SOBA Newsletter: November 2013

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President’s Message
by Janine Belleque, SOBA President

Dear SOBA Members and Boating Industry Partners:

When I was asked to write a message to the membership and our boating industry partners as SOBA’s new President, I wasn’t sure what I wanted that message to convey. I pondered highlighting all of the task forces that members are working on, stressing the importance of the reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, emphasizing the fantastic partnerships we have, and the need to create additional ones, and then I remembered a wise person recently telling me the meaning of the word BOAT: “Best of All Times”. I thought about how that definition directly applies to SOBA’s mission, and to its future.

We are all connected through our shared passion for boating, whether it is through the designing of boating access; protecting the environment in which we boat; enhancing the experience and accessibility for all types of boaters; providing grant funding to build access, but we must also continue the circle of economic stimulus driven by the boating industry. Working together creates the “Best of All Times” for boaters, regardless of whether they have motor, paddle or sail.

I’m grateful for the past SOBA leadership that had the vision to engage and foster close partnerships with the boating industry, and other organizations, while increasing SOBA’s recognition as a leader in boating access. SOBA has utilized the collective expertise of our membership to develop nationally recognized technical publications including: Design Handbook for Recreational Boating and Fishing Facilities, Operation and Maintenance Program Guidelines for Recreational Boating Facilities and we are nearing the completion of the Aquatic Invasive Species and Clean Vessel Act Best Management Practice Guides.

In looking at SOBA’s future, I’m excited about the creation of the Paddling Access Design Guideline...
Task Force, the progress being made on the Multi-State Grant, (http://www.sobaus.org/partnerships/partnerships1.html) and the opportunity to increase member participation through a variety of volunteer activities. We have also been updating our SOBA website, and will be using it and the List Serv as platforms to keep members notified on issues, concerns and opportunities surrounding boating. Such issues include the upcoming Boating Infrastructure Grant rulemaking and the reauthorization of the Trust Fund. I hope you share my vision and desire to work together for the “Best of All Times”, and as SOBA's new President, I look forward to working with all of you during the year ahead.

SOBA 2013 Conference: A Big Success
by Wayne Shuyler and Janine Belleque: Oregon Host Co-Chairs

The 27th Annual National Boating Access Conference, recently held in Portland, Oregon, brought together SOBA members from all around the country to engage in educational sessions, visit with vendors and exhibitors, share information with counterparts from other states and territories, meet federal agency staff from Washington D.C. and USFWS regional offices, participate in organizational business, experience dragon boat racing, and inspect local boating access facilities.

While not a record, the 191 registered conference participants made Portland one of the most-attended conferences ever. Delegates from as far away as Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Northern Marianas Islands, joined members from 38 states – including several states that have not been able to send delegates in recent years – in acquiring the kind of information and insight that is only available by experiencing a SOBA conference. The mainstay of the conference program, education, featured 33 separate sessions and 57 presenters, including 5 general sessions and 12 concurrent sessions. In addition, eighteen vendors displayed their wares in the exhibit hall, which was open to delegates for two full days.

The theme of the conference, “New Dimensions in Boating Access”, included a special focus on sustainability and the access/needs of paddle sports as a part of more traditional boating access. A number of educational sessions and speakers helped to deliver the conference theme through presentations and interactive dialog with delegates. An important byproduct of the conference was the decision by the SOBA Board to initiate the development of a design handbook for paddling access sites, similar to the organizations Design Handbook For Recreational Boating & Fishing Facilities.
The conference, held over a four-day period from September 30 to October 3, featured a day-long federal assistance workshop conducted by staff of the US Fish & Wildlife Service from Washington, D.C. and the Portland regional office. Lisa Van Alstyne, Karla Drewsen, and Paul VanRyzin provided program updates on federal Sport Fish Restoration, Clean Vessel Act, and Boating Infrastructure Grant programs. Presentations covered upcoming amendments to program regulations, the new Financial Assistance Wiki, and the TRACS Database.

At the Opening General Session, representatives of SOBA affiliates presented updates on their respective organizations, including:

- Thom Dammrich of the National Marine Manufacturers Association and the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council;
- Ron Regan of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies;
- Stephanie Hussey of the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation;
- Ryck Lydecker of BoatUS;
- Jamie Doyle of the National Working Waterfronts and Waterways Conference;
- Wendy Larimer of the Association of Marina Industries, and;
- Joyce Johnson for Hannibal Bolton of USFWS.

Mark Duda of Responsive Management provided an update on the National Assessment of Boating Access project, and Brian Bohnsack of USFWS presented recent data relating to the demographics participation in boating.

In addition to concurrent educational session in the morning and afternoon, a highlight of the second day of the conference was the annual SOBA Awards Luncheon, where many of the organization’s project and program awards are presented. The results of the annual awards are highlighted elsewhere in this newsletter. The recipients of the project awards provided more in-depth information about their sites and the processes that resulted in successful completion of the boating access site improvements. Congratulations are in order for all of the recipients. The evening featured a dinner aboard the Portland Spirit as it cruised the Willamette River from Portland upstream to Lake Oswego and back again.

On Wednesday, the third day of the conference, delegates had the opportunity to attend one of three concurrent educational sessions as well as a general session and the SOBA Business Meeting. The general session featured progress reports by Craig Walker on SOBA’s Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force and Janine Belleque on the CVA Best Management Practices effort. This session also introduced the concept of creating a SOBA Task Force to initiate the development of Design Standards for non-motorized boating access. This initiative was supported by the delegates. The business meeting included the election of SOBA officers and at-large Board members for 2014. The results are featured in another article in this newsletter.

The Wednesday afternoon highlight featured an opportunity to gain hands-on experience in a dragon boat. Local racing teams and representatives of other paddle sports hosted SOBA delegates at the Portland Boat House, where they discussed the differing preferences and needs of the users of kayaks, canoes, outriggers, stand-up paddle boards, rowing shells and sculls, and dragon boats. From the type of water conditions, to seasons of use, storage needs, and access facilities, the presenters covered the waterfront. Afterwards, delegates were given safety training and instructions on how to paddle and follow specific commands from the captain of a dragon boat. Delegates filled the dragon boats and proceeded to practice their new-found skills in two short sprint races.

Wednesday evening’s main activity was the closing banquet. This annual event provides delegates
with the opportunity to recall the highlights of the conference through slides, acknowledge the
transition between the serving and newly-elected Boards, observe the presentation of additional
awards, recognize the contributions of Board members leaving office, and learn about plans for the
2014 Annual Conference to be held in Little Rock, Arkansas.

