SOBA NEWSLETTER December 14, 2017

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A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT: SCOTT MEISTER

Dear SOBA Members and Boating Industry Partners:

I hope December finds you all well and enjoying the many pleasures of the holiday season. Here in coastal South Carolina with our relatively mild winters, we’re lucky to have what amounts to an almost 12-month boating season and this is the time of year you’ll find me and my family on any given weekend, and many weekday evenings, enjoying the local waterways in our old Whaler. As we utilize the recreational...
boating access sites and marina facilities along our coast I feel a sense of pride that South Carolina has been able to preserve large portions of its waterfronts for public access and recreational boating use, a direct result of strong partnerships such as those that have resulted in successful initiatives including the Boating Infrastructure, Boating Access, and Clean Vessel Act programs. Extrapolated across the nation, the impact these programs are having on recreational boaters is enormous. I couldn't be more proud of the work that SOBA does every day to continue these successes and advance water-based recreational opportunities across all states, territories, and commonwealths.

Many examples of these success were on display this past August in Anchorage, Alaska, at our 31st annual conference. Hosted by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, and excellently coordinated by Paul Cyr and Valerie Thompson, this year's conference was a shining success. Covering topics ranging from ice & erosion renovations for boat ramps to sea level rise considerations for marina facilities to aquatic invasive species challenges, this conference had something for everyone across all the major programs that SOBA supports. I would like to extend a personal thank-you to our sponsors and exhibitors, without which the conference would not be possible, and to our members, many of which made a long trek to attend SOBA this year.

As exciting as Alaska was, we are now looking forward (and many are working feverishly) to our 2018 conference in Duluth, Minnesota. Hosted by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the conference is shaping up to be another excellent opportunity to advance national recreational boating issues and programs across the country. Nancy, Kevin and their team are busy crafting an agenda and planning the logistics as we prepare to head to the boater-friendly shores of Lake Superior.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome to our new Executive Board Member-At-Large Mike Wichrowski, Lands & Facilities Administrator with the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. Mike brings a wealth of boating access experience to the table and we are excited about his addition to the team and we appreciate his willingness to volunteer his time and efforts towards SOBA's mission.

Finally, as you read through this issue of the newsletter I think you'll agree with me that the volume and breadth of activities that SOBA is currently involved in is impressive and the work we do on behalf of the recreational boaters we advocate for is high-quality and relevant in nature. I couldn’t be more excited for what 2018 brings for SOBA and recreational boating programs across the country and I couldn’t be more honored to have the opportunity to help lead this organization into the future.

Sincerely,
Scott Meister
SOBA’S 32ND NATIONAL BOATING ACCESS CONFERENCE:
MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

by Nancy Stewart & Kevin Johnson — SOBA 2018 Conference Co-Host

Greetings from the Land of 10,000 Lakes. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources—Parks and Trails Division is excited to be hosting SOBA and the 32nd Annual National Boating Access Conference, to be held September 24–27 in Duluth, MN. If you haven’t already, block these dates on your calendar right now! Getting here is easy, you can fly to the Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport (MSP) or Chicago (ORD) and then fly or drive to Duluth (2.5 hour drive).

The conference will be held at the Duluth Entertainment Conference Center (DECC) aka “the Deck” which is located on the St. Louis River Harbor with views of Lake Superior. The DECC is a short walk through the skyway system or easy drive from the conference hotel, the Holiday Inn and Suites, where a block of rooms will be available at the per diem rate.

The conference theme, “Access is the Bridge to Superior Water Recreation Experiences” was chosen to reflect how important access is to peoples enjoyment of water. Lake Superior, one of the world’s largest freshwater lakes and the greatest of the great lakes will provide a stunning backdrop to the conference.

The conference will follow a format similar to recent years: a Monday workshop focusing on federal programs (SFR, BIG, CVA, and TRACS), Tuesday and Wednesday educational sessions, awards luncheon, business meeting, and banquet on Wednesday, and the Thursday boating access project site trip. The access project site trip will take you to two SOBA Award winning access sites on Lake Superior; the McQuade Small Craft Harbor and Two Harbors, Agate Bay which also has a tier 1 BIG project in the planning stage. We will also visit an inland lake access and a river access.

While in Duluth we hope you learn the difference between a “Laker” and a “Saltie”, and why watching the aerial lift bridge go up and down is the iconic and cool thing to do. Duluth offers a variety of restaurants, museums, shopping, fishing, hiking, biking and breathtaking scenery, find more information at Visit Duluth.

If you have specific topic ideas that you would like to see showcased in 2018, or if you have a topic you would like to present please send an email to info@sobaus.org.

LACY NICHOLS EDUCATION FUND:

Please consider providing some door prizes and/or a donation to our Silent Auction which benefits our Lacy Nichols Education Fund.

Lacy was a great friend to SOBA, and a leader and promoter of boating access throughout his long career. In 2013 SOBA established an educational fund in his honor to help SOBA members attend their annual National Boating Access conference. The fund provides up to $500 of non-federal matching funds associated with a Boating Access, Clean Vessel Act, or Boating Infrastructure Grant.

