A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT: RON CHRISTOFFERSON

Dear SOBA Members and Boating Industry Partners:

As the hot summer continues to give us great watercraft weather, I hope you are finding some time to get out on the water and take advantage of your state’s boating opportunities. As usual for this time of year, a multitude of public boating facility projects are underway across the U.S. and its territories, largely under the guidance of the SOBA membership. At the national level, a hot topic in the political arena is the expansion of funding for transportation infrastructure projects. Here at SOBA, one of our goals is to insure politicians and the public recognize that our member state agencies have been in the transportation infrastructure business for a very long time, and have consistently achieved great success along the way.

In May, I attended the American Boating Congress (ABC) in Washington, D.C., along with SOBA Vice-President Scott Meister, and Executive Director Libby Yranski. In addition
to insuring SOBA is nationally recognized as a leader in our field, this event provides a great opportunity to educate members of Congress and their staff on the importance of federal grant funds for public boating facilities, including the corresponding financial benefits to the folks back home involved in the marine recreation industry. In addition, this year's Congressional Award was presented to South Carolina Senator Tim Scott, who has been a staunch supporter of boaters in his state.

Planning and coordination for the 2017 National Boating Access Conference in Anchorage, Alaska is largely complete, and I hope to see you there. Registration is still open and available on the SOBA website, as is the link for making hotel reservations, so there is still time to make your arrangements. This will be a unique place to visit, with a lot of new and useful topics to cover.

In closing, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the SOBA membership and Board of Directors for your support of SOBA and our goals. As my tenure as President draws to a close this fall, I am very proud of all you do for the boating public, and it has been an honor to help further the mission. As we move forward with all the challenges the future has in store for us, I offer this advice: Keep calm, and go boating.

Ron Christofferson
President

SOBA'S 31ST NATIONAL BOATING ACCESS CONFERENCE IS COMING SOON AND SHOULDN'T BE MISSED!
by Paul Cyr — SOBA 2017 Conference Chairman and Host

Here is a quick highlight of what we have to look forward to! The conference will be held August 28 – 31 at the Hilton Anchorage Hotel. The Hilton prides itself on its friendly and hospitable staff and customer service. The downtown Anchorage location provides nearby access to a wide variety of restaurants, recreational, shopping and cultural activities that are within walking distance. If you wish to venture outside of city limits, there are numerous power boating, rafting, kayaking, fishing, hiking, biking, camping, sightseeing and other activities that can be had within driving distances of one to three hours.

We have a great agenda planned that will include a Federal Aid Workshop providing Federal updates on Monday, August 28 with an evening reception at the William Jack Hernandez Sport Fish Hatchery. The hatchery, at 141,000 square feet, is the largest indoor sport fish hatchery in North America and provides 100 fish rearing tanks that can produce more than 6 million sport fish annually for boating and shoreline anglers throughout southcentral Alaska.

Tuesday, August 29 will provide an opening session with SOBA affiliate reports, SOBA update, and Platinum Sponsor Presentation in the morning. Early afternoon concurrent sessions will focus on topics in Engineering and Clean Waters. Concurrent
sessions with topics related to the Boating Access Program and Natural Resources will be provided in the late afternoon. Sessions will include a mix of both local and national topics.

**Wednesday, August 30** will continue with concurrent presentations related to the Clean Vessel Act Program, Natural Resources, Engineering and Boating Infrastructure Grant Program in the morning, and the SOBA Business Meeting right before lunch. The Awards Luncheon and Award Recipient Presentations will be held on the 15th floor of the Hilton Anchorage, which provides beautiful 360o views of the Anchorage area, Cook Inlet, and mountain ranges both near and far. Wednesday afternoon will continue with sessions related to the BIG Program and Engineering, and breakout sessions providing Vendor Updates and the BIG BMP Taskforce. Our conference will conclude on-site as we meet again on the 15th floor for a social mixer and banquet dinner.