The banquet keynote speaker was Jim Martin, Conservation Director for the
Berkley Conservation Institute, a branch of Pure Fishing. Jim, the former
Chief of Fisheries of the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife and Salmon
Advisor to Governor John Kitzhaber, spoke on the need to advocate for
conservation principles with a passionate reference to The Big Burn: Teddy
Roosevelt and the Fire that Saved America by Timothy Egan. Jim’s talk was
inspiring and evocative of the need for a renewed commitment to protecting
the nation’s valuable natural resources.

The concluding event of the conference was Thursday’s visits to local boating access sites. Stops
included the following facilities:

- a BIG/CVA project featuring a transient tie-up and pumpout at Jon Storm Park, a recent
  SFR-funded ramp project at Sportcraft Marine Park, and a problem site at Clackamette Park
  near the confluence of the Clackamas and Willamette rivers – all in Oregon City;
- a complete, multi-phase makeover of M. James Gleason launch ramp (with mixed SFR,
  CVA, BIG, and state and local funding), including a four-lane concrete ramp, transient tie-up,
  vessel waste disposal, wave wall, flush restroom, and parking area, which is managed by
  Metro regional government, and;
- a (BIG-funded) boat-access-only transient tie-up and composting toilet on Government
  Island in the Columbia River, operated by Oregon State Parks.

The Columbia River Yacht Club provided their clubhouse for lunch
during the site visits and supplied seven yachts and captains to ferry all
of the SOBA delegates out to Government Island and back.

The Oregon State Marine Board, as the state agency host of the
conference, extends our sincerest appreciation to: the SOBA Board; all
of the speakers, presenters and delegates to the conference; the many conference sponsors and
contributors; the conference vendors and exhibitors; Portland’s Mayor’s Office; Governor Kitzhaber’s
Office; the Daughters of Neptune; Columbia River Yacht Club; Metro Regional Government; City of
Oregon City; the donors of items and the winning bidders of the silent auction whose generosity
benefits the Lacy Nichols Education Fund; Bernice McArdle and key NMMA staff; and the members of
the conference host committee who worked tirelessly to make the conference such a success.
THANK YOU to our SOBA 2013 Conference Sponsors and Exhibitors

SOBA’s annual conferences would not be successful without the generous support of its sponsors and exhibitors. We would like to say THANK YOU to the following companies for making our 2013 National Boating Access Conference such a success:

**Platinum Sponsor:**

![GatorDock](image)

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SOBA Presents Special Awards at 2013 Annual Conference

SOBA recently presented a number of individual and project-based awards during its annual conference, held this year in Portland, Oregon from Monday, September 30 through Thursday, October 3, 2013. Honorees include individuals, agencies and organizations that have continually worked to promote boating access and provide better boating experiences for state residents and tourists. Individual and project-based honors were given during the Annual Conference’s gala dinner on Wednesday October 2nd.

Wayne Shuyler, Boating Facilities Section Manager/Deputy Director with the Oregon State Marine Board, received the highest honor that SOBA bestows each year, the William Ivers Award. It 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. Shuyler has been involved in parks and recreation for nearly 40 years, working for three state governments in Missouri, Arizona and Oregon. He has also been active with SOBA since 2004 serving on the Executive Board in 2006 as a Member-At-Large, to the Treasurer position in 2008, VP in 2009, President in 2010 and Past-President in 2011.

Doug Hobbs, US Fish and Wildlife staff serving as the Designated Federal Officer for the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council received the Outstanding Service Award for his contributions to improve access on our nation’s public waters for boaters and anglers. Hobbs' advocacy for boater access to the water, coupled with his understanding of the important role that state boating access programs play, has helped raise the stature of SOBA as a professional organization.

Julie McQuade was given the Professional Service Award, noting her ongoing efforts on behalf of SOBA’s mission. This work includes her 16 years as a SOBA member, Executive Board Member and Past President, and her work as the Grant Coordinator in the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Watercraft Division, resulting in 180 boating access projects investing over $40 million.

Joyce Johnson, Special Assistant for Program Analysis and Development for the Fish and Wildlife Service’s Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program received the Special Recognition Award, honoring efforts that are directly illustrative or supportive of SOBA’s mission. Johnson has worked to address a wide range of issues associated with the administration of Federal grant programs which distribute over $1 billion annually to state and local governments for recreation and natural resources conservation purposes.

Project-based awards were also given during the ceremony, honoring organizations that promote state boating access, innovation and environmental achievements. The State Boating Access Program Excellence Award was presented to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources: Wildlife Resources Division, for their significant work towards boat access development, and their outstanding service to residents and visitors to the state. In addition, the State Clean Vessel Act (CVA)
Program Excellence Award was presented to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, for their stewardship of the State CVA program, serving the overall state community residents and visitors to the state.

Four categories of Outstanding Project Awards were also given to agencies or organizations involved in boating access projects that are of high quality, innovative, unique and economical. This year’s recipients are as follows:

Outstanding Projects – Small Access
Harold & Sid Nichols Park Boating Facility Development, City of Winston, Oregon

Outstanding Projects – Medium Access
Pena Blanca Lake Boating Access Renovation: Arizona Game and Fish Department

Outstanding Projects – Large Access
M.James Gleason Boating Facility/Metro Parks and Environmental Services, Oregon

Marinas and Harbors
Keegan Clair Docks – City of Indian Rocks Beach, Florida

Enhancing Fishing Access Through a National Assessment of Recreational Boating Access

by Mark Duda and Amanda Richie, Responsive Management

Research shows that more than half of all anglers (57%) use a boat while fishing. Further, of the total number of days these anglers spent fishing, about half (48%) were spent fishing from boats (more than 246 million days fishing from boats (1) Additionally, two key factors anglers consider when deciding where to fish are whether there is boat access (54% of anglers say this factor is very important) and whether the access area has a well-maintained boat ramp (also 54% (2) Yet, despite the link between boating/fishing access and participation, recruitment, and retention among boaters and anglers, a comprehensive national assessment of the current and future needs for boating access has never been conducted.

This study asks the question: Is boating access impacting boating and fishing participation? To this end, the study focuses on the intersection between boating and fishing activities. There is no doubt that recreational boating and fishing activities are intertwined and, consequently, as the number of participants in one activity falls, the other falls as well: conversely, as participation rises in one, it also rises in the other. This study is designed (1) to determine whether lack of boating access has contributed to decreases in participation and (2) to create assessment tools for boating access that states and regions can replicate to measure their boating access programs and needs.

The two-year project has been funded under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Multi-State Conservation Grant Program. SOBA is leading the study efforts, and partners in this study include: Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF), National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), Boat Owners Association of the United States (BoatU.S.), and Association of Marina Industries (AMI). The research team has contracted Responsive Management, an independent research firm specializing in public opinion research on natural resource and outdoor recreation issues, to conduct the study.

