Registration is now Open!

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SOBA 2019 Annual Boating Access Educational Symposium

SAVE THE DATE!

September 9–12, 2019:
Portsmouth, Virginia

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT: PRESTON SMITH

SOBA Members and Boating Industry Partners:

Since my last message in December, I want to bring you up to speed on the new and exciting things that are happening in the Organization. Member-at-Large Nancy Stewart is working on the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation boating access project. We thank Nancy for taking on that herculean task. Lorene Reid, SOBA Treasurer has been investing numerous hours in the development of the TRACS system, as well as updating the online Lacy Nichols Program guidance documents. As with many of our colleagues, we lack the work force or time to embark on such missions that present a deviation from our usual task. With that in mind, it is also important to highlight the achievements of other board members and their activities. Mike Wichrowski, member-at-large and the Pumpout Nav
subcommittee continue to work on the California CVA app. Todd Mize, member-at-large and Janine Belleque, Past President are focusing on updating the ADA Guide, and Trey Cooksey, Vice-President is completing work on the O&P/Paddle Craft Design Handbook. Libby Yranski, Executive Director has been traveling in coordination with the National Marine Manufacturers Association representing SOBA at various functions such as the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Council, meeting with U.S. Fish and Wildlife officials regarding training branch participation at future SOBA conferences, and working with me to organize the SOBA 2019 conference.

From May 13–15 Trey Cooksey and I will be participating in the American Boating Congress. This event, in which SOBA participates, affords two opportunities. First, Trey and I will canvass Capitol Hill to discuss with Senators and Representatives issues that support SOBA’s mission. Second, SOBA’s Congressional Service Award is bestowed to a member (or members) of the U.S. Congress who has made significant contributions to public boating facility programs in the nation. This year the SOBA Board reached out to the membership to see if there were any Congressional Champions that could be consider for this recognition. If your Senator or Representative has been a strong champion for the work that you and SOBA does and you feel as though they warrant this recognition, please contact Libby Yranski, lyranski@nmma.org.

This year’s SOBA Conference is being co-hosted by the Virginia Department of Health and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Although bringing a conference together is an arduous task there are some joyful times. With that thought, I would be remiss if I did not encourage you to consider hosting a SOBA Conference. Having participated in this process before I can assure you that the SOBA Board is very helpful and is willing to provide guidance. We all want to put forth the best conference possible. If you feel, as though you lack the staff or resources please consider collaborating with a sister agency or an adjacent state so that you are not carrying the entire burden and resources can be allocated equally.

I may be contacted at preston.smith@vdh.virginia.gov or by phone at 804-864-7468 if you ever have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Preston Smith
SOBA President

**SOBA’S 33RD ANNUAL BOATING ACCESS EDUCATIONAL SYMPOSIUM**

by John Kirk — SOBA 2019 Conference Co-Hosts

*Overcoming Challenges and Improving Boating Infrastructure*

SOBA’s Annual Boating Access Education Symposium will be here before you know it and registration is now **OPEN**! The Virginia Department of Health and the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries will be co-hosting the 2019 event in Portsmouth, Virginia September 9–12th. Over the past couple of months John Kirk, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and Preston Smith, Department of Health have been busy developing an agenda for the event.

**WHEN:** September 9–12, 2019
WHERE: The Renaissance Portsmouth-Norfolk Waterfront Hotel in Portsmouth. Our room rate is $94 plus taxes. Make your reservations today, please click here.

REGISTRATION: Register for the conference HERE.

THE PROGRAM: Monday will feature the WSFR Training Day; Tuesday and Wednesday will feature the General Sessions, Breakout tracks with Engineering, Clean Vessel, and Boating Infrastructure; a full Exhibit Hall with Vendors; Awards program; and the traditional boating access site visits along the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

The conference theme is “Overcoming Challenges and Improving Boating Infrastructure.” As professionals providing access to boaters, we face many challenges from securing locations and agreements to building in rising seas and changing weather. I encourage you to come and share your experiences with your fellow new and old SOBA colleagues and friends. Together we can overcome any challenges that we face, in order to provide great infrastructure and opportunities to our boating constituents.

If you or any of your colleagues, or somebody you may know have a specific expertise, experience, or knowledge in regards to boat sewage, the American’s with Disabilities Act, public access, climate change, and engineering/design or non-motorized boating access and you are interested in speaking at SOBA please contact either john.kirk@gif.virginia.gov or preston.smith@vdh.virginia.gov.