On **Thursday, August 31** we will provide a boating project site trip to the port of Whittier; the closest recreational harbor to Anchorage, where we will review both BIG Tier 2 and Recreational Boating projects. The approximately 1.5 hour drive to Whittier includes a scenic trip along the Seward Highway and Turnagain Arm and takes you through the longest tunnel in North America. A glacier tour boat will take us on a four hour cruise of a portion of Prince William Sound and will showcase remote boating access site improvements and local glaciers.

SOBA's 31st boating access conference features a great lineup of boating-related presentations and topics. The Alaska SOBA conference should not be missed! Please plan on joining us August 28-31 in our unique and beautiful state for an outstanding conference!

Have you booked your rooms yet? Click [HERE](#) to reserve your rooms at our preferred rate.

Our agenda (subject to change), registration package and hotel information are available on the [SOBA Conference Webpage](#).

**Information to Remember**

**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:**
If you have any items you would to donate any items to the Silent Auction benefiting the Lacy Nichols Education Fund, or you would like to sponsor any part of the conference, please contact Paul Cyr (paul.cyr@alaska.gov) or Libby Yranski (lyranski@nmma.org).

**BIG BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TASKFORCE UPDATE**
by Scott Meister

The SOBA BIG BMP Taskforce was formed to create a "Best Management Practices" document for the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program. Utilized by State coordinators, municipalities, marina facilities, consultants and others, the BMPs will assist in BIG program development/improvement, proposal writing and preparation, pre and post-
award processes, and other aspects of a successful BIG program. The Taskforce envisions that the BMPs will be used in conjunction with the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and Federal Register throughout the BIG process.

The Taskforce is comprised of state coordinators, and industry professionals, with USFWS advising throughout the process. To date, a preliminary draft has been comprised and taskforce members are busy working on their contributions to strengthen the current chapters, blend writing styles, and add additional chapters moving forward.

All interested parties are invited to attend the next Taskforce meeting which will take place at the annual SOBA conference in Anchorage. The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 8/30/17 starting at 4:45PM in the "Alaska" Room.

If you would like to participate in the Taskforce, in any capacity, please contact Scott Meister at MeisterS@dnr.sc.gov.

**USFWS UPDATE**

by Brad Gunn

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (Service) Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) staff hopes everyone is having a great summer and we look forward to seeing many of you at the SOBA annual conference in August. Below is some of what's going on with the WSFR and the boating grant programs.

**WSFR Launches Strategic Communications Planning Effort:**

The partnership between WSFR and the States is considered by many to be the most successful conservation program in the history of the US, and a model of State and Federal collaboration. And whether it is Boating Access, Aquatic Education, Wildlife Restoration, Sport Fish Restoration or Tribal/State Wildlife, all of WSFR's 12 grant programs requires effective communications among the program partners.

This August, WSFR embarks on a 10-12-month process to develop a Strategic Communications Plan. Development of the Plan will combine program knowledge (WSFR staff) with communications expertise (External Affairs staff) to define communications strategies and tactics for engaging target audiences to help meet the program goals of stable funding, partner and public support, and program relevance.

DJ Case and Associates, a "conservation engagement" company based in Mishawaka, Indiana is supporting and facilitating the effort. Tim Smith, Stakeholders Liaison and Colleen Sculley, WSFR Chief in the Northeast Region are co-leads. For more information, contact Tim Smith at timothy_smith@fws.gov.

**Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program:**

The Service is currently accepting applications for BIG Tier 1 National and BIG Tier 2 nationally competitive projects from the States, territories and the District of Columbia. To obtain application materials and instructions, go to www.grants.gov and enter the applicable Funding Opportunity number in the search box. For Tier 1 State projects (with a total Federal award of $200,000 or less) enter Funding Opportunity Number F17AS00214. For Tier 2 National projects (with a total Federal award of up to $1.5 million) enter Funding Opportunity Number F17AS00215.
Please remember to carefully read the application instructions and submit your applications well in advance of the deadline in case of technical difficulties. We expect the Tier 2 awards to be very competitive this year, so please give a lot of attention to the details in your applications. In particular, a very good explanation on how you plan to prorate costs between transient boaters and other users is critical! The deadline for accepting applications is 11:59 P.M. PDT September 11, 2017. Please contact your Regional BIG Program coordinator for grant assistance.