The study began with a project kick-off meeting in January 2013, and Responsive Management has completed several project elements, including a research review of similar efforts to assess boating access, identify obstacles and challenges, and develop a foundational context for assessment design. In addition to the research review, Responsive Management has also conducted 4 focus groups with boaters in Houston, Texas; Richmond, Virginia; Kenosha, Wisconsin; and Portland, Oregon. In addition, Responsive Management conducted a focus group with the SOBA Board in March 2013 and another focus group with boating industry/business at the American Boating Congress in May 2013.

Responsive Management has also developed a telephone survey focused on fishing and boating participation, factors that impacting boating enjoyment and participation, boat ownership, ratings of the importance of boating and fishing, and use of and opinions on boat access, to name a few topics. Using this survey, Responsive Management will obtain 3,300 telephone surveys nationwide: 3,000 surveys of boaters and anglers, 200 surveys of boating professionals, and 100 surveys of industry
professionals and private business owners (e.g., marinas, docks, boating vendors).

In addition to this telephone survey, Responsive Management is developing survey modules, which can be used as an assessment tool that states can utilize for conducting detailed statewide assessments to identify locally-specific approaches to improving public access. The development of survey modules will help standardize the assessment and provide consistent and comparable data from which to measure improvements in boating access. Ultimately, Year 2 of this study will result in an assessment tool, adaptable at national, regional, and state levels, designed for repetition at periodic intervals to measure change, progress, and improvement in access and obstacles to access.


U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Program Update
by Christy Vigfusson

We hope that you are doing well in this time of uncertainty with the government shutting down and budgets being up in the air. It can be quite challenging to navigate our already challenging roles, and we greatly appreciate all you do to keep the facilities available and resources managed for the boating public. Keep up the good work!

With regard to the government shutdown, the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) remains one of the few U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Divisions that has not been significantly affected by the government-wide shut down because the majority of WSFR funds are non-appropriated funds, such as excise taxes or import duties on fishing tackle, fuels, boats, etc. WSFR shut down programs that depend on appropriations, such as the apportioned and competitive State Wildlife Grants programs, and shifted staff to other duties supported with non-appropriated funds. All Regional and Headquarters WSFR staff remain fully employed throughout the shutdown to date. However, as noted below, the shutdown of other federal government functions has impacted WSFR’s ability to move forward on key projects, such as Wildlife TRACS deployment.

Wildlife TRACS:
Despite a series of obstacles that have resulted in delays, WSFR and State partners continue to plan for deployment of TRACS in the near future. Currently, WSFR is awaiting approval of the Information Collection Request from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Unfortunately, OMB has been shut down for more than two weeks, resulting in a delay in WSFR’s approval. WSFR cannot legally collect information from States until this request has been approved, so States cannot access and use TRACS yet. We expect the approval to be forthcoming within a matter of weeks following resolution of the government shutdown, but this remains an unknown at this time.

The working groups that have guided the development of TRACS with representation from States, WSFR Headquarters, and WSFR Regional staff, will soon be replaced with new committees. The new committees will ensure smooth deployment of the system and address questions or concerns that arise as States begin using TRACS. We will invite a SOBA board member to serve as a representative on one of the new TRACS committees following the start of State data entry. Additional information about the makeup and roles of the new TRACS committees will be forthcoming soon.

We have already started to collect feedback on TRACS from SOBA and its members. Examples include the WSFR overview of TRACS at the national conference in Portland this month and a WSFR TRACS webinar for the SOBA board. We expect to receive SOBA’s input and suggestions for improving the system as well as management procedures controlling data entry through these and other meetings.

Boating Infrastructure Grants (BIG):
In FY13, the Service Director awarded a record-setting $20.9 Million in BIG Tier 1 and Tier 2 awards through two rounds of funding. The FY14 BIG Program is currently accepting applications through October 25, and WSFR staff have received many inquiries from interested parties. For more information on FY13 awards as well as FY14 program details, see http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/GrantPrograms/BIG/BIG_Funding.htm.

National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program:
Applications for the FY 2014 National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant are currently under review.
We anticipate announcing awards by January 2014. The National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program awarded more than $20 million in FY 2013 project grants to fund 24 coastal wetland acquisition and restoration projects in 12 states and 1 territory to conserve and restore 4,693 acres of important coastal wetland habitat, including several miles of shoreline.

**Clean Vessel Act Grant Program:**
The announcement of availability and request for applications for the FY 2014 Clean Vessel Act Grant Program is posted on Grants.gov (CFDA 15.616). Applications are due by December 4, 2013. The Service awarded $15.14 million in FY 2013 Clean Vessel Act program funds for 32 CVA applications from 24 States and territories to install, maintain, repair, and operate pumpout stations, dump stations, floating restrooms, and pumpout boats across the country. Funds also support education efforts to inform boaters and the public about the benefits of proper disposal of sewage from recreational boats. Please keep submitting top notch applications for this very important work!

**Boating Access Subprogram of the Sport Fish Restoration Program:**
States and Regions continue to work together to install, maintain, repair, and operate motorized and non-motorized recreational boating facilities around the country. Funds for this subprogram are 15% of Sport Fish Restoration apportionment.

For questions or to follow up on any of the above items, feel free to contact Lisa Van Alstyne, Lisa_Van_Alstyne@fws.gov, 703-358-1942, Paul VanRyzin, Paul_VanRyzin@fws.gov, 703-358-1849, or Christy Vigfusson, Christy_Vigfusson@fws.gov, 703-358-1748.

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**SOBA 2013 National Boating Access Conference - Annual Business Meeting Highlights**
*by James Adams, Immediate Past President, SOBA*

Each year during the annual conference the SOBA Executive Board hosts its Annual Business Meeting for SOBA Members pursuant to the Organization’s ByLaws. On October 2 just past, SOBA’s 2013 Annual Business Meeting was held at the Doubletree Hotel in Portland Oregon, and the Member roll call documented a Quorum.

During this meeting, the members received an update on the following business items:

- Strategic Issues Underway by the SOBA Board of Directors
- Activities of the Executive Board during 2013
- Update on SOBA’s “Enhancing Fishing Access Through a National Assessment of Boating Access” project: a cutting edge national survey funded by the AFWA Multi-state Grant Program (through the Sport Fishing Restoration and Boating Trust Fund);
- Output from two of SOBA’s taskforces: CVA and AIS
- Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund reauthorization activities
- Trip report on SOBA’s participation in the American Boating Congress, which included a presentation of SOBA’s 2013 Congressional Award to Congressman Frank LoBiondo (NJ) for his support of boating access in New Jersey and across the nation

SOBA Treasurer Ron Christofferson presented the Annual Treasurers report, and Immediate Past President and Nominating Chair Steve Miller presented the slate of officers and board members for the 2013-2014 year. Both Treasurer and Nominating Committee reports were unanimously passed by the members present.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the floor was opened up for member comments. An issue was presented which called for the SOBA board to update the PumpOut Equipment Review and Testing Results report carried out a number of years ago. The suggestion was received favorably, and the SOBA Board of Directors will establish a new task force to address this issue.