USE OF USFWS FUNDS TO HELP YOU ATTEND THE CONFERENCE

SOBA reminds conference attendees that certain costs are eligible under USFWS grants (Boating Access, CVA), in particular, memberships and certain conference costs. See the applicable OMB Circular for more details.

LACY NICHOLS EDUCATION FUND:

Did you know that you can use the Lacy Nichols Education Fund to help you attend the conference? The Education Fund can be used to defray costs associated with attending the annual SOBA symposium. Example costs are the twenty-five percent non-federal match required for Sport Fish Restoration, Clean Vessel Act or Boating Infrastructure Grant Programs, or other conference related expenses such as travel costs, accommodations, or registration. The maximum award was recently increased to up to $750.00. We encourage you to apply for this worthy grant, and if you have any questions please contact Lorene Reid, (Chair) at Lorene.Reid@dnr.ga.gov.

SOBA CALL FOR 2019 AWARDS

SOBA is accepting nominations for the 2019 Awards Program through May 31. Nominations should be forwarded to Trey Cooksey, Albert.Cooksey@tpwd.texas.gov, 512-389-8743. Nominations are now being accepted through May 31st for the following SOBA awards:
The William H. Ivers Award
- Outstanding Service Award
- Professional Service Award
- Special Recognition Award
- State Boating Program Excellence Awards
- Outstanding Project Awards
- President’s Project Award

SOBA will present the awards during the annual National Boating Access Education & Training Symposium at the Renaissance Portsmouth, Portsmouth, VA September 9–12, 2019.

**Recognize the Outstanding Work of Your Peers or Your State!**
SOBA’s Awards Program allows you recognize outstanding achievement of your staff, your peers, and the many cooperators and partners you have worked with. The consolidated Awards categories allow you to nominate the outstanding work around you and allow the Board to choose where these projects fit best!

A complete description of the awards criteria can be found [here](#). The single nomination form is available [Here](#). Nominations should be emailed to Trey Cooksey no later than May 31st, 2019. All project initiatives should be completed when your nomination information is submitted, and if in rare circumstances this is not possible, please contact Trey Cooksey, Albert.Cooksey@tpwd.texas.gov, 512-389-8743.

**CALL FOR SOBA BOARD OF DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS**

The Call for Nominations is now open for SOBA’s 2020 Executive Board of Directors, and we are specifically seeking additional candidates for at-large Board Member positions. A slate of officers and at-large Board members for 2020 will be elected at SOBA’s Annual Business Meeting, Wednesday, September 11th in Portsmouth, Virginia. The Nominating Committee will select the slate based on nominations received from member states.

Individuals nominated to serve on the SOBA board must be employed by a member state agency, and be able to secure a letter of support from their agency. Please consider serving on the Board and submitting a nomination for the 2019 SOBA Board. **Nominations close Friday June 7th, 2019.** Please send your nominations to Janine Belleque SOBA Past President and Chair of SOBA’s Nominating Committee: Janine.Belleque@oregon.gov.

**RBFF BOAT RAMP DATA COLLECTION**

**by Nancy Stewart**

RBFF wants your boat ramp locations for their “Places to Fish and Boat” interactive map. To see what this map is all about, click the following link: [RBFF Places to Fish and Boat](#)

RBFF just needs four fields to create a record for the map (body of water, official name of the site, latitude and longitude). You can put this data in an excel spreadsheet, to GIS files wanted or needed.
Thirteen states are complete, and no further action is needed. They are FL, IL, ME, MS, MO, NV, NC, OR, PA, UT, VT, VA, and WA. There are thirty-seven states remaining — including mine. Help me shrink this number by May 1st. Send your state’s boat ramp data to nancy.stewart@state.mn.us.

USFWS WSFR UPDATE
by Brad Gunn

Happy spring everyone! We hope you get ample opportunities to spend some time afield and on the water as the season progresses! Here are some updates from the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) Program.

Boating Programs’ Updates

Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program:

The BIG program offers two levels of funding, Tier 1 and Tier 2. Tier 1 may be competitive within the States and provides a maximum Federal award of $200,000 per State annually. Tier 2 funding can be up to $1,500,000 per project and is nationally competitive.