FINALLY, don’t forget that certain costs to attend our annual boating access conference are eligible under USFWS grants (Boating Access, CVA). Click HERE for more information.
RENEW YOUR 2018 SOBA MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

SOBA membership renewals were mailed on October 30th 2017. If you haven’t received your renewal or would like to pay via credit card please email Nakia Rounsaville or call directly at (312) 946-6264.

2018 SOBA AWARDS RECAP

Preston Smith and Trey Cooksey, SOBA Board Members announced during the 2017 States Organization Boating Access conference the following awards: The William H. Ivers Award was presented posthumously to Steve Miller who worked for Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and was instrumental in developing resource and facility opportunities for boaters but was also a longtime SOBA participant and board member. The Outstanding Service Award was presented to Fred Bedell a longtime employee of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Al Wolselgel, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission won the Professional Service Award for his steadfast service to recreational boating, dedication to the CVA program and unwavering support of SOBA. Outgoing Board Member Awards were presented to SOBA Past President Janine Belleque of the Oregon State Marine Board, and SOBA Past President Ron Christofferson of the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

The 2017 State Program Excellence Awards were presented to the State of Florida Clean Vessel Act program and the State of South Carolina’s Boating Infrastructure Grant program — Scott Meister, Program Coordinator accepted on behalf of the State of South Carolina. Although Brenda Leonard was unable to attend this year’s SOBA conference Deborah Furrow of the Florida’s Fish and Wildlife Conservation Committee accepted the award on behalf of Brenda and the State of Florida. In regards to the Outstanding Projects Award the State of North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission was recognized for its development of the Vandemere Boating Access Area. Sara Sherman, Project Engineer with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission accepted the award on behalf of the Commission. Dick Somerville, accepting on behalf of PDN Engineers and the City & Borough of Juneau, were recognized for the development of the Statter Harbor Launch Ramp Facility.

The first annual President’s Award, which highlights that project or activity that is judged to be innovative, useful, of high quality, unique and/or economical was presented to the Puerto Rico Department of Natural Resources for the Parguera Boat Ramp facility. Mayra Garcia and Luis Ve’lez accepted the award on behalf of the PR Department of Natural Resources.

BIG BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TASKFORCE UPDATE

by Scott Meister

The SOBA Boating Infrastructure Grant Program Best Management Practices Taskforce has been charged with creating a “Best Management Practices” document.
for the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program to assist grant applicants create complete, competitive funding proposals. As the competitiveness of the BIG Program has increased, the need to develop concise, high-quality proposals has never been greater.

Comprised of SOBA members from eight member states, the Taskforce has been making steady progress with a face-to-face meeting at the Alaska conference and quarterly conference calls. With nine chapters currently in development, members have split assignments based on experience and expertise. Much progress has been made to date but considerable effort still lies ahead.

The goal of the Taskforce is to have the final draft of the BMP’s completed and released in time to be utilized by applicants during the FY19 BIG funding cycle. With an anticipated BIG Notice Of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) release date of June 2018, having the final draft of the document completed by the NOFO release date is critical. In order to allow the necessary time for edits and revisions, plans are for the Taskforce to provide a working draft to the US Fish & Wildlife Service in January 2018 for review and editorial suggestions.

Although we are deep in the process at this point in time, we can always use more help and we welcome all parties who are interested in assisting, in any capacity, to please contact Scott Meister at MeisterS@dnr.sc.gov.

NEW PUMPOUT LOCATOR “APP” SUB-COMMITTEE
by Mike Wichrowski

Following this year’s SOBA conference, the Board moved ahead with forming a sub-committee to work with the San Francisco Estuary Partnership (SFEP) to further develop their pumpout locator app, Pumpout Nav. Over the past few years SFEP has been working on the development of this app using Clean Vessel Act (CVA) funding provided through California’s Division of Boating and Waterways. The mobile app provides boaters with information on pumpout locations, working status, fees, etc., that is updated quarterly based upon surveys conducted as part of California’s CVA program. The goal of the subcommittee will be to gather input from local, state, and federal partners across the country in an effort to expand and improve the app’s usefulness to both boaters and states. SOBA's roll as a leader in boating issues nationwide will help move the app forward so that it has nationwide applicability. If you work directly on CVA projects or have an interest in serving on the sub-committee, please reach out to me directly.

2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Virginia Department of Health and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries will be hosting the 2019 SOBA conference at the Renaissance Portsmouth — Norfolk Waterfront Hotel in Portsmouth, Virginia, September 9, 2019–September 12, 2019.

NATIONAL BOAT RAMP DATABASE

Earlier this year, SOBA teamed up with the Recreational Boating and Fishing
States Organization for Boating Access

Foundation (RBFF) to assist with their efforts to develop a comprehensive national database of public boat ramps as a service to the boating public and state agencies. In addition to making it easier to find a boat ramp in your area or when visiting from another state, RBFF’s websites (TakeMeFishing.org and VamosAPescar.org) work as conduits for sending visitors to the individual state agency web pages for more specific information. To date, at least 13 states have provided the data requested, resulting in several thousand new boat ramps being included in the RBFF database. Only basic data is being requested in order to minimize the effort on the part of SOBA members, while still providing enough information to make the database functional. As SOBA continues to coordinate with our membership in the remaining states, we strongly encourage you to take the time to help fulfill this project, which ultimately benefits your own state and its boaters.