Full conference proceedings, agenda, attendee listing and photographs from the conference will shortly be available on SOBA’s website at www.sobaus.org

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**SOBA Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force Making Progress**
*by Craig Walker, Utah*
The SOBA AIS Task Force (Task Force) was pleased to present information during the 2013 SOBA Conference on the Aquatic Invasive Species Control Best Management Practices Manual (BMP Manual). Our goal during that presentation was two-fold. First, we wanted to showcase Task Force progress on the manual as it pertained to practical guidance related to AIS-related activities at boater access facilities. Secondly, and more importantly, we wanted to solicit input from SOBA members with an eye on crafting a more comprehensive guidance document. Based on the questions received following our presentation, and the numerous SOBA members who volunteered to serve as reviewers, the Task Force feels that we achieved our goal and are poised to finalize the BMP Manual during the winter months of 2013/2014.

Currently the Task Force is awaiting comments from over 15 reviewers; including state boating program coordinators, marina owners, and non-governmental organization representatives. Additionally, review of this document will also be undertaken by representatives of the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Western Regional Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species, and the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. We recognize that the BMP Manual presented at the 2013 SOBA Conference was by no means complete. That said, Task Force members anticipate that the existing document will undergo a rigorous review process; resulting in a much more detailed and comprehensive guidance tool for SOBA members.

Thanks again to all the Task Force members for their continued participation in this process. Thanks also to all those who volunteered to review the BMP manual. As mentioned previously, the eventual goal of the SOBA AIS Task Force is to produce a BMP Manual that is endorsed by the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF) and embraced by boater access/marina development administrators. For more information on ANSTF and other regional AIS control programs, contact Craig Walker at craigwalker@utah.gov

Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council Update
by Thom Dammrich

Another year is winding down and it was a mixed bag. At the highest levels of our federal government, decision-makers pointed on most, if not all, matters facing the Nation. Result: a new fiscal year starting with a federal shutdown. In spite of that intransigence, there was incremental, positive change on the economic scene and for recreational boating. The Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council is winding down its term, but with a decidedly better mixed bag of activity.

This summer the Council delivered its Strategic Vision for Fish and Aquatic Resource Conservation in the Fish and Wildlife Service. The report and Strategic Vision is the culmination of a more than 1 year process in which the Council reached out to stakeholders and partners of the Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program in the FWS. The goal is to influence which goals and objectives the FWS will strive to accomplish in conservation and restoring the Nation’s fish populations and aquatic habitats. The FWS can’t accomplish this on its own, so it is critical that states, tribes and other conservation partners help shape the FWS role. While the document itself is complete, we are just beginning the process of working with the FWS to have our recommendations addressed and, hopefully, implement.

On the boating front, the Council is beginning to revisit its examination of the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program and the Clean Vessel Act Grant Program to determine if there are ways to increase participation in these important programs. I hope many of you had the opportunity to provide your initial input in this process as it pertained to practical guidance related to AIS-related activities at boater access facilities. Secondly, and more importantly, we wanted to solicit input from SOBA members with an eye on creating a more comprehensive guidance document. Based on the questions received following our presentation, and the numerous SOBA members who volunteered to serve as reviewers, the Task Force feels that we achieved our goal and are poised to finalize the BMP Manual during the winter months of 2013/2014.

Finally, the Council is beginning its latest assessment of the activities of the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF.) The RBFF is striving to increase participation in recreational fishing and boating, while raising awareness of the need to conserve our aquatic resources. It is a big task that has born some fruit recently: according to the FWS recreational fishing participation increased 11% between 2005 and 2011. That is good news for boating, since a large majority of boaters are out on the water to fish. Over the next few months, the Council will be once again engaging with RBFF stakeholders and partners to take a look at what is being accomplished, and how efforts can be improved.

As this Council term winds down, we continue our work to create incremental, positive change within the FWS. Our mixed bag comes with the nature of the Council. We end the year suggesting positive ways to improve boating and angling. We look forward to beginning a New Year and new Council term doing more of the same.
**RBFF Update**

*Notes from RBFF Board Meeting Conference Call - October 14, 2013*

*by Steve Miller, Wisconsin*

**Youth Initiatives:** This will focus heavily on understanding and quite possibly promoting High School fishing clubs and also Fishing as a sport in High Schools. It was noted that a number of colleges have competitive fishing clubs. An RBFF task force is currently working on this subject and will report out at the January 2014 Board meeting. FLW and The Bass Federation sponsor some tournaments and events already. For more information, please visit [www.highschoolfishing.org](http://www.highschoolfishing.org).

**Hispanic Campaign:** This campaign continues to be developed, and work is ongoing on the development of a "microsite" (e.g. a Hispanic version of the Take Me Fishing website). The site will contain knowledge and resource information that is culturally relevant for Hispanics. Events will be held in Texas and California, and the focus of the campaign will be on Hispanics that are already engaged in outdoor activities as a family or an individual, but not necessarily involving fishing or boating. The full campaign is scheduled to launch in April 2014.

**Disney Strategic Alliance:** This creative initiative is progressing very nicely. The big effort will be in branding some of the "parks" at Disney world with the RBFF "Take Me Fishing" brand. Folks who rent boats and who go on fishing trips at Disney will be introduced to "Take Me Fishing".

**Website Metrics:** RBFF sets goals for numbers of visits to their websites. They have been working to increase their website traffic by 10% each year. So far in 2013 they seem to be on target.

**Make Someone Fall for You Hook, Line, and Sinker.**

Whether you want to make someone fall in love with you for the first time, or all over again, the answer may be closer than you think: a date on the water.

A new survey conducted among men and women currently in relationships reveals that two-thirds of couples have gone fishing or boating with their spouse or significant other. Those who have been out on the water together describe their experience as relaxing, exciting, playful and romantic. Of the one-third of couples who have never been fishing or boating on a date, 60 percent of women and 50 percent of men would be game to try! Check out this interesting infographic on RBFF's website, [http://blog.takemefishing.org/fishing-and-romance-infographic/](http://blog.takemefishing.org/fishing-and-romance-infographic/).

