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF SOBA

April 2008
CHARLESTOWN LANDING, OHIO RIVER, CHARLESTOWN STATE PARK, CLARK COUNTY, IN - dedicated on June 26, 2007

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT: This $2,797,500 project included the construction of a new boat launching facility with a five-lane reinforced concrete boat ramp, nearly three miles of road construction and improvement, a restroom, two river over looks and two parking lots. The project funding consisted of over $2 million in state funds and $750,000 from the Sport Fish Restoration Fund. The ramp is 123' in length and provides access to the Ohio River. The lower portion of the ramp, which is 75' wide and 38' long, was pre-cast in one piece and pushed into place on steel skids. The paved parking lot has 76 vehicle/trailer parking spaces. There are 4 vehicle/trailer spaces for persons with disabilities. A land-based transfer facility has been constructed adjacent to the parking lot to allow for the transfer of persons with disabilities to/from boats at three different heights. There are 22 vehicle spaces to accommodate persons who want to enjoy the river walk and two overlooks that are connected to the site.

The access facility is located ten miles upstream from Louisville, KY and thirty river miles downstream from Madison, IN. Boat access to the Ohio River in this area was cut off during World War II when the Department of Defense built the Indiana Army Ammunition Plant on 9,790 acres along the river. In 1993 the Army began transferring portions of the land to the State of Indiana for use as a state park. The 2,600 acres transferred in 2004 doubled the size of the park and provided river frontage.

According to a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service news release, Service biologists began conducting bat surveys on the property during the plant closure. In 1997 the biologists discovered gray bats at the site. Only one known maternity colony of this federal endangered species had been previously found in the state. Then in 2004 the biologists also found the federally endangered Indiana bat in the area. Both endangered bat species where known to use the forested areas adjacent to the river for foraging and travel corridors and there was concern for their habitat. The State and USFWS worked closely to incorporate bat habitat considerations into the boat access site design, which included provisions for minimizing the tree clearing for the ramp and associated development. Hundreds of trees were planted between the parking lot and the river as well as in the parking lot islands to create additional habitat for the bats.

Construction of the boat ramp was temporarily halted in 2006 when workers uncovered the remains of a 4,000-year-old “kitchen” that ancient American Indian tribes may have used to prepare their winter food supply. The site had been well preserved over the centuries by layers of silt that had been deposited by floodwaters.

HMB Professional Engineers, Inc. provided the design work for the project and MAC Construction and Excavating, Inc., New Albany, IN, constructed the facility.