**Clean Vessel Act Grant Program:**

The Service plans to announce the FY 2018 Clean Vessel Act (CVA) NOFO sometime around mid-August with the deadline for applications sometime in early December 2017. The Notice of Funding Opportunity can be found by searching on Grants.gov for CFDA 15.616. We plan to announce the CVA funding in May 2018. CVA provides funding to States, the District of Columbia, Commonwealths, and territories for the construction, renovation, operation, and maintenance of sewage pumpout stations, waste reception facilities, and pumpout boats for recreational boaters and for educational programs that inform boaters of the importance of proper disposal of their sewage. Approximately $12 million will likely be available for the Service to award in FY 2018.

**Training Branch Insights:**

Issuing Subawards and Monitoring Subrecipient Financial Management Systems. The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200) is often considered to be the biggest change in Federal financial assistance (grants and cooperative agreements) that any of us will likely observe in our working careers. It represents the Office of Management and Budgets efforts in the consolidation of 8 existing circulars governing costing, administration, and audits of Federal financial assistance. The goal of 2 CFR 200 was to establish a more streamlined, consistent regulation for all participants in Federal financial assistance. Despite this comprehensive effort, 2 CFR 200 did establish new administrative burden, both on Federal awarding agencies and their recipients.

One area where some recipients often feel overwhelmed and confused is in regards to issuing subawards versus contracts (2 CFR 200.330). When a recipient issues a subaward to a subrecipient, 2 CFR 200.331 describes the specific requirements that recipients (now called pass-through entities) must include in their subaward documents, as well as describes any additional requirements that the pass-through entity is bound to comply with.

2 CFR 200.331(a) states that every subaward agreement must contain 13 required items such as the subrecipient's unique entity identifier; subrecipient name (which must
match the name associated with the unique identifier); Federal award identification number; name of the Federal awarding agency; CFDA number and name; indirect cost rate for the Federal award; and identification of whether the award is for Research & Development. Recent audits conducted by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) on Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) grants have found that some State recipients have failed to include all of the required items in their subaward agreements. This has resulted in audit findings, so consider reviewing your agency’s agreement templates to ensure that they contain all the required elements necessary when issuing a subaward.

Additionally, 2 CFR 200.331(b) requires that the pass-through entity evaluate each subrecipient’s risk of noncompliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the subaward. One factor that pass-through entities should consider is whether the subrecipient has new personnel or new/substantially changed financial systems. When assessing a subrecipient’s financial management system, 2 CFR 200.302(b) states that the subrecipient’s financial management systems must at minimum provide for: (1) identification of all Federal awards received and expended; (2) accurate, current, and complete disclosure of financial results of each Federal award; (3) records that identify adequately the source and application of funds for Federally-funded activities; (4) effective control over and accountability for all funds, property, and assets; (5) comparison of expenditures with budget amounts; and (6) written procedures for payment and determining allowability of costs. In short, among other things, the subrecipient's financial management system should be adequate to permit the tracking of funds to a level of expenditures adequate to determine that such funds have been used according to Federal statutes, regulations, and terms and conditions of the award. Additionally, their systems must provide records supported by source documentation that identifies the source and application of funds for all Federally-funded activities.

OIG auditors, again while conducting their reviews on Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration grants, have found instances where States have issued subawards to small subrecipients who did not use financial management systems or the systems they did use did not possess the ability to perform fund accounting. In these instances, there is nothing that tells the auditors which expenditures relate to which subaward. The auditors concluded that the expenditures were therefore unsupported costs and were disallowed. Pass-through entities should be conscious of this, particularly when entering into agreements with small or inexperienced subrecipients that may not possess the financial management system resources compared to larger subrecipients.

Pass-through entities can assist these smaller subrecipients in meeting the financial management system requirements of 2 CFR 200 in a variety of ways. First, encourage subrecipients to purchase electronic fund accounting software. If software acquisition is not possible, encourage subrecipients to keep a manual or electronic spreadsheet for each subaward to identify grant-related expenditures as they occur so that they have documentation of which expenditures relate to which award and can easily show when funds have been fully expended. Either of these options is considered a best management practice. If the subrecipient is not able to do either of these options, writing the subaward number in the memo line on checks or next to expenses on a credit card statement for grant-related expenditures allows for easy identification and documentation that is minimally acceptable to auditors during a review.
For more information about issuing subawards or the requirements of both pass-through entities and subrecipients, please feel free to contact your WSFR Regional Office or the WSFR Training Branch staff.