The Service received 36 BIG Tier 1 and 27 Tier 2 FY 2019 BIG applications from the States and Territories. Tier 1 applications requested approximately $4.1 million and the nationally competitive Tier 2 applications requested approximately $21.2 million in federal FY 2019 BIG funding. A total of $20.9 million is available to fund the FY 2019 Tier 1 and Tier 2 applications.

WSFR’s recommendations for funding the FY 2019 applications are currently undergoing the Service’s approval processes. We hope to announce the funding by the time this newsletter is published.

In previous years, the BIG grants had to go through a separate Department of Interior (DOI) grant review process prior to award by WSFR. WSFR has received a waiver from this process for BIG from DOI and the FY 2019 BIG awards will not have to go through the review.

Clean Vessel Act Grant (CVA) Program:

The Clean Vessel Act (CVA) program provides matching grants to the States, the District of Columbia, and insular areas for the construction, renovation, operation, and maintenance of pumpout stations and waste reception facilities for recreational boaters and also for educational programs that inform boaters of the importance of proper disposal of their sewage.

The deadline for FY 2019 applications was December 24, 2018 and we received 38 applications requesting $17,848,596.43 in federal funding. As with the BIG applications the Service Director makes the final funding
Boating Access Subprogram:

The Boating Access subprogram provides grant funds to the States, the District of Columbia and insular area fish and wildlife agencies for projects that acquire, develop, renovate, maintain, or improve facilities that provide public access to the waters of the United States for recreational boating.

States in each Region must collectively spend at least 15% of their Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) apportionment on Boating Access projects over a set 5 year period. The Service finalized the FY 2019 SFR final apportionment on February 15, 2019 and it is $365,396,740.

TRAINING BRANCH INSIGHTS

Common Form Renewal Process for OMB Collection Clearance: If you have recently applied to WSFR for Federal financial assistance funding or have reported on the financial expenditures of a current financial assistance award, you may have noticed that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) collection clearance on several government-wide forms has expired. Such forms include: (1) Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A); (2) Statement of Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B); (3) Budget Information for Construction Programs (SF-424C); (4) Statement of Assurances for Construction Programs (SF-424D); and (5) the Federal Financial Report (SF-425). All five of these forms expired on January 31, 2019.

All of the currently expired clearances are now in the OMB renewal process. During the renewal process, all forms are granted an automatic 30-day extension every 30 days until the renewal process is completed. So in the meantime, please continue to use these common forms, despite their OMB collection clearance being expired. Once the renewal process is complete, applicants and recipients should see updated versions of these common forms with new OMB collection clearance expiration dates.

Ability to Submit SF-424B Certifications using SAM: The Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA) tasked OMB to identify new common data standards, build efficient reporting tools, and provide new solutions that reduce administrative burden on recipients of Federal financial assistance, as well as the government workforce. As of February 2, 2019, the General Services Administration’s (GSA) System for Award Management (SAM) began to implement a new feature that will allow financial assistance registrants to submit their SF-424B “Statement of Assurances for Non-Construction Programs” when creating, updating, or renewing their SAM registration. Once fully implemented by all federal agencies, it is estimated that this will reduce the administrative burden on non-Federal entities applying for financial assistance by approximately 150,000 burden hours.

Financial assistance recipients who certify the SF-424B as part of their SAM registration, update, or renewal will no longer have to submit the form with each
application. If you are required to submit the SF-424C “Budget Information for Construction Programs” as part of your complete application, please continue to submit this signed form with each application.

Please feel free to contact your WSFR Regional Grants Management Specialist, WSFR Policy, WSFR Programs, or the Training Branch if you have any additional questions regarding the OMB collection clearance process or the ability to certify the SF-424B as part of your organizations registration, update, or renewal in SAM.

Ryan Oster
Grants Management Specialist
WSFR Training Branch
304-596-3641
ryan_oster@fws.gov

WSFR POLICY UPDATES

WSFR Policy extends the invitation — you do not have to wait for an official comment period to make suggestions or to discuss your WSFR Policy needs. You may contact Lisa at Lisa_Van_Alstyne@fws.gov or (703) 358-1942. Your interaction helps us to learn what would help make Policy more effective, what issues are complicating your awards and projects, and how we can better serve our partners. We look forward to hearing from you!