And finally, take the time to view this 30 second ad used in targeted geographical regions around the country. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Y3p3X4N3kU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Y3p3X4N3kU)

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**Update From the Capitol**

*by NMMA DC Legislative Team Members*

**Update on the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)**

On Wednesday, September 11, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee unveiled its version of the critical water resources infrastructure bill. H.R. 3080, the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2013 (WRRDA), was introduced in the House by Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA), Committee Ranking Member Nick J. Rahall, II (D-WV), Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee Chairman Bob Gibbs (R-OH), and Subcommittee Ranking Member Tim Bishop (D-NY). The legislation is a bipartisan effort that seeks to cut federal red tape and bureaucracy, streamline the infrastructure project delivery process, promotes fiscal responsibility, and strengthen the nation’s water transportation networks to promote America’s competitiveness, prosperity, and economic growth. The Senate passed its version of WRRDA, S. 601, the Water Resources Development Act of 2013, on Wednesday, May 15. Through WRRDA, Congress authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to carry out its missions to develop, maintain, and support the Nation’s vital port and waterways infrastructure needs, and support effective and targeted flood protection and environmental restoration needs. Historically, Congress has passed such legislation every two years to provide clear direction to the Administration and the Corps, but no bill has been signed into law since 2007. NMMA recently met face-to-face with House Transportation Committee Chairman, Bill Shuster (R-PA-9), thanking him for his leadership on producing a good
WRDA that will significantly address some of the recreational boating community’s critical water infrastructure needs.

**Ethanol**
Work to repeal or significantly amend the Renewable Fuel Standard is kicking into high-gear. There are numerous bills and proposals being generated to scrap the present situation and bring some sanity to the nation’s fuel policy. NMMA is in the thick of the fight, working with coalition partners to keep the pressure on Congress to fix the problem before the end of this year. In the latest congressional developments: Senators Wicker (R-MS) and Vitter (R-LA) have introduced a bill, S. 344, which would freeze ethanol levels in gasoline at 10%. Rep. Sensenbrenner (R-WI) has introduced H.R. 875, which would stop e15 by requiring the National Academy of Sciences to conduct an assessment of the scientific and technical research on the effects of e15 on engines, freezing ethanol levels where they are in the meantime. On June 20th, Senators John Barrasso (R-WY), Mark Pryor (D-AR) and Pat Toomey (R-PA) introduced “The Renewable Fuel Standard Repeal Act” (S. 1195), which would repeal the RFS and allow lawmakers to investigate less harmful alternatives to ethanol. The bill’s sponsoring senators are continuing to work to gain support to scrap the RFS. Thanks to concerned voices in the marine industry, lawmakers are aware that E15 will cause major damage to engines, fuel systems, and fuel infrastructure nationwide if adopted. Finally, NMMA and others took the EPA to court on the ethanol waiver, losing at the Appeals Court level. An appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court was filed on March 25, 2013.

**Business Activity Tax Simplification Act**
Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner in July introduced H.R. 1439, the Business Activity Tax Simplification Act (BATSA) for the 113th Congress. There is no Senate companion bill yet. The measure would not only create uniformity in the states and certainty for business, but would help to quell the multitude of states inappropriately attempting to shift their tax burdens to out-of-state companies and individuals. BATSA establishes a clear physical presence standard for taxing multistate businesses engaged in cross-border transactions. The bill will help to foster inter-state economic activity by eliminating the burden for businesses of having to comply with varying and complex state income tax laws. As nearly half of states have already sought to loosen their physical nexus standard, BATSA could not come at a more critical juncture. In lieu of a physical nexus, states are adopting policies that force new tax liability onto those with a mere “economic nexus.” Codified in many different forms across the country, the economic standard grants nebulous authority to force out-of-state, nonresidents to comply with a state’s tax code. The gradual shift to economic nexus is an attempt by states to raise tax revenue beyond what their own economies and taxpayers can sustain. Economic nexus poses a direct threat to the principles of democracy and republican governance by the people, shifting the cost of government to non-residents. NMMA is working closely with House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA-6) to bring the bill up in committee and pass it off to the full Congress for its consideration. NMMA also is working with numerous Senate offices to ensure that if/when the bill is approved by the House, the Senate will approve it quickly and send it to the president for his signature.

**Bipartisan Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus Leadership Introduces 2013 Sportsmen’s Package**
In a significant advancement for sportsmen and women across the country, the bipartisan House leadership of the Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus (CSC) introduced the Sportsmen’s Heritage and Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Act of 2013. This legislative package includes various pro-sportsmen’s bills that will help ensure our outdoor traditions are protected and advanced, and addresses some of the most current concerns of American hunters and recreational anglers and shooters. Considered to be one of the most important pieces of pro-sportsmen’s legislation in a decade, the passage of the SHARE Act would be a legislative milestone for the sportsmen’s community.

CSC Co-Chairs, Representatives Bob Latta and Bennie Thompson and Vice-Chairs, Representatives Rob Wittman and Tim Walz, introduced the SHARE Act as a bipartisan package of pro-sportsmen’s legislation in an effort to continue to safeguard and promote America’s hunting and fishing traditions. Some of the priorities that this legislation addresses includes: protecting the traditional use of lead ammunition and fishing tackle by American hunters and anglers, the potential increase of more Pittman-Robertson funds for shooting ranges, the permanent authorization of the electronic duck stamp, the importation of polar bear carcasses legally harvested in Canada before 2008, authorizing the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission to develop and implement a new fishery management plan that will ensure the long-term conservation of Gulf of Mexico red snapper, and helps facilitate the use of and access to Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service lands and waters for hunting, recreational fishing and shooting. NMMA is actively supporting passage of the SHARE Act.

**Formaldehyde Emissions for Wood Products**
NMMA submitted comments to the EPA regarding its proposal to implement onerous formaldehyde emission controls for composite wood products. California established formaldehyde emissions five
years back, and specifically exempted boats and boat component parts from the emissions and certification requirements. The EPA rule proposes to vastly expand the umbrella of manufacturers who would now be subject to emissions controls and implements a testing procedure that is burdensome and costly. NMMA and interested stakeholder parties lobbied Members of Congress this summer against the proposed rule, indicating it was an extreme overreach by EPA and would have a crippling effect on industry, without significant environmental gain.

**St. Lucie Waterway Hearing on Capitol Hill**
On October 3rd, Congressmen Patrick Murphy (D-FL) and Trey Radel (R-FL) held a briefing at the Capitol to discuss the systemic water quality and quantity issues facing the St. Lucie River and Estuary and the Indian River Lagoon. Community and state leaders attended the briefing as well as most members of the Florida delegation and top Transportation and Infrastructure committee members. Panelists discussed the impact Lake Okeechobee discharges are causing and impact they are having on local communities and economies. Solutions were discussed as well as possible funding mechanisms contained in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA), which passed the House Transportation and Infrastructure committee last month. A similar bill passed the Senate and staff is hopeful the WRDA/WRRDA legislation will pass a full House and go to conference and signature by the President by the end of the year. Staff will continue to work with Members of Congress to address this growing environmental and access problem in south Florida.