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

**WSFR Policy & Programs:**

Members of the Clean Vessel Act Regulation Review Team (CVARRT) met for an in-person workshop the week of June 5. We thank those who attended and those who provided feedback that allowed us to really dig into considerations for updating the Clean Vessel Act rule at 50 CFR 85. The CVARRT will have a few more conference calls during August to prepare for a session at the SOBA Conference Federal Workshop on Monday, August 28. There we will share the CVARRT’s recommendations and thoughts and open it up to the whole group for further input. We expect to draft the proposed rule based on the CVARRT recommendations and the input received from those attending the SOBA Federal Workshop. Rulemaking has been delayed while the new administration determines processes for improving the regulatory agenda, but we will still target publishing the updated CVA rule by January 1, 2018.

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**BIG/CVA ANNOUNCEMENT ROUNDTABLE**
by Preston Smith

On July 7, 2017 Scott Meister, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Vice-President of the States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA), Preston Smith, Virginia Department of Health and Libby Yranski, Executive Director SOBA, attended a round table discussion on the economic benefits of transient boating with the Secretary of Interior Ryan Zinke at the historic Yorktown Freight Shed on Riverwalk Landing in Yorktown, Virginia. During the round table discussion, Scott Meister engaged in a conversation with Secretary Zinke regarding the importance of continued or perhaps increase funding through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust for the Boating Infrastructure Grant. Scott emphasized the need to seek an increase in funding for BIG due to the increased numbers of grant proposals submitted and the lack of available funds to address the nation’s transient boater needs.

Afterwards, Secretary Zinke announced $14.7 million in 2017-18 funding for the BIG program. The Secretary made known that Virginia was going to receive $769,000 in both Clean Vessel Act and BIG funds. The announcement was made while overlooking the York River and the BIG transient complex that was awarded in FY-2002 and completed in 2006.
60TH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF ALLIED SPORTFISHING TRADES (ICAST)
by Scott Meister

For the third year in a row, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) has participated in the International Convention of Allied Sportfishing Trades (ICAST), the world's largest sportfishing industry tradeshow. Taking place in Orlando, Florida, July 11-14, this year's event drew tens of thousands of attendees and hundreds of fishing-related manufacturers from 73 countries. Organized by the American Sportfishing Association, in partnership with the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) and the American Fly Fishing Trade Association (AFFTA), the event covered 200,000 square feet of exhibit space and was a site to behold.

Sportfishing equipment has a 10% excise tax, paid at the manufacturer level, which contributes to the Sport Fish Restoration Program. Administered by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the grant program provides funding to wildlife agencies for fishery projects, boating access, and aquatic education.

With over 20 companies to date, South Carolina’s sportfishing manufacturing industry is rapidly growing, and SCDNR has recognized a need to share with these industries how the Agency uses the excise tax monies collected on their products to manage aquatic resources and provide recreational opportunities. Building upon a model originally put forth by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, SCDNR wants to build lasting relationships with sportfishing industry partners with the goal of providing for socio-political support of recreational fishing, recreational access and related natural resource protection and management. ICAST is a perfect opportunity to build upon these critical relationships.

The 4-day event was packed with opportunities to learn more about the sportfishing industry, from tackle, to apparel, to boats, and accessories, the show had something for everyone. Numerous business development seminars were held and a session of government outreach presentations were held for industry partners.

2018 ICAST has been scheduled for July 10-13 in Orlando, Florida, so now is the time to start making plans for next year. If your state is interested learning more about SC’s Sportfish Restoration outreach to industry contact Scott Meister @ MeisterS@dnr.sc.gov.

ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES UPDATE
by Ryan Roberts

AFWA Annual Meeting (September 10-13, 2017)

Registration is now open for AFWA’s 2017 Annual Meeting in Sandy, Utah. Please find the conference schedule and committee meeting agendas at www.AFWAAnnualMeeting.org. Please make your hotel reservation at the Snowbird Resort by August 9, 2017.
Statement from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Supporting the Introduction of the HELP for Wildlife Act

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies supports the introduction of the Hunting Heritage and Environmental Legacy Preservation (HELP) for Wildlife Act (S. 1514). This bipartisan legislation would reauthorize important conservation programs and provide federal regulatory clarity for sportsmen.

U.S. Senator John Barrasso (R-WY), chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW), joined with Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD), Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), John Boozman (R-AR), and Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) to introduce the Hunting Heritage and Environmental Legacy Preservation (HELP) for Wildlife Act on Friday, June 30, 2017.

"This legislative package will move forward and strengthen a number of conservation programs that are important to our nation's outdoor heritage and fish and wildlife resources," said Nick Wiley, President of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Executive Director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. "This bill will reaffirm the tremendous value of conservation partnerships and the key role for state fish and wildlife agencies working closely with federal, tribal and industry partners and non-governmental organizations"

"The Association strongly supports this important legislation," said Executive Director Ron Regan. "We greatly appreciate that the Chairman and bill sponsors included the Fish Habitat Conservation through Partnerships provisions in the, HELP for Wildlife Act."

Specifically, the HELP for Wildlife Act will:

- Reauthorize the North American Wetlands Conservation Act until 2023;
- Reauthorize the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Act until 2023;
- Reauthorize the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act until 2023;
- Prohibit judicial review of the final rule de-listing the gray wolf in Wyoming that was reinstated by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia on March 3, 2017 and republished on May 1, 2017;
- Mandate the reissuance of the final rule de-listing the gray wolf in the western Great Lakes and prohibits judicial review;
- Reauthorize the Chesapeake Bay Program until 2023;
- Reauthorize the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails network and the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Grants Assistance Program until 2023;
- Finalize partnerships among public agencies and other interested parties for promoting fish conservation;
- Prevent farmers from being held liable for bird baiting for hunting purposes if they adhere to USDA and state agricultural best practices; and
- Promote the building and expansion of public target ranges.

The Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife Update

Thanks to the good work of Jen Mock Schaeffer (AFWA), and leadership by Jeff Crane (Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation) we are now in the final stages of the process with Congressman Don Young's office for reintroduction of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act in the House. Mr. Young is committed to leading the charge for this legislation and is ready to work with his colleague, Debbie Dingell of Michigan again to push the bill toward passage in the House. We believe we could have a scheduled
introduction as early as later this month, but certainly before August recess. We also felt it was important to have a more formalized campaign governance structure to provide strategic advice and overall guidance to the campaign, so we've created a campaign steering committee made up of the co-chairs of the Blue Ribbon Panel working groups, and a couple state directors as well as AFWA President Wiley. We wanted to maintain continuity and oversight from members of the Blue Ribbon Panel and provide good opportunities to engage those organizations/entities represented by the panelists more directly. Thanks to continued leadership and financial support from the states, a new Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife campaign logo has been developed and a new campaign website and other branded materials are in production and will be available for use very soon once we have officially launched the campaign (to coincide with the reintroduction of the bill in the House this summer). We are looking to early fall for a director/CEO level advocacy fly-in and a meeting of the Blue Ribbon Panel other events in DC. We are sure that we will have a House bill reintroduced by then and possibly a Senate bill as well, and will look forward to working with all partners to advocate for co-sponsors of that legislation soon.

**USFS Discusses Revamp of 30 Year Aquatic Resource Strategy**

AFWA recently hosted a call with the USFS and the state fish chiefs to discuss the USFS Draft National Fish and Aquatic Stewardship Strategy. When finalized the Draft Strategy will replace the Rise to the Future strategic plan that was implemented 30 years ago and seeks to provide a USFS framework for objectives such as; conserving fish and aquatic resources, increasing water dependent recreation, and facilitating collaboration, communication, and cooperation with states, tribes, and non-governmental partners. The USFS plans to review comments on the plan and roll out the updated strategy this Fall.