Please sign up for the WSFR Policy & Programs ListServ (https://www.fws.gov/lists/listinfo/wsfr_pop_news) to stay connected to current news.

WSFR Headquarters Boating Grant Contacts:

Lisa E. Van Alstyne
Fish & Wildlife Administrator — Policy
Lisa_Van_Alstyne@fws.gov
703.358.1942

Christy Vigfusson
Chief, Policy and Programs Branch
Christy_Vigfusson@fws.gov
703.358.1748

Brad Gunn
Fish and Wildlife Biologist — Grants (National Lead for Boating Access, BIG and CVA)
Brad_Gunn@fws.gov
703.358.2009

RECREATIONAL BOATING AND FISHING FOUNDATION

RBFF Challenges Industry, Agencies to Share Boat Registration Tool
The more licensed anglers and registered boaters, the better. That’s a simple equation. But did you know the impacts go beyond just the direct benefits to state agencies and conservation funds. More licensed and
registered individuals leads to greater overall participation, something industry stakeholders can certainly get behind, which is why RBFF is challenging the industry to implement its new Fishing License & Boat Registration Website Plugin into as many consumer-facing websites as possible. Help us spread the word and help consumers around the country have improved access to the licensing and registration information they need.

READ MORE

Nineteen States Partner with RBFF to Reactivate Boaters
RBFF’s successful Boat Registration Reactivation Program is set to bring lapsed boaters back to the water for the eighth straight year. In all, letters will be distributed to owners of boats with lapsed registrations in 19 states. In 2018, the program brought 50,000 boats back to the water and generated $1.9 million in revenue, adding an estimated $145,000 in additional revenue from the Sportfish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund along the way.

READ MORE

RBFF, Industry, NOAA Sign Memorandum of Agreement
At the Progressive Insurance Miami International Boat Show, RBFF, the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MOA) that will work to promote the boating and fishing opportunities on federal marine waters. RBFF and the industry is excited by NOAA’s leadership in helping us reach the 60 in 60 goal.

READ MORE

Twelve Organizations Receive Funding Through RBFF Education Fund
A total of 12 organizations in eight states have received funding through RBFF’s George H.W. Bush Vamos A PescarTM Education Fund. The Education Fund awarded nearly $60,000 to the organizations, with 1:1 matching funds provided by state agencies, the total amount of funding reaches approximately $125,000. Grantee organizations will use the funds to engage Hispanic communities, bringing them boating and fishing experiences and conservation education.

READ MORE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE UPDATE

The NPS is working with partners on a “River Access Framework” document to help river managers plan river access, providing for diverse uses, while protecting natural resources and sustaining desired recreation outcomes. As part of that project, we are compiling supplemental materials to briefly characterize access considerations for specific watercraft, modeled after similar work by the San Francisco Bay Water Trail.

- Are you aware of similar one-pagers that exist for characterizing individual motorized or non-motorized craft?
- In the coming months, we would appreciate review of our work. Please contact
Corita Waters, corita_waters@nps.gov if you are willing to provide review and feedback this spring.

NASBLA NEWS

Spring Aboard — Take a Boating Education Course wraps up 5th year

While it may not feel like boating season yet, boating safety advocates are wrapping up their fifth year promoting the Spring Aboard campaign, urging boaters to *Keep Your Edge* by enrolling in a boating education course this spring. The Spring Aboard — Take A Boating Education Course campaign, coordinated on a national level by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), encourages boaters to get educated prior to the kick-off of the boating season to make the most of your time on the water.

Many education providers and partners across the country offer discounts or other incentives for students who enroll in or complete a boating safety course during the week of Spring Aboard. Boaters are encouraged to take a boating education course if they have never taken one before, or to take a course as a refresher in order to prepare for the boating season ahead.

“Taking a boating education course is the first thing everyone should do before they go boating. These courses teach you about navigation rules, laws that must be followed in your state and provide safety checklists that will go a long way in helping you and your loved ones have a fun and enjoyable boating season,” says Mark Brown, President of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), lead organization for the campaign. “Whether you are a first-time boater or have years of experience, there is always more to learn when taking to the water. Taking a boating education course is one of the best things you can do to prevent accidents on the water.”