**US-Canada Regulatory Cooperation Council**
NMMA met with leaders at the Canadian Embassy this week to discuss the RCC and opportunities for the recreational boating industry during high level working group discussions. NMMA applauds the RCC efforts and urges both countries to take a serious look at resolving regulatory differences and establishing a framework to ensure future regulatory cooperation between the two countries. NMMA hopes to encourage greater Canadian participation on standard setting bodies such as ABYC and work to further align recreational boat safety standards, compliance monitoring and safety recall regimes.

**TTIP Trade Talks Delayed Due to Shutdown**
NMMA and the European Boating Industry submitted a joint statement and white paper to their respective governments in September, outlining goals for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. The TTIP is an unprecedented trade agreement currently underway between the EU and US. EBI and NMMA began discussions in the spring to align the boating industry associations for the purpose of these trade discussions. NMMA and EBI are seeking a separate annex in the agreement to cover recreational boating. Specifically, the white paper calls for functional equivalence for marine certification, allowing NMMA certification to ABYC standards and CE mark with 3rd party certification to satisfy each regimes safety requirements. Additionally, EBI and NMMA support continued efforts to harmonize safety standards and an elimination of tariffs for boats and boat engine imports into either regime. The second round of TTIP negotiations between the US and EU was scheduled for this week, however has been delayed due to the US government shutdown. NMMA continues to monitor these discussions and push for inclusion of a recreational boating annex in the final agreement.

**Life Jacket Labeling and Standards**
NMMA will submit comments supporting USCG efforts to remove references to life jacket type codes in carriage and labeling of USCG approved PFDs. These type codes were unique to the US and often proved confusing to consumers and a barrier to trade for manufacturers internationally. Removing the type codes will facilitate future industry consensus for PFD labeling that will be easier to understand by consumers and move toward international harmonization. PFDMA, USCG, and UL have been working together to set a UL standards for life jackets more aligned with ISO 12402. Though not completely harmonized, the standard will be a significant step forward for the PFD industry in removing barriers to trade and production for the US and international markets.

**Boaters and Anglers Advocate for Access in the FL Keys:**
The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) is revising the Sanctuary’s rules that regulate boating, fishing and other activities. The FKNMS already designates management zones and areas where boating and fishing are either limited or prohibited. The revised 10-year plan, which will be in place in 2015, will likely enlarge those areas.

Boaters and anglers are concerned that some of the changes under consideration may be counterproductive or overly restrictive. Responsible boaters, fishermen and businesses support well-considered, workable regulations that will promote environmental sustainability and protect important marine environments for future generations.

NMMA has expressed concern to some of the recommended changes which could severely impact boaters and anglers:

- Unsupported Boundaries of Expanded Protected Areas: The new boundaries of the protected areas were not drawn based on scientific analysis and did not take into account the economic impact these new zones would have on those who make a living by fishing and boating.
Expanding protected areas will push users into smaller unprotected areas, cause heavy congestion and increase conflicts among recreational, commercial, and charter fishermen. 

- Unworkable "Special Permit" System: One recommendation would create a special permit system that would allow only "professionals," i.e. commercial, charter, research, and "Blue Star" dive operators - to access some areas. This will put a strain on law enforcement that currently operate with limited resources.

- Unenforceable User Fees: Implementing "user fees" to be paid by all boaters and fishermen within the park will be difficult to enforce given the park's myriad access points.

- Prohibition of Catch-and-Release Fishing In Protected Areas: Prohibiting catch-and-release fishing within protected areas will hurt anglers, decrease tourist activity, and create significant economic hardship on businesses in the Keys.

Ohio Law Blocks Safety Checks

Governor John R. Kasich signed into law House Bill 29, known as the "Boater Freedom Act," which establishes criteria for watercraft safety inspections on Ohio's waters by state and local law enforcement. It will not apply to federal authorities.

This legislation should help decrease the multiple safety inspections that recreational boaters experience on Lake Erie and all of Ohio's waterways. The law states that a state or local law enforcement officer will no longer have the authority to stop or board a vessel to conduct a safety inspection unless: the owner or operator voluntarily requests such an inspection; there is reasonable suspicion the vessel, its equipment or its operator is in violation of watercraft or local law; or the boat is being inspected as part of an authorized checkpoint. Charter boat captains and others holding certain U.S. Coast Guard credentials and endorsements from completing Ohio's boater education course are exempt.

Paddling Access Design Guideline Task Force

by Janine Belleque

At the 2013 SOBA Conference there was a general session to talk about the need to develop nationwide standards for paddling access. Currently, most paddling access designs are for kayak and canoe access on rivers but do not include other types of paddlers such as rafts, stand-up-paddle boards, drift boats, kiteboards, sculling or rowing boats. In addition, developing access guidelines for lakes and oceans or bays is also needed. This discussion lead to the formation of the Paddling Access Design Guideline Task Force. The following people have volunteered to work on this project over the next 12-18-months.

- Larry Horan, Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife
- Ron Christofferson, Arizona Game and Fish
- Jeff Smith, Oregon State Marine Board
- Joe Russell, Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources
- John Kirk, Virginia Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries
- John Olson, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources
- Lisa Gutierrez, Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources
- Michael Cantrell, Arkansas Game and Fish
- Morgan Scherer, Washington Water Trails Association
- Rory Calhoun, Washington Recreation & Conservation Office
- Valerie Blajeski, Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game

Once a draft guideline has been developed the document will be shared with several paddling organizations and interested individuals for comments and recommendations. Please watch for future updates and requests for information as the Paddling Access Design Guideline is developed.

Lacy "Lacy" Nichols Education Fund Silent Auction

The first annual Silent Auction to benefit the Lacy "Nick" Nichols Education Fund was held at the 2013 Boating Access Conference in Portland, Oregon. Through the generous contributions of our attendees, together we made $1,251.

This fund was established in 2013 to help cover partial expenses associated with attending the annual conference. SOBA recognizes the challenges that public entities face with constrained budgets and that it has become increasingly difficult for public entities to provide funding for professional.
development and continuing education.

The Lacy E. "Nick" Nichols Education Fund provides a resource to members who have a desire to further their knowledge and expertise in boating access and related issues through continuing education. Members in good standing, and who have made contributions to SOBA in some way, are eligible. The Education Fund award is intended to provide the twenty-five percent non-federal match, up to $500.

The Education Fund Committee is looking for your feedback on any challenges or difficulties you may have in order to apply for a Lacy "Nick" Nichols Education Fund Award. Please contact James Adams at James.Adams@dgif.virginia.gov.

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**Clean Vessel Act Best Management Practices Update by Janine Belleque**

This task force is busily working towards putting together a draft document to share with SOBA members. The pumpout station installation is drafted and the dump station and floating restroom portions are being worked on as this newsletter goes to press. The task force has combined guidance documents, memos, and letters as footnotes to the rules in order to have the information all in one place. We have also been gathering a variety of different example forms, charts, and checklists to include as additional reference materials. We hope to have a draft available this spring to share with SOBA members.