**AFWA Releases State Conservation Machine Report**

In total, the 50 state wildlife agencies own, manage, or administer wildlife conservation on more than 464 million acres of land and 167 million acres of lakes, reservoirs, wetlands, and riparian areas. State wildlife agencies employ nearly 50,000 employees and leverage the efforts of 190,000 volunteers. Collectively, state agencies have 11,000 degreed wildlife biologists, 10,100 law enforcement officers, and nearly 6,000 employees with advanced degrees. Annually, state wildlife agencies contribute more than $5.6 billion to conservation through their collective annual budgets. Clearly, the contribution of the 50 state fish and wildlife agencies is enormous and integral to wildlife conservation in North America.

Read more [here](#).

**RECREATIONAL BOATING AND FISHING FOUNDATION (RBFF) UPDATE**

by Stephanie Vatalaro

**Fishing and Boating Reimagined in New 2017 Take Me Fishing and Vamos A Pescar Ad Campaign**

RBFF is looking to disrupt with a message of less technology and more time in nature through its new Take Me Fishing and Vamos A Pescar ad campaign for 2017. The campaign positions fishing and boating as "the antidote to modern life" and encourages everyone to put down the touchscreens and pick up a fishing rod, embracing their inner "wild child."
The Take Me Fishing campaign will keep the "FirstCatch" hashtag that proved extremely popular among our target audience (those who typically participate in outdoor activities with their families, but may not have taken up fishing or boating) in 2016. Through the hashtag, anglers new and old are encouraged to share their first catch, whether it be first of a lifetime, season or day. We all know that #FirstCatch is more than just a fish on the line; it's an escape from the mundane and provides the real experience kids need to grow up, and families need to grow together. With this campaign and hashtag, RBFF is encouraging consumers to heed the call of the wild child and make their way to the great offline.

Additionally, RBFF has released a new public service announcement that highlights the link between fishing licenses and conservation. The PSA is available in video, audio and print with custom tagging for your organization available. Also available this year is a series of custom PSAs for each of the 50 states. Please download the PSA materials today for use in your own outreach.

**RBFF and the Recreational Boating Leadership Council Release Case Study Video Series**

With the help of RBFF, the Recreational Boating Leadership Council (RBLC) developed a series of educational videos focusing on businesses who are successfully engaging and selling to diverse markets. The video series is part of RBLC's New Markets Task Force and has been made available free of charge to all RBLC and RBFF stakeholders. All five videos in the series are available in the RBFF Resource Center.

**RBFF Promotions, Events and Influencers Reel in Participants**

Utilizing National Fishing and Boating Week (NFBW) as the kickoff of the fishing and boating season, RBFF began engaging consumers with promotions, events and digital content from social media influencers. During NFBW, #ReelFun Fishing Events at more than 1,600 Walmart stores across the country brought Fishing League Worldwide (FLW) Pro Anglers and fun activities to consumers. Since then, the #FirstCatch promotion and a fun Fish Personality Quiz have kept fishing and boating on the top of consumers' minds. The 2017 Best Family-Friendly Places to Boat and Fish list has also continued to pick up national media attention and RBFF's "school of influencers" are sharing their personal stories of family adventures on the water on social media and their own personal blogs.

**60 in 60: Tide Rising for Fishing Participation**

Thanks to recent reports by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Outdoor Foundation, it's clear that RBFF's 60 in 60 goal is off to a strong start. These reports show fishing license sales up 4.26% over the last 10 years and fishing's popularity gaining — it's still the number two adult outdoor activity, but is closing in on the number one spot, jogging.
Additionally, RBFF’s own Special Report on Fishing shows even more positive news. More people are taking up fishing (2.5 million new participants in 2016) and key audience segments are seeing strong participation. The Hispanic audience increased participation by 11% and the number of youth anglers is up to 11 million (+3%).

The 60 in 60 goal seems more attainable than ever before. But it will still take a concerted effort by the entire industry to reach the goal, and RBFF is leading the push. At the center of this effort is effective angler and boater recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) efforts. RBFF is spreading this message at industry events, through communications and leading by example with new resources and programs.