NASBLA Recognizes Guess for Service as President

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) recently recognized Mr. Thomas E. Guess, who recently completed the year as NASBLA President, for his extraordinary leadership. While serving as Virginia’s Boating Law Administrator as well as through
multiple governance roles within NASBLA, Mr. Guess continued to distinguish himself and the VDGIF as national leaders in recreational boating safety (RBS) and boating law enforcement.

Under Mr. Guess’s year at the helm, NASBLA experienced significant success both in advancing national policy issues as well as in building and strengthening the Association’s internal capacity and capabilities. With respect to the latter, Mr. Guess oversaw a yearlong, top-to-bottom strategic review of the Association, culminating in a four-year strategic plan to guide the organization’s agenda and programs. This member-driven initiative succeeded in large measure thanks to the hands-on participation of Mr. Guess and the Executive Board.

As a graduate of NASBLA’s annual Leadership Academy himself, Mr. Guess is now part of the Academy’s senior teaching faculty where he brings his decades of leadership experience in the agency and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) to bear in the classroom.

https://community.nasbla.org/blogs/hannah-helsby/2019/02/13/nasbla-recognizes-guess-for-service-as-president

**Charlie Sledd receives NASBLA Lifetime Achievement Award**

Charlie Sledd received the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) Lifetime Achievement Award at the recent NASBLA State RBS Workshop in Lexington, Ky. The *Lifetime Achievement Award* is awarded to those who have made significant contributions to boating safety over his or her lifetime.

After nearly 37 years with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Sledd retired in early 2011. Following retirement from the state, Sledd accepted the position of NASBLA’s Director of Government Affairs in June 2012. His career with Game & Inland Fisheries started in 1974 as a District Fisheries Biologist, followed by a number of subsequent positions including Fisheries Division Assistant Director, Education Division Director, Assistant to the Executive Director, and Agency Outreach Director/State Boating Law Administrator. During his 11 years as the State BLA, Sledd served on the Executive Board and as President of the Southern States Boating Law Administrators Association; as NASBLA Education Committee Chairman for four years; and on the NASBLA Executive Board and as President from 2005–2006.

Sledd entered the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve in May, 1972 and earned promotions to Boatswain's Mate First Class. As a BM1, he received a Direct Commission in 1981 and retired from the Coast Guard Reserve in June 2002 at the rank of Commander.
Over the years, Charlie Sledd has been a champion for NASBLA in funding from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. As Government Affairs Director, Sledd represented NASBLA on the Angling & Boating Alliance, a coalition of national recreational boating, angling, outdoor recreation interests, conservation groups, and state boating safety and natural resources agencies committed to the sustainable future of the Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund. In appearances before various groups and federal officials, Sledd drew upon his experience in boating safety and wildlife resources to bring home the importance of adequate boating safety funding to the states.

Among his honors and awards, Sledd also received the esteemed NASBLA Award in 2004 for his work in the NASBLA Education Committee in support of boating safety education on a national basis.

**Delaware Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police becomes accredited in National Standard of training**

The Delaware Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police is being recognized for its accomplishment in becoming accredited by the NASBLA Boat Operations and Training (BOAT) Program. This accreditation recognizes the Delaware Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police as having successfully implemented a National Standard of training, typing and credentialing. Accreditation of an agency ensures that its training curricula, policies, qualification processes and documentation for crew members, boat operators for search and rescue, and tactical operators meet the BOAT Program’s National Standard.

Established by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), the BOAT Program was created to ensure the readiness of law enforcement and emergency response boat crews throughout the country. The BOAT Program is recognized by the United States Coast Guard as holding the National Standard for the training, qualification, credentialing and typing of marine law enforcement and emergency first responders. Agencies who choose to adopt this National Standard enhance their ability to conduct missions on our nation’s waterways safely and effectively, and operate seamlessly with their federal, state, county, tribal and local maritime partners.

Since 1911, the Division of Fish and Wildlife has worked to conserve and manage Delaware’s fish and wildlife resources, provide safe and enjoyable fishing, hunting, and boating opportunities to citizens and visitors, and improve the public’s understanding and interest in the state’s fish and wildlife resources through information and outreach programs. The Division’s goal is to manage and provide access to the lands with which it is entrusted for public use and enjoyment. Delaware Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police officers protect wildlife and fisheries resources, promote boating education & safety, hunting & fishing, respond to boating emergencies and are a partner in Delaware’s Homeland Security maritime mission.