**USFWS UPDATE**

by Brad Gunn

The Service’s Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) staff hopes those of you that attended the SOBA annual conference in Anchorage found it to be as useful and informative as we did!

**BOATING PROGRAMS’ UPDATES**

**Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program:** The Service received 33 BIG Tier 1 and 27 FY 2018 BIG Tier 2 applications from the States, Territories and the District of Columbia. Tier 1 applications are requesting approximately $4.1 million and the nationally competitive Tier 2 applications are requesting approximately $22.7 million in federal FY 2018 BIG funding. We anticipate having approximately $14.8 million available for BIG this year so the Tier 2 applications will be very competitive.

Tier 2 applications are normally reviewed and ranked by a committee made up of Service WSFR grant specialists and industry and state representatives assembled by the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (Council). Unfortunately, the Council will not participate this year as DOI Advisory groups’ activities are suspended pending DOI review of the charter and charge of each group. Therefore, the review and ranking of the FY 2018 applications will be made by the Service WSFR grant specialists. Subsequently, we will recommend applications to the Service Director for funding. The Service Director makes final grant selections for Tier 1 and Tier 2 funding. We anticipate announcing those selections during March 2018.

**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 2018 applications is December 4, 2017. WSFR Regional grant specialists will begin reviewing applications in December and the review will continue in the new year with WSFR Headquarters, NOAA, EPA, and Coast Guard and finalize with making recommendations for funding to the Service Director. As with the BIG applications the Service Director makes the final grant selections. We anticipate announcing those selections during May 2018.

**Boating Access Subprogram:** The Boating Access subprogram provides grant funds to the States, the District of Columbia and insular areas fish and wildlife agencies for projects that provide access to America’s waterways by developing new access facilities or renovation and/or improvement of existing facilities.

Some funds reverted this year and will go back into the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. The amount of reverted funds has not been completely tabulated as yet but is in excess of $750,000.

Ryan Oster from the Training Branch is working on a Boating Access Safety Margin tutorial as part of their Virtual Learning Series. It should be available on the wiki soon!

**TRAINING BRANCH INSIGHTS**

**Monitoring Payments and Drawdowns under Subawards:** The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (§ 2 CFR 200) provides many instances of increased autonomy to States and their respective individual agencies, compared to other non-Federal entities participating in Federal financial assistance. One such area includes receiving payments for Federal financial assistance. § 2 CFR 200.305(a) describes that for States, payments are governed by each individual Treasury-State Cash Management Improvement Act (CMIA) agreement and the default procedures codified at § 31 CFR 205. All other non-Federal entities receive payments under Federal financial assistance in accordance with § 2 CFR 200.305(b).

So what exactly are CMIA agreements? The Cash Management Improvement Act was passed in 1990 to resolve two recurring problems. First, States were consistently drawing Federal funds in advance of their needs. And secondly, the Federal government was providing late grant awards to States. The CMIA provides the rules and procedures for the efficient transfer of funds for Federal financial assistance programs between the Federal government and the States (including the District of Columbia and territories). The agreements, between each individual State and the Department of Treasury, cover the transfer of all Federal funds however; only major Federal assistance programs are included in the written Treasury-State Agreement (TSA) which specifies how the transfer of funds from those major assistance programs will take place.

Unfortunately, Federal funding from the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs (to include Wildlife Restoration, Sport Fish Restoration, Enhanced Hunter Education, Clean Vessel Act, Boating Infrastructure Grant Program, and State Wildlife Grants) is typically not considered a major Federal assistance program and therefore is not
covered in the written TSA. As a result, WSFR State recipients must follow their internal State policies and procedures regarding whether they receive payment for Federal financial assistance either as a reimbursement or as an advance payment.

While most WSFR State agency recipients utilize the reimbursement method, both the CMIA and § 2 CFR 200.305(b) allow for non-Federal entities to be paid in advance, as long as the recipient minimizes the time elapsing between the transfer of funds from the United States Treasury (or the pass-through entity in the case of a subrecipient) and the subsequent disbursement of those funds by the non-Federal entity. § 2 CFR 200.305(b)(1) further clarifies that, “Advance payments to a non-Federal entity must be limited to the minimum amounts needed and be timed to be in accordance with the actual, immediate cash requirements of the non-Federal entity in carrying out the purpose of the approved program or project. The timing and amount of advance payments must be as close as is administratively feasible to the actual disbursements by the non-Federal entity for direct program or project costs and the proportionate share of any allowable indirect costs.”