Reaching the 60 million angler mark would mean more than a $500 million increase in fishing license sales, $35 billion in annual economic contributions from the 14 million new anglers and a $10 billion annual increase in economic contributions thanks to the resulting 7.5 million new boaters. To learn more about the goal and to find out how you can get involved, please visit RBFF.org/60in60.

AMI UPDATE
by Eric Kretsch

AMI is at the mid-way point in this year's National Marina Days: Summer of Giving. This year's Marina Days has a focus on giving back to your community, with many marinas celebrating national marina days in June and July. Marinas are asked to give back to an organization of their choice. The official suggested charity of this year's Marina Days is Folds of Honor; Folds of Honor provides educational scholarships to the children and spouses of those killed or disabled while serving our nation. National Marina Days runs through Labor Day, for more information contact Michelle Umberger @ mumberger@marinaassociation.org.

AMI wants to welcome the Pacific Coast Congress of Harbor Masters and Port Managers (PCC) to the AMI affiliate program. We look forward to working with PCC in advancing the marina industry on the West Coast and throughout the US. Until next time.

DISCOVER BOATING ENCOURAGES PARTICIPATION WITH 'VACATION ON DEMAND'

Coming out of the Grow Boating Summit in December, attendees spanning boat, engine and accessory manufacturers as well as dealers and key industry partners, outlined Discover Boating's critical role as the first marketing touchpoint for helping to attract the next generation of boat owners—those people who are first-time boat buyers.

As a result, Discover Boating is focusing its 2017 campaign on introducing people to boating. In doing so, the strategy behind its 2017 campaign is 'Vacation on Demand'—a campaign that connects the kind of feelings and experiences that come from boating with the feelings and experiences that come from something most people understand—being on vacation. Whether its relaxation, escape, fun, being outdoors, or connecting with family and friends, boating is the ultimate vacation on demand.

To motivate people to consider boat ownership, the campaign shows people that owning a boat lets you take a "Vacation on Demand"—you can go where you want, when you want, on your own terms. This idea is integrated across all key Discover Boating marketing efforts this summer, including digital advertising, public relations,
influencer engagement and social media, to help attract the next generation of boat owners. Check out this new Discover Boating video, where a family is surprised with a vacation on the water to explore a range of different boats and activities.

There’s also a new geo-targeted Facebook ad that triggers when someone is near a body of water. What does that mean exactly? It’s an innovative way Discover Boating is able to connect with potential first-time buyers on a much more local level, in their backyard. The new ad provides a personalized recommendation for how, where, when and why that person can get on the water by connecting them with boating opportunities nearby, as well as photos, videos and updates from others in the area who are out on the water.

A crucial part of the campaign is how it connects these potential first-time buyers with brands. DiscoverBoating.com content is continually being updated to better serve the needs of first-time boat buyers as they move on the path to ownership and are beginning their boat-buying research. The website remains a hub for those exploring boat ownership as it sends people off to boat brand websites to shop and explore, otherwise known as referrals. Brands are reporting that Discover Boating is often one of the top three sources of web traffic to their website. In fact, manufacturers that are tuned into the referrals coming from Discover Boating and then nurturing these referrals as part of a comprehensive marketing effort, are seeing tremendous results from the campaign. To learn more about referrals click here for a quick video.

**NMMA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE**

**Successful 2017 American Boating Congress Draws Nearly 250 Attendees, Showcases Marine Industry’s Importance**

The 2017 American Boating Congress (ABC) — the marine industry’s premier political and legislative event produced by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) and more than 20 co-hosts — wrapped up drawing nearly 250 attendees who gathered on Capitol Hill to meet with the nation’s leaders and champion issues most impacting the recreational boating and fishing industries.

"NMMA is overwhelmed at the number of organizations across our industry that came together during ABC to educate the nation’s leaders on the significant impact recreational boating and fishing have throughout the U.S.," said NMMA President Thom Dammrich. "Making a lasting impact through advocacy requires every single voice our industry has to offer, and by joining forces each year, our presence has only continued to strengthen ties in Washington, D.C., creating positive change for recreational boating."