The Delaware Natural Resources Police will be formally recognized at the NASBLA Annual Conference this September in Anchorage, Alaska.

ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES
Multistate Conservation Grant Program

The Fish and Wildlife State Agencies Directors approved 16 National Conservation Needs (NCNs) during the Business Meeting at 84th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference.

AFWA is soliciting Letters of Intent (LOIs) for the 2020 Multistate Conservation Grant Program cycle. Starting with the 2020 Multistate Conservation Grant Program cycle, the application process for Letters of Intent and Full Grant Proposals will move to an online platform. Guidelines will be posted on the AFWA website. The deadline for submitting LOIs for 2020 cycle is April 12, 2019.

- 2020 National Conservation Needs Priorities

2018 Annual Report

Each year, the Association’s annual report highlights the outstanding participation of state, provincial and territorial fish and wildlife agencies, federal agencies and the greater conservation community and sportsmen industries in collaborating to realize the past year's accomplishments in:

- Protecting fish and wildlife legislative priorities and funding mechanisms on Capitol Hill;
- Protecting conservation authority in the U.S and abroad;
- Coordinating science-based conservation on species-based programs and cross-cutting concerns;
- Connecting more Americans to fish and wildlife conservation
- Fostering conservation leadership; and
- Enhancing relationships with federal agencies and the archery, hunting, shooting sports, boating and sportfishing industries to raise awareness of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

Read AFWA's 2018 Annual Report.

Government Affairs Updates

National Fish Habitat Bills Reintroduced
On March 12, 2019, Rep. Rob Wittman (R-VA) and Rep. Marc Veasey (D-TX) in the House, and Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID) and Senator Benjamin Cardin (D-MD) in the Senate, respectively reintroduced the bipartisan “National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnership Act,” (H.R. 1747, S. 754). The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies strongly supports the reintroduction of both bills as well as its inclusion in the ACCESS Act. This legislation aims to codify the National Fish Habitat Partnership, whose mission is to protect, restore and enhance the nation's fish and aquatic communities through partnerships that foster fish habitat conservation and improve the quality of life for the American people.

The National Fish Habitat Partnership has supported more than 840 projects benefiting fish habitat in all 50 states. The partnership works to conserve fish habitat nationwide; leveraging federal, state, tribal, and private funding resources to achieve the greatest impact on fish populations through priority conservation projects of 20 regionally-based Fish Habitat Partnerships.
Update: Wallop-Breaux Reauthorization

The Angling and Boating Alliance (ABA) has been discussing potential policy issues to include in reauthorization of Wallop-Breaux, a provision that in current law that directs receipts from the gas tax on motorboats and small engines to the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Safety account. President Ed Carter appointed a working group of Directors to provide input and review policy recommendations of the ABA. In the coming months Directors will receive a draft reauthorization platform for Wallop-Breaux. The Association will seek feedback from Directors and the relevant committees before moving forward with a reauthorization platform this Congress.

The two federal agency partners in this endeavor are the US Coast Guard (USCG) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). We are awaiting the release of the President’s budget to unveil the USCG’s legislative change proposal that will inform the ABA’s reauthorization position, and we will work with the FWS to integrate their administrative change needs as well. Because the agency details of the President’s proposed FY2020 budget is being released the week of March 18, AFWA and the ABA were unable to prepare a reauthorization proposal to vet with AFWA committees of interest at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Denver, CO. Stay tuned for further developments over the next couple of months. The ABA expects to have a draft proposal to vet with AFWA committees in late April or early May.

WOTUS: AFWA President Appoints Group to Review Proposed Rulemaking

At the North American Fisheries & Water Resources Policy Committee, the committee approved a motion that recommended to the Directors, “that a group, with representation from each region of the country, be appointed by the AFWA President to investigate the potential for AFWA to submit comments on the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) Rule proposed rulemaking.” At the Business Meeting the Directors approved this action and AFWA leadership is currently in the process of identifying individuals to participate in this expeditious review. Comments are due to EPA/ACOE on the proposed rulemaking to redefine the scope of federal authority under the Clean Water Act on April 15th.

Background: On December 11, 2018 the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers released a revised definition of “waters of the United States” (WOTUS). The proposed rule was officially published in the Federal Register on February 14th and will be open for a 60-day comment period. Unless extended, the public comment period will close on April 15, 2019.