Recent audits conducted by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) on Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) grant recipients have determined that some State agencies have conducted improper drawdowns on awards that involved subrecipients. Specifically, several instances were noted where State agencies awarded money to subrecipients and State policies allowed for the subrecipients to be paid in advance. The State agencies subsequently drew down the total amount of Federal funds under the awards. During their reviews, auditors contacted the subrecipients and discovered that several had not spent all of the funds prior to the end of the award. However, the State agencies drew all the Federal funds as if the subrecipients had expended all of the money. In essence, the State agencies overdraw Federal funds and had not reimbursed the Federal awarding agency, in one case several years after the initial drawdown, the Federal share of the outstanding amount of the award.

The auditors noted that the State agencies perhaps did not have policies and procedures in place to minimize the time between the drawdown of funds and their disbursement by subrecipients. State agencies are encouraged to implement policies and procedures to monitor and verify whether their subrecipients are prepared to disburse Federal funds in accordance with § 2 CFR 200.305(b). In cases where subrecipients lack the internal controls necessary to meet this requirement, then State agencies may consider requiring subrecipients to provide evidence that they actually expended the subaward amounts prior to the State agency drawing down Federal funds.

For more information about receiving payments for financial assistance awards, please feel free to contact your WSFR Regional Office or the WSFR Training Branch staff.

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WSFR POLICY UPDATES

The draft CVA regulation update is delayed until likely February 2018. However, the next steps will be pre-rulemaking review, so all will have the opportunity to continue to
States Organization for Boating Access

work with WSFR on building the update.

Please sign up for the WSFR Policy & Programs ListServ to stay connected to current news.

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NASBLA NEWS

Operation Dry Water Results Announced  
During the annual three-day heightened awareness and enforcement Operation Dry Water weekend, hundreds of local, state and federal law enforcement agencies made 518 boating under the influence arrests nationwide.

The Operation Dry Water campaign targets boating under the influence, through heightened awareness and enforcement. Annually, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard coordinates the saturation of thousands of officers who are on the lookout for boating under the influence law violations.

Agencies and campaign supporters also increase boater outreach leading up to the three-day weekend in an effort to educate all boaters about safe boating practices. This year’s Operation Dry Water heightened awareness and enforcement weekend took place June 30–July 2, 2017 nationwide.  
READ MORE

Garner Award presented to Minnesota Legislators for Sophia’s Law  
The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) presents Minnesota legislators, Senator Melisa Franzen & Representative Jerry Hertaus the 2017 NASBLA Garner Leadership Award for Sophia’s Law.

Established in tribute of William B. Garner, who successfully marshaled the nation’s first boat operator licensing law through state legislature, the Garner Award is presented to those men and women whose outstanding effort and achievement have
elevated state or federal policy interventions to heights not previously attained. READ MORE

NASBLA BOAT Program attends National Emergency Management Association Meeting
John Fetterman, NASBLA Deputy Executive Director and Dave Considine, BOAT Program Director attended the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) annual forum and addressed members of the NEMA’s Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) Committee. The Emergency Management Assistance Compact is the framework for activating mutual aid assistance between states and the federal government, at times when the response of appropriate resources is critical. READ MORE

NASBLA Receives Approval for New Human Propelled National American Standard
NASBLA has received approval from the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) of its third American National Standard. ANSI/NASBLA 101-2017 Basic Boating Knowledge — Human-Propelled is recognized as a American National Standard as of September 28, 2017. All three American National Standards are available for free download on the National Education Standards webpage.

ANSI recognition finalizes work on this standard which began in September 2013. The standard underwent eight (8) public reviews during which the National Boating Education Standards Panel reviewed and individually disposed of over 250 public comments during this 4 year effort. READ MORE

ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES UPDATE
by Ryan Roberts

We are excited to give you an update on the Alliance for America’s Fish & Wildlife campaign. It's going to be an exciting fall with the expected introduction of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) anticipated any day now.

There has been a change in lead sponsorship with Congressman Fortenberry (R-NE) now taking the lead on the bill, with Debbie Dingell (D-MI) being the lead co-sponsor. Don Young's office is currently focusing on other priorities and they agreed it would be best to have Mr. Fortenberry take the lead. Representatives Fortenberry and Dingell are excited and eager to take the lead on this bill and want to get it dropped in the House ASAP.

We sent a separate email last week with a draft press release from the Alliance and AFWA. We hope you will be able to draft your own press releases/statement of support of the bill once it is dropped. Please feel free to use the quotes from our press releases in your own releases. We are coordinating with members of your staff to give them this update and work on communications and press outreach materials as well. The Alliance will be hosting a Tele-Press event when the bill is introduced to give the bill sponsors and hopefully some of you an opportunity to make statements to the press. We are coordinating with Representatives Fortenberry and Dingell, as well as Alliance partners including industry and NGO leaders to speak during this event. We
States Organization for Boating Access would also like to invite you to participate if available.

We will reach out to you with more details once we get a firm date of when the Recovering America's Wildlife Act will be introduced. Thank you for your continued leadership and support and we look forward to working with you and your staff to pass this historic legislation. For more information, visit this link.