**Sport Fish Restoration & Wildlife Restoration Acts Generate $1.1B in Funding for State Agencies**

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke announced $1.1 billion in annual funding for state wildlife agencies through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund (SFRBTBF) and Wildlife Restoration Program. NMMA has been a longtime supporter of SFRBTBF, also known as Dingell-Johnson Act, as it is the backbone for fisheries conservation.
The funds, which are distributed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, support critical state fishing and boating projects, that otherwise might not be sustainable. Boaters and anglers lead the way in preserving our nation's waterways, contributing $600 million annually to SFRBTF from motor boat fuel and fishing equipment excise taxes.

State-by-state listings of the final Fiscal year 2017 apportionments of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund can be found here.

**Modern Fish Act Introduced in U.S. Senate**

The recreational fishing and boating community praised the Senate introduction of the Modern Fish Act by Senators Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii), John Kennedy (R-La.) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.). The "Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act of 2017" (Modern Fish Act) would improve public access to America's federal waters, promote conservation of our natural marine resources and spur economic growth. A companion bill, H.R. 2023, was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives on April 6, by Congressmen Garret Graves (R-La.), Gene Green (D-Texas), Daniel Webster (R-Fla.) and Rob Wittman (R-Va.).

**NMMA, Sportfishing Industry Commend Senate Committee Passage of Legislation on Fisheries Conservation**

Key legislation supporting recreational boating and fishing industry conservation principles moved forward in the Senate. The Hunting Heritage and Environmental Legacy Preservation Act (S. 1514), or HELP for Wildlife Act, which also included an amendment by Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.) on Great Lakes fishery research, passed by Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW).

Specific provisions related to the recreational boating and fishing industry in the HELP for Wildlife Act include:

- Protections for traditional fishing tackle from unwarranted regulation by the EPA.
- Authorizing the National Fish Habitat Partnerships program which will conserve, restore and enhance fish habitat throughout the nation, providing better fishing opportunities.
- Provisions beneficial to the health of the Chesapeake Bay.
- Reauthorization of important conservation programs like the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

**New Bill Introduced in Senate Aims to Improve Visitor Experience on Public Waters**

Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Representative Rob Bishop (R-UT) introduced a bipartisan bill that will update processes and policies on the nation's public lands and waters to improve the outdoor recreation experience. The Recreation Not Red-Tape Act (RNR) aims to reduce barriers to access and improve management processes on the nation's public lands and waters for Americans who enjoy boating, fishing, paddling, skiing, mountain biking and hiking.

**House and Senate Committees Move Forward with USCG Reauthorization**

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Authorization Act of 2017 (H.R. 2518) on May 24, coming less than a week after the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee passed their version of the bill (S. 1129). NMMA applauds both the House and Senate
committees for proposing legislation to reauthorize and support the United States Coast Guard in its missions to safeguard our shores and marine resources and ensure a 21st century maritime transportation system for America in FY18.

Much like S. 1129, the House bill includes a number of boating safety provisions that NMMA and the industry support, such as language on establishing a performance standard for visual distress signals, promoting the use of engine cut-off devices, and allowing certificates of documentation to be renewed every five years for recreational vessels. The House language on recreational boating safety differs slightly from the Senate version, in that H.R. 2518 would require installation of engine cut-off devices on vessels under 26 feet in length, but provides no direction to the USCG to ensure boat operators properly wear this important safety device. NMMA has been supportive of operators wearing engine cut-off devices since the USCG proposed a rulemaking in 2011.

Earlier this month, boating advocates, including NMMA, ASA, BoatUS, MRAA and NASBLA, sent letters to the House and Senate committees of jurisdiction urging operator wear of engine cut-off devices for vessels under 26 feet in length, when the device is factory installed and while operating above displacement speed - exceeding slow, trolling-like speeds. Currently, more than 85 percent of new vessels are factory installed with engine cut-off devices, yet operator wear remains low. This not only poses a risk for the operator and passengers, but perils law enforcement efforts to safely stop runaway boats.

There are a few more steps that must take place in the legislative process before the USCG Authorization Act is signed into law, and NMMA will continue to work with the House and Senate to make boating safety a top priority in the bill, and help ensure that final passed language directs operators of certain vessels to properly use the engine cut-off device.