AFWA, along with the Association of Clean Water Administrators (ACWA), Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) and Association of State Wetlands Managers (ASWM) submitted a formal comment requesting that the EPA and ACOE extend the 60-day comment period on the proposed rulemaking by an additional 60 days to ensure that state agencies have adequate time to conduct a thorough review and analysis of the proposal and compile comments.

AMI UPDATE

by Eric Kretsch

IMI hosting webinar series on marina electrical and the National Electric Code

On March 6th, the Association of Marina Industries’ training and professional development branch, the International Marina Institute kicked off a multi-month series on the marina electrical system. Webinars will be held the first Wednesday of every month from noon to 1:00pm Eastern Standard Time.
March’s webinar focused on the 2017 and 2020 National Electric Code standards that pertain to the marina electrical system. The April 3rd webinar will discuss Ground Fault Protection and how it is used in the marina. More information on the webinars can be found here.

AMI to Co-Host 2019 American Boating Congress

AMI is proud to announce it will co-host the 2019 American Boating Congress, taking place May 13–15 at the Renaissance Hotel in downtown, Washington DC. AMI members will join the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) and other leaders to advocate for the recreational boating industry, by participating in hill visits, attending educational policy seminars, and listening and speaking to members of Congress.

Please join AMI and others this year by visiting www.nmma.org/abc.

AMI celebrates most successful IMBC ever
AMI’s annual conference, the International Marina and Boatyard Conference, had the most successful year in its 17-year history, ending with registration up 20%. A sold-out exhibit hall was packed with marina operators and boatyard personnel, while the educational seminars were well attended.

IMI adds summer 2019 Intermediate Marina Management (IMM) Course
The International Marina Institute will be holding a summer training course in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida from June 23–27, 2019. This course is the first step to becoming a Certified Marina Manager (CMM) or Operator (CMO). You will learn to about critical issues and common challenges facing the industry, how to manage your staff successfully, management and leadership, and much more. To learn more about requirements to take this course and to register visit here.

BOATUS UPDATE

BoatU.S. Foundation Looking to Fund Safe and Clean Boating Outreach Projects

The BoatUS Foundation’s Grassroots Grants program has grants available up to $10,000 to nonprofit organizations including community-based groups, boat clubs, angling and environmental organizations, USCG Auxiliary, or US Power Squadrons. Projects should focus on behavior change in the boating community and be unique and innovative. Organizations are encourage to visit http://www.boatus.org/grants/ for program guidelines and to complete a Letter of Intent.

NMMA DC UPDATE

Congressional Boating Caucus, NMMA Members Highlight Recreational Boating Industry’s Importance to the US Economy
On Wednesday, February 27, NMMA, marine manufacturers, and members of the Congressional Boating Caucus — including Representative Jackie Walorski (R-IN-02), Representative Bill Huizenga (R-MI-02), Representative Joyce Beatty (D-OH-03), and Representative Jared Huffman (D-CA-02) — assembled for a briefing on Capitol Hill to discuss the economic impact of the recreational boating industry. The event — titled “Boating Industry Briefing: Jobs, Businesses, and the Economy” — also served as the official release of NMMA’s latest economic data infographics, which highlight the industry’s economic impact at the national, state, regional, and congressional district levels.

Infographics are available here: https://www.nmma.org/statistics/publications/economic-impact-infographics

One common theme was shared by all — though the recreational boating industry is largely made up of small businesses, it has a big economic impact. The industry generated $170.3 billion in spending in 2018, supporting 691,000 jobs and 35,000 businesses across all 50 states.

Members of Congress praised the recreational boating industry for continuing to support the U.S. economy and creating jobs in their districts. Representatives also discussed challenges facing the marine manufacturing industry, including headwinds from Section 232 tariffs and tariffs on boat exports that are affecting the industry's bottom line.

- **Representative Jackie Walorski (R-IN-02)** promised manufacturers that she is working on behalf of the industry to fight the Section 232 tariffs on steel and aluminum that are hurting Indiana manufacturers, as well as businesses across the country.
- **Representative Bill Huizenga (R-MI-02)** discussed the importance of manufacturing to the fabric of the U.S. economy and noted that support of business-friendly legislation like the Modern Fish Act is crucial to ensuring the recreational boating industry continues to thrive.
- **Representative Joyce Beatty (D-OH-03)** thanked industry stakeholders for supporting small businesses and discussed how the Congressional Boating Caucus looks for bipartisan opportunities to help the recreational boating industry.
- **Representative Tim Burchett (R-TN-02)** pledged to support the industry and thanked Tennessee marine manufacturing companies for investing in the community and creating jobs in the state.
- **Representative Jared Huffman (D-CA-02)** praised the recreational boating industry for contributing to the California economy and for working to preserve the health of America’s oceans and waterways.