RepYourWater Teams Up With Beyond the Pond to Benefit the Driftless Area

RepYourWater, a Colorado-based angling and hunting gear company, founded by the husband and wife team of Garrison and Corinne Doctor, has a new Driftless Area 2.0 hat for sale with 1% of sales going to Beyond the Pond, 501c3 non-profit organization for the National Fish Habitat Partnership. Sales of the hat will benefit conservation work through the Driftless Area Restoration Effort (DARE), a National Fish Habitat Partnership Partner. RepYourWater is a leader in providing creative and unique designs on high-quality apparel and merchandise as well as making a difference for wildlife habitat around the country. In addition to benefitting from 1% of sales of the Driftless 2.0 hat, Beyond the Pond will also receive 1% of all hat sales from Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois state hats, as they make up the Driftless Area. RepYourWater state hats can be found here: http://bit.ly/2gZ9X3u.

Along with Beyond the Pond, RepYourWater donates 1% of sales of corresponding designs to the Trout Unlimited chapters of Canada, Wyoming, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Southeastern Conservation Project, New Mexico, and Connecticut, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers Chapters in Utah, Alaska and Montana, the Wild Steelhead Coalition, New Mexico Wildlife Federation, Delta Waterfowl Idaho Wildlife Federation, Boundary Waters Trust, the Billfish Foundation, and the Bonefish and Tarpon Trust. RepYourWater also donates 10% of sales from its conservation collection to their conservation partners, which Beyond the Pond is fortunate to be included in. Additional details on the conservation collection can be found here.

Garrison Doctor, co-owner of RepYourWater, is excited about the new partnership saying, “RepYourWater is thrilled to partner with Beyond the Pond. We feel that Beyond the Pond, through the National Fish Habitat Partnership is supporting great conservation work in the Driftless Area and across the country. We hope that our 1% donations to the Driftless Area will provide much-needed resources to meet the goals of the Driftless Area Restoration Effort.”

“Beyond the Pond is fortunate to be a RepYourWater conservation partner,” said Tom Champeau, Chair of the National Fish Habitat Board. “We are pleased to team up with RepYourWater as we look to build relationships with businesses to benefit our 20 regional Fish Habitat Partnerships.”

Commercial Vessel Incidental Discharge Act Negotiations Continue to Threaten States' Authorities

CVIDA (S. 168/H.R. 1154) continues to preempt states’ current authorities to regulate, protect and manage in state waters the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS), water pollution, and pathogens for all commercial vessels. It also expands a list of exemptions under "discharges incidental to the normal operation of vessel" to include known introduction pathways for spreading AIS. If you are able, please contact your
Members of Congress and strongly oppose CVIDA because it preempts current state authority.

Discussions on Marine Fisheries Management Continue in the House and Senate
On September 27th the House Natural Resources Committee Subcommittee on Water Power and Oceans conducted a hearing to review legislation aimed at amending the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). The legislation discussed included H.R. 2023, the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act of 2017 (Graves — LA), which was a discussion item at the AFWA Ocean Resources Policy Committee meeting in Sandy, Utah and remains a bill of interest.

The conversation on sustainable management of marine fisheries and reauthorization of the MSA continues in the Senate. On October 24th the Senate Commerce Subcommittee overseeing oceans and fisheries policy met to receive testimony from numerous fisheries scientists on the current status of ocean fisheries and the potential reauthorization of the MSA. This hearing marks the fourth hearing of a series focusing on marine fisheries management. Although no bills were considered at the October 24th hearing, it is of interest to share that the Senate has a companion bill to H.R. 2023, S. 1520 (Wicker - MS). AFWA staff are currently working to assess the position of our state members on these bills.

RECREATIONAL BOATING AND FISHING FOUNDATION (RBFF)
UPDATE
by Stephanie Vatalaro

Engaging the Next Generation with the Take Me Fishing First Catch Centers
For years, sports like baseball, football and golf have enjoyed the benefits of successful youth development programs. In contrast, fishing and boating are activities that have generally been passed down from one generation to the next. However, with fewer and fewer parents and grandparents teaching the importance of outdoor activity, and fishing and boating in particular, to their children and grandchildren, RBFF knew something had to be done.

Starting in late 2017 and ramping up in 2018 will be two new pilot locations for Take Me Fishing First Catch Centers. These centers will encourage youth and families to learn how to fish and boat, and by focusing on repeat visits, will foster lifelong participation.

To learn more about the Take Me Fishing First Catch Centers and the two pilot organizations, head to the Take Me Fishing Newsroom.

RBFF Leading the Way With R3 Resources
With fishing and boating participation on the rise, we are off to a strong start in reaching the 60 in 60 goal. However, it’s clear that reaching that 60 million angler mark will take coordinated effort from all facets of the fishing and boating community. With that in mind, RBFF has created several resources that aim to help organizations with their R3 planning and execution.

Organizations can discover why R3 matters in the Recommendations and Strategic Tools for Effective Angler Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (R3) Efforts,
develop a plan with the Angler R3 Plan Guiding Document, and evaluate their efforts with the worksheet included in the Best Practices Workbook for Boating, Fishing and Aquatic Resources Stewardship Education. All of these resources can be found on the new R3 webpage in the Take Me Fishing Resource Center.