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**WANTED: Volunteers for TRACS Sub-Committee**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service invited SOBA to participate in the development of Best Management Practices for the entry of Boating Access, Clean Vessel Act and Boating Infrastructure Grant projects into the TRACS Reporting System. It is important to have consistent entry on the accomplishments that these boating programs provide, and be able to demonstrate the need for the reauthorization of the fund. We are looking for three volunteers who would like to participate on a few conference calls to develop best management practices. If you are interested please contact Janine at Janine.belleque@state.or.us.

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**Mark Your Calendars: SOBA Goes South in 2014 by Tom Jones, 2014 Arkansas Conference Host**

SOBA’s 2014 National Boating Access Conference will take place in North Little Rock, Arkansas October 6 – 9. We have a number of surprises in store for you, so come prepared to be surprised!

Our Federal Workshop will take place Monday, October 6th. Monday evening we will kick off our event with some true-blue Southern hospitality at the Maritime Museum on the banks of the Arkansas River in downtown Little Rock. The evening will have a Cajun flair, with a focus on seafood jambalaya and shrimp gumbo.

Our 2014 event will focus on how to plan, organize and effectively accomplish projects within our respective states. We will feature a strong emphasis on partnerships with participation of applicable federal and state agencies that are involved in permitting. We will be inviting the Corps of Engineers, involved in Arkansas site permitting for CVA and BIG projects, to share with us what we need to do to make permitting more streamlined, and ensure that our projects complete in a timely fashion. Our educational sessions will also cover system design, pumps, discharge head extremes, piping, anchoring for piping, docks and marinas, in addition to Invasive Species.
On Tuesday afternoon we will board the Mark Twain Riverboat and go upriver through the Murray Lock and Dam, ending up at Hastings Bay Marina. Here we will see a Tier 1 transient, CVA, and visit the newly constructed Invasive Species Facility for large vessels. We will stay on at Hastings Bay Marina for dinner, and afterwards attendees will have the opportunity to wander through one of the most impressive privately owned antique museums in existence: the Hastings Family Museum. This museum is a lifetime creation of Harry Hastings, and I know Harry will give us all a personal tour of this extraordinary, historical and eclectic collection of American history.

Our Boating Access Site Visits will take us to two nearby new marinas (Rockwater)-CVA, Tier 1 and 2 in North Little Rock, and Burkhalter Marina (Tier 2 and CVA) in Little Rock just downstream from the Clinton Library.

We plan to knock your socks off with Southern hospitality in 2014, and deliver a conference to remember. Arkansas is a great state to visit, so come prepared to be surprised!

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**Fishing (Not Golf!): Top Lightning Deaths**

*by Ryck Lydecker, BoatUS*

Since 2006, lightning has killed 152 people engaged in outdoor leisure activities and, no, golfing is not at the top of the list; it’s fishing, according to the National Weather Service (NWS). In a recent study of all 238 lightning deaths over the past seven years, the agency determined that 152 could be associated with leisure activities and that anglers accounted for 26 of those deaths, followed by campers (15 deaths), and boaters with 14 deaths.

NWS says the large number of fishing, camping, and boating lightning deaths may be because these activities require extra time to get to a safe place. “People often wait far too long to head to safety when a storm is approaching, and that puts them in a dangerous and potentially deadly situation,” said John Jensenius, an NWS lightning safety specialist.

Statistically, the chances of death from lightning are 1 in 126,158, according to the National Safety Council. Nonetheless, lightning killed 14 anglers fishing from boats and 11 fishing from shore, with one fishing in the water. An analysis of accident records showed that at least five boat anglers did not appear to be seeking safe shelter at all. Of the 14 general boating deaths, only eight appeared to be headed to safety. Jensenius says that lightning can strike from 10 miles away: “If you can hear thunder, you can be struck.”

The most important preventive measure for boaters, according to the BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water, is to get off the water, if you can. A VHF radio or good weather app on your
smartphone can warn you of an approaching storm with enough time to get to safety. If you can’t, the Foundation offers these personal safety tips:

• Lower any radio antennas and unplug electronics.
• Stay low in the boat.
• Try to be in the center of the boat.
• Don’t touch anything metallic if possible.
• NEVER touch any two objects that might be connected to the boat’s grounding system.
• Try to stay dry.
• If you’re fishing, stop. Fishing rods are excellent electrical conductors.
• Stay out of the water!

Lightning safety information and tips for protecting the boat are included in the Foundation’s free online boating safety course: www.BoatUS.org

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**Why Be A Member Of SOBA?**

*by Patricia Harrell, Florida*

If you are a state worker responsible for your Boating Access Program, Boating Infrastructure Grant Program, or Clean Vessel in your state, you should already be a SOBA member, because of everything that SOBA does for you! Do you know anyone else who would benefit from SOBA membership?

SOBA maintains close working relationships with organizations that are integral to SOBA’s mission, including the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and our federal WSFR partners. Through these partnerships, SOBA has advanced on many fronts, and these advancements are passed down to you, the SOBA member.

So we challenge you to think about WHO would benefit from being a SOBA member? Thoughts include SeaGrant personnel, Power Companies, Consulting Firms that do business with SOBA state members, City and County agencies, Federal Agencies such as the US Forest Service, Parks and Recreation, Engineering and Construction Companies – the list is endless! Stop and think about the people you work with every day, and consider the advantages of cross pollinating these companies with SOBA? We have so much to learn from each other – and we need your leadership to help SOBA expand its reach.

Are you interested in being a SOBA Ambassador? Can you help us reach out to other partners? Please visit our website at [www.sobaus.org](http://www.sobaus.org), and review the SOBA promotional brochure which is an excellent snapshot of SOBA. While you are there browse our website to familiarize yourself with the work of SOBA, and distribute this brochure far and wide, with a personal note on why SOBA membership is invaluable to anyone involved in boating access.

I thought I would share with you, a note we received from a SOBA conference attendee, which really highlights the value SOBA brings through its annual conference. Read first-hand what one of our conference attendees had to say about attending SOBA’s annual conference in Portland this year:

*As a CVA program manager from Connecticut, I was very pleased to attend the SOBA 2013 Conference in Portland, Oregon. This was probably the best conference I have attended so far in terms of the level of information provided to CVA program managers. The agenda was well-organized, on time and full of comprehensive information about critical issues that program staff need in order to effectively administer these federal funds and the important environmental programs to which they provide support.*

*In particular, the Federal Assistance Workshop on the first day was extremely informative in the areas of historic CVA trends and new tools that are becoming available on the Financial Assistance Wiki. Tracking and reporting actions for the conservation of species were also discussed. For the first time, a comprehensive discussion of the National Historic Preservation Act, and its importance to the administration of federal funds for boating projects was delivered to the attendees. State perspectives on compliance enforcement of sub-grantee agreements, how to increase public awareness of CVA funded facilities, and education and outreach activities were also presented. These presentations were incredibly informative to the audience, assisting both seasoned and new program coordinators alike.*

*During the concurrent sessions, attendees were able to learn about partnerships and mapping tools that can and have been created to make management of the CVA program much easier,*
and we heard some frank feedback about the program directly from a private marina operator. These presentations and the opportunity to network with various state program managers, pumpout equipment vendors and boat builders, and representatives from the USFWS were well worth the travel to the conference.