**NMMA Opposes EPA Proposal to Allow Year-Round Sales of E15**

Last month, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed regulatory changes to allow gasoline blended with up to 15 percent ethanol (E15) to be sold during the summer months. As part of the proposal, EPA is considering adopting additional consumer protection measures, which
NMMA advocated for and helped secure.

In response, NMMA president, Thom Dammrich stated, "The EPA's legally questionable decision to allow year-round sales of E15 needlessly puts millions of American boaters — not to mention hundreds of millions of people with chainsaws, generators, and lawnmowers — at an increased risk of misfuelling just so a powerful, politically important constituency can reap a financial windfall. NMMA is adamantly against this proposal and we encourage the administration to abandon this reckless policy."

Dammrich continued, "Our nation's boaters shouldn't have to compromise their safety to enjoy time on the water, and the EPA should aim to protect consumers — not put them in jeopardy. We look forward to working with the agency and other policymakers to provide needed consumer safeguards from misfuelling — including labeling standards, consumer education, and keypad confirmation — and ensure boaters and all consumers have a safe and reliable fuel supply."

When E15 is used in a wide range of smaller and older engines, it wreaks havoc on these types of power sources — which is why NMMA and an overwhelming majority of stakeholders are staunchly opposed to expanding the availability of E15. The government appears to be aware of E15’s shortcomings considering federal law prohibits the fuel's use in marine and other off-road engines. But unfortunately, EPA’s efforts to inform the public about the dangers of E15 are inadequate, leading to consumers using incompatible fuels that destroy their products.

On March 4, the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute released a study showing misfuelling is on the rise, with more than 3 in 5 Americans mistakenly assuming that any gas sold at gas stations is safe for all of their products — proving that the only debate over additional consumer safeguards is how many more we need at the pump.

**NMMA Adds Four New Staffers to Advocacy Team**

Since the beginning of 2019, NMMA has brought on four new employees: Jill Sims and Lee Gatts to serve the organization as its newest policy and engagement manager, and Callie Hoyt and Clay Crabtree have joined the association as its newest directors of federal government relations. The hires come as the federal legislative season kicks into full gear and NMMA works to advance the recreational boating industry’s policy agenda on all fronts, including conservation, infrastructure, and trade.

Jill Sims comes to NMMA from Capitol Hill, where she most recently served as Operations and Finance Manager for Congressman Reichert. She was the first liaison to constituents, industry stakeholders, and foreign government officials in Washington DC. Prior to her time on Capitol Hill, Jill worked in Minnesota on several political campaigns as well as at Teach for America.

A former staffer to U.S. Senator Bob Corker (R-TN), Lee Gatts earned his master's and undergraduate degree at Tennessee Technological University, where he was awarded the prestigious "Derryberry Award," given to one graduating senior each year. In 2015, Gatts was recognized by Governor Bill Haslam and awarded the Colonel Aide de Camp for "outstanding achievement by a Tennessee citizen."

Callie Hoyt comes to NMMA from the Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC), where she...
served as manager of federal affairs, directing the association’s federal advocacy portfolio in Washington, D.C. on issues ranging from outdoor recreation, to transportation and international trade policy. Prior to joining MIC, Callie held positions at the Intelligent Transportation Society of America and the Trucking Alliance where she worked on infrastructure and connected and autonomous vehicle policy and safety and efficiency issues impacting the trucking industry, respectively. Callie is a native of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, and grew up riding personal watercraft and on her grandfather’s ski boat along the Bohemia River in Cecil County, Maryland.

Prior to joining NMMA, Clay Crabtree served as policy director for the American Sportfishing Association, focusing on state and federal policies impacting freshwater issues. Clay also worked for a federal agency as a congressional liaison between members of Congress and the Department of Health and Human Services, and he served as an aide for Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV), advising the senator on trade and budgetary issues. Clay is a native West Virginian and an avid angler.

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