**RBFF’s Impact on the Industry**

Did you know that for every $1 RBFF spends, $48 is generated for the economy? It’s true. Through RBFF’s consumer outreach campaigns, partnerships with state agencies, grant programs and more, RBFF is driving revenues that contribute much-needed funds to conservation programs across the country.

With the fishing and boating community already making significant progress toward the 60 in 60 goal, RBFF’s efforts are more needed than ever. With every angler representing a $2,500 opportunity, reaching the 60 in 60 goal could bring a $35 billion increase in economic contributions from anglers.

As the United States continues to become more diverse by the day, inclusion will be key to our success as an industry. RBFF is leading the charge with its multicultural messaging and focus on females and youth anglers. This has led to new participants skewing young and female, and resulted in an 11% increase in Hispanic participation and a 3% increase in youth participation. You, too can get involved by using RBFF’s free resources like multicultural images, event planning materials and a Spanish translation guide, all available in the RBFF Resource Center.

So, as we continue on our path to reach 60 million anglers, we thank our valuable partners who have backed us so far and ask for even more support as we push for more participation, and more revenues for our partners.

**New MOU Unites RBFF, Industry, and Agencies in 60 in 60 Goal**

A new memorandum of understanding (MOU) was recently signed, bringing together RBFF, the American Sportfishing Association (ASA), the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The MOU calls for increased fishing and boating opportunities on public lands and waterways throughout the United States. Ultimately, the MOU will help the organizations promote fishing and boating opportunities in the quest to reach the 60 in 60 goal. Read more about the unprecedented MOU in the Take Me Fishing Newsroom.

**Nearly 50,000 Boats Re-Registered through RBFF Program**

RBFF’s successful Boat Registration Marketing Program enjoyed a significant increase in registrations in 2017. The program reeled in 49,867 registrations, up more than 4,000 over the last two years. The 2017 program earned $1.8 million in gross revenue for the 19 state agency partners. Even more impressively, the program saw a nearly 9% response rate and a lift of 5.49% over the control group.
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE UPDATE
by Corita Waters

How Much is A River Worth? Understanding the Economic Impact of the Huron River and Water Trail (sponsored by the National Water Trails Peer Network)

Date: Tuesday, December 19th; 2:00–3:00 PM Eastern
Registration: The webinar is FREE but you do need to register at this link.

Description:

In 2016, the Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) commissioned a unique study to measure the economic impact of the river on local communities, focusing on Huron River Water Trail activities and the value of natural systems that maintain a healthy, clean river. Through The Economic Impact of the HURON RIVER study, a Grand Valley State University research team quantified the recreation-related spending attributed to the Huron River and the value of the river’s ecosystem services. They found the river’s contribution to the local economy to be enormous.

Having clear and trusted information about the economic value of your river can help support your conservation message, engage new partners, and guide future investments. Join us for this webinar to learn the details of how the study was conducted, its key findings and how HRWC anticipates using the information to support its ongoing work. This webinar is sponsored by the National Water Trails Peer Network, a peer network for Trail Managers of the National Water Trails System.

Presenters:

- Elizabeth Riggs, Huron River Watershed Council Deputy Director
- Dr. Paul Isely, Grand Valley State University Associate Dean and Principle Investigator

NPS Trip Planning Guide
Each year thousands of visitors to national parks are involved in incidents, resulting in injury or death, that were unintentional and could have been avoided.

The NPS Trip Planning Guide is a document that provides visitors with general safety actions that can be applied to their visit to a national park no matter what their activity (e.g. hiking, kayaking, camping).

The target audience is individuals or groups that have little to no outdoor recreation experience and that participate in frontcountry, day-long trips. However, the safety messages highlighted are beneficial to any and all park visitors.

The NPS Trip Planning Guide divides a visitor’s trip into four phases:
Before the Trip: “Know Before You Go”
Arrival at the Park: “Ask a Ranger”
During the Trip: “Assess and Adjust”
After the Trip: “Share the Experience”

Each phase features its own specific safety actions visitors can follow to avoid some of the most common mistakes made when recreating in national parks. Visitors are responsible for their safety by properly planning and preparing for their trip, using reasonable judgment to avoid risks, and following warnings and advice from park staff during their visit to a national park. Following the principles outlined in the NPS Trip Planning Guide can help visitors avoid some of the most common mistakes people make.

**BoatUS UPDATE**

2017 has been a busy year at BoatU.S. our membership has grown to near record levels, as has the number of students taking our free online boating safety course, now reaching over 150,000 students each year. Our Government Affairs team has been very active and the BoatU.S. Foundation is conducting some cutting edge research. All of this together makes boating more accessible and affordable and supports the efforts of partner organizations like SOBA.

Our Government Affairs team, now led by Chris Edmonston has been very active with the newly formed Outdoor Recreation Industry Roundtable (ORIR). ORIR is a group of outdoor recreational professional including BoatU.S. and NMMA who work directly with the new administration to foster the use of public private partnership to strengthen the recreation industry. Programs like BIG and CVA are seen as tangible examples of effective programs that engage both public and private sectors.