Thank you to the organizers of the Portland conference. I look forward to the next conference in Little Rock, Arkansas!

October 2013.

Need we say more! If you have questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Thank You: Proud to be a SOBA member
Patricia Harrell: Patricia.Harrell@MyFWC.com or 850-617-9538.

Access Board Guidelines Update
by Terry Boyd, Alabama

The Access-Board asked SOBA to review the proposed Summary of the Accessibility Guidelines for Boating Facilities. We put a call out to our members and received several excellent comments. These were passed to Peggy Greenwell, and she was very appreciative of SOBA's feedback, all of which will be put to good use. The Access-Board expects to publish their Guidelines in the not too distant future, and we will notify our SOBA members and colleagues as soon as we receive word that these have been completed. Thank you again for your participation.

How Can I Join The SOBA Board Of Directors?

If you have ever considered becoming a SOBA Board Member, now is the time to talk to your Manager and agency Director to get their support to serve on the SOBA Board. Below is some general information and frequently asked questions about the process, expectations and rewards of serving on the SOBA Board.

SOBA has a seven-member Board, which includes the Past President, President, Vice President, Treasurer and three Members-At-Large. Terms for officers and at-large positions are one year (renewable) beginning after the annual conference. Individuals nominated to serve on the SOBA board must be from a SOBA member agency, and be able to secure a letter of support from the director of that member state agency.

The SOBA board is a working board and members are expected to participate in monthly conference call meetings, travel to quarterly face-to-face meetings including the annual conference, and take on committee and/or task force assignments.

Being a Board member is rewarding both professionally and personally. Board members will help the organization face new challenges arising from reauthorization, contribute to nationally renowned technical resources, help shape how federal programs are administered, work with the leaders of other boating industry organizations, and affect long-term positive change within the world of boating access.

SOBA Board Member Frequently Asked Questions:

Are my expenses for attending meetings covered by SOBA?
YES. SOBA will cover your per diem expenses (travel, hotel and meals) for all business meetings.

Are members paid to be Board members?
NO, permission is needed from your agency to participate and any SOBA related work would be carried out during your regular work day.

What if I am only interested in being a Member At Large?
YES, this is possible, and has been done by a number of members who were only interested in being involved in operational and logistical board work.
Do you need to be a member of States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA) to run for office? YES, you must be from a SOBA member state, and be in good standing with the organization to be considered.

How do I become President?
The President is typically picked from among existing board members who have served in another officer capacity and as a member-at-large.

When do board terms begin?
Terms usually run from September/October through the following September/October to coincide with the annual conference.

Watch for the Spring 2014 newsletter and SOBA List Serv notices announcing that nominations are being accepted. If you would like to talk to a Board Member about applying please contact Janine Belleque (janine.belleque@state.or.us), Ron Christofferson (rchristofferson@azgfd.gov) or James Adams (james.adams@dgf.virginia.gov) with any questions.

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**Plans Underway For 2014 IMBC**

*by Wendy Larimer, AMI*

The 12th International Marina & Boatyard Conference (IMBC), produced by the Association of Marina Industries (AMI), is scheduled for January 29–31, 2014 at the Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center in Fort Lauderdale, FL. Registration is open and many new plans are underway.

New in 2014, a Marina Design and Engineering breakout track has been added that will focus on designing, building, and maintaining marina facilities. A special Marina Design Course focusing on the American Society of Civil Engineers new Manual 50 will also be available. In addition, participants will have the option to attend a hands-on keynote follow up session and continue their education on the exhibit floor with IMBC's New Product Demos and a Visual Trends Board. Finally, a Best Profit Ideas panel will highlight the best business ideas, provide attendees with new concepts that they can implement at their facility, and engage the audience when a vote for the best idea is taken and a winner is awarded.

On top of these new additions, IMBC will offer its traditional educational program, exhibit hall with more than 140 booths, networking receptions, AMI member meeting, marina and boatyard field trip, and CMM award presentation. This year’s event will feature more than 25 seminars including five small group workshops, a Clean Marina Workshop and Reception, and four general sessions. Topics include how failure can lead to success, integrating marinas with multi-use recreational facilities, marina construction contracting, and an update on copper concentrations in fresh water.

To view seminar descriptions, learn more about IMBC’s new features, view a list of exhibitors, and read about conference networking events such as the Taste of the Tropics Opening Reception and Casino Night, visit [http://tinyurl.com/nzbllwq](http://tinyurl.com/nzbllwq) to download the preliminary brochure.

To register for IMBC, visit [MarinaAssociation.org/IMBC](http://MarinaAssociation.org/IMBC). Full conference passes start at $379. Exhibit hall only and one-day passes are also available. A discount is offered to AMI members. To learn more about the Association of Marina Industries, visit [MarinaAssociation.org](http://MarinaAssociation.org).

**AMI Releases New Manual For Marinas: Best Management Practices for Marina Electrical Safety.**
The manual is designed to give marina staff an overview of common marina electrical components, potential hazards and how to identify and correct them, and tools that every facility should have onsite. It also offers suggestions for how to work with customers to ensure their boats are safe.

The manual was drafted with input and information from John Adey at ABYC (American Boat &Yacht Council), Chris Dolan with Eaton Marina Power and Lighting, Mark Stafford at Marinas International and Captain John McDevitt. It includes photographs for easy identification of problems and common testing equipment, and a checklist to encourage regular assessment of electrical systems.

The manual is available at no cost to AMI and ABYC members and for twenty dollars to non-members. Go to [www.marinaassociation.org/publications](http://www.marinaassociation.org/publications) to order.
SOBA Seeks Future State Conference Hosts

We are very excited that the 2014 Annual Conference will be in North Little Rock, Arkansas and the 2015 Annual Conference will be in Vermont. But where will the 2016 and SOBA’s 30th anniversary 2017 Conferences be held? We are looking for volunteer states to host these and future conferences.

Our partnership with NMMA has benefited past conference hosts by reducing the hosting state’s staff time negotiating with the hotel, handling registrations and processing payments. If you have ever considered hosting a conference but were unsure how to apply, or wondered what the hosting state would need to do, please contact any SOBA Board Member for more information.

http://www.sobaus.org/board/board.html

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