The BoatU.S. Foundation in partnership with the National Safe Boating Council and the U.S. Coast Guard embarked on research on the challenge of distracted boating with the use of headsets that monitor brain activity. The Foundation is also leading in boating education developments by building upon our on the water training courses and in 2018 we will completely overhaul our free online course. On the environmental front we continue to work with industry and natural resource agencies on the challenges of invasive species inspection and decontamination and are partnering with TowBoatU.S. captains to take on large marine debris removal projects.

One thing that is changing in 2018 is staffing. Susan Shingledecker has accepted a new position as Vice President of the Chesapeake Conservancy here in Annapolis, MD starting in the new year. Most of you know Alanna Keating who has attended a number of SOBA conferences. She and Chris will continue to be primary liaisons to SOBA. We will soon advertise a new position with environmental and boating background being key qualifications. If you know of someone who might be a good fit, please let us know.
AMI UPDATE
by Eric Kretsch

IMI announces Intermediate Marina Manager Course in Austin, TX
The International Marina Institute will host an Intermediate Marina Manager course February 18–22, 2018 in Austin, Texas. This course focuses on marina operations, policies, and procedures and is the first step to becoming a Certified Marina Manager or Operator. For more information see HERE.

AMI joins the Outdoor Recreation Industry Roundtable
The Association of Marina Industries (AMI) is proud to announce our membership to the Outdoor Recreation Industry Roundtable (ORIR). AMI joins America’s outdoor recreation leaders to promote the growth of the outdoor recreation economy, through policy and legislative reform.

NMMA, AMI, and state trade associations submit letters on Harvey and Irma relief
AMI joined the National Marine Manufacturing Association and other trade associations to members of the Texas and Florida federal delegation in order to elevate awareness on the impact Hurricane Harvey and Irma had on marinas and boating infrastructure in Texas and Florida respectively. See an example of the Florida and Texas letters.

AMI and Affiliates submit proposal to 2020 National Electric Code Update
AMI and its affiliates (Virginia Marine Trades Association, Marina Association of Texas, Midwest Marina Association, and the Pacific Coast Congress of Harbor Masters and Port Managers) submitted a proposal for the 2020 National Electric Code update. This effort is to connect better with a code making process that effects almost every marina and boatyard business in the United States. More updates will come as the 2020 update process moves forward.

IMBC announces Hurricane Recovery Forum
The 2-hour session, schedule for Friday, February 2nd, 2017; 2–4 PM at the Ernest N. Memorial Convention Center, New Orleans, LA, will focus on successful post storm safety and recovery. For more information click here.

Registration is now open for IMBC

DISCOVER BOATING

Grow Boating Marketing Summit Explores Role of Brands, Discover Boating Campaign in Reaching New Boat Buyers

Discover Boating’s First-Time Boat Buyer Study is helping boat manufacturers and dealers identify ways to attract and engage new boat buyers. This research on first-time boat buyers was highlighted in the first-ever Maximize Your Grow Boating Investment: Marine Industry Marketing Summit, held September 18, ahead of the International BoatBuilders’ Exhibition and Conference (IBEX) in Tampa. The Summit featured marketing and research experts who outlined industry data insights, exploration into the mind of the first-time boat buyer and best practices for how the recreational boating industry can stay engaged with today’s increasingly digital consumer through their own marketing strategies and with the Discover Boating campaign. Click here for more information on the Grow Boating Marine Industry
NMMA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

U.S. Departments of Interior and Agriculture Sign Unprecedented MOU with Fishing and Boating Industry

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) recently announced a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), the American Sportfishing Association (ASA), the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) and the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF). The unprecedented MOU, signed just after U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke declared October will officially be recognized as National Hunting and Fishing Month, was created to develop and expand cooperation among the participating parties for planning and implementing mutually-beneficial projects and activities to promote recreational fishing and boating conducted on public lands and waterways.

"Anglers and recreational boaters help bolster many local economies in the pursuit of these American pastimes," said U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke. "We want to make sure to encourage more people to cast out their lines and get their boats out on the water. Partnerships like this are vital as we work to increase access to public lands and waters and pass on these traditions to future generations."

“The MOU provides a tremendous opportunity to work together with our partners in the outdoors and the Department of the Interior to ensure sufficient access and conservation of our nation’s public waterways,” said NMMA President, Thom Dammrich. “Waterway access and conservation are critical to recreational boating—an industry made up of nearly 650,000 people who help deliver an estimated $121 billion in annual economic impact in the U.S. each year.”

Click here to read the full press release.

EPA Invites NMMA to Join Smart Sectors Partnership

NMMA recently joined the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the launch of Smart Sectors, a partnership program between the Agency and regulated industries, like marine manufacturing, focused on achieving better environmental outcomes. Being part of this program is a tremendous step forward for our industry as it creates more meaningful collaboration and builds more open dialogue with EPA. NMMA’s John McKnight was invited to attend the launch event alongside BRP-Evinrude’s Jeff Wasil. Other industries in the partnership include Aerospace, Agriculture, Automotive, Cement and Concrete, Chemical Manufacturing, Construction, Electronics and Technology, Forestry and Wood Products, Iron and Steel, Mining, Oil and Gas, and Utilities and Power Generation.

“When we consider American business as a partner, as opposed to an adversary, we can achieve better environmental outcomes," said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. “The Smart Sectors program is designed to effectively engage business partners throughout the regulatory process. The previous administration created a narrative that you can’t be pro-business and pro-environment. This program is one of the many ways we can address that false choice and work together to protect the environment. When industries and regulators better understand each other, the economy, public, and the
environment all benefit.”

“We are thrilled to be part of the EPA’s launch of its Smart Sectors Program and are proud to represent an industry that’s always first in line when it comes to partnering with EPA to improve its processes and benefits,” said John McKnight, senior vice president of government relations for the National Marine Manufacturers Association. “The recreational boating industry is unique in that while the EPA, the State of California, and many international environmental government agencies place stringent environmental requirements on our products, our customers—the 142 million Americans who went boating last year—also demand and expect clean water and a healthy environment in which to fish, swim, and enjoy watersports. As a treasured American pastime with 95 percent of the boats sold in the U.S., made in the U.S., an estimated 35,000 marine-related businesses, which provide approximately 650,000 jobs, and an estimated $121 billion in economic impact, the recreational boating industry is one of our country’s driving economic engines that is eager to continue meaningful collaboration with the EPA.”

A sector-based approach can provide benefits, such as: increased long-term certainty and predictability, creative solutions based on sound data; and, more sensible policies to improve environmental protection. Program leads for each sector will serve as ombudsmen within the Agency across program and regional offices. Staff will also conduct educational site tours, host roundtables with EPA leadership, analyze data and advise about options for environmental improvement; maintain open dialogue with business partners and their environmental committees; and, develop reports that profile the impact of each sector on the environment and the economy.

Smart Sectors aims to facilitate better communication and streamline operations internally at EPA. The program is located in the Office of Policy’s Immediate Office, which enables the sector leads to work across EPA’s land, water, air, and chemical program offices, as well as with environmental justice, enforcement and compliance assistance, and other offices, including EPA regional offices.

For more information, visit this link.

Recreational Boating and RV Industries Join Forces to Show Support for Public-Private Partnerships
NMMA President, Thom Dammrich, and RVIA President, Frank Hugelmeyer, together penned an opinion editorial supporting Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s plan for public-private partnerships. The Op-Ed ran in the Denver Post in October and makes the argument for public/private partnerships, noting that they are not privatization and will in fact expand access and improve Americans’ experiences on our nation's public outdoor lands and waters. Click here to see the Op-Ed in the Denver Post.

Recreational Boating and Fishing Industries Advocate For Modern Fish Act
A coalition of groups from across the recreational boating and fishing industries, led by the Center for Sportfishing Policy and including NMMA, continue to work toward seeing the Modern Fish Act get passed. In late October, a hearing was held by the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard, which is chaired by Senator Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska). The hearing, titled "Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA): Fisheries Science" was an important step in educating lawmakers on why the Modern Fish Act is an ideal solution. It was the fourth MSA hearing held by the Subcommittee this year. A video of the hearing and witness testimony can be found here.
“We thank Chairman Sullivan for gathering the Subcommittee for this important series of hearings on the Magnuson-Stevens Act,” said Jeff Angers, president of the Center for Sportfishing Policy. “The Senate has heard from federal fisheries officials, all stakeholders and scientific experts regarding the condition of our nation’s fisheries. The need for updates to the Magnuson-Stevens Act is abundantly clear, and we have confidence Chairman Sullivan will use the information revealed in these hearings to better serve the American people and our fisheries.”

Witnesses at the hearing included:

- Dr. Ray Hilborn, professor at University of Washington School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences
- Dr. Larry McKinney, director of Texas A&M University Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies
- Karl Haflinger, founder and president of Sea State, Inc.
- Dr. Michael Jones, professor at Michigan State University Quantitative Fisheries Center

Dr. Hilborn reported to the committee that, “Overfishing remains a concern for a limited number of stocks but should not continue to be the most important concern for U.S. fisheries policy.” And while he pointed to some positive outcomes brought by implementing total allowable catch for “individually targeted, large scale industrial fisheries,” he argued it is “totally inappropriate for recreational” fisheries.

Earlier this year, the “Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act of 2017” (Modern Fish Act) was introduced in both chambers of Congress to address the unworkable requirements placed on the recreational fishing sector by MSA. The bipartisan Modern Fish Act (S. 1520/H.R. 2023) is based on the recommendations provided by the Morris-Deal Commission on Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Management, established in 2013 to bring meaningful recreational fishing policy recommendations to the discussion of reauthorizing MSA.

Dr. McKinney, chairman of the Morris-Deal Commission, spoke to those recommendations during the hearing noting, “Recreational fish should be managed, not as a commodity, but as a natural resource belonging to all Americans and accessible by all Americans. Flexibility to meet differing regional angler needs, as well as, ecological and biological subtitles across large geographic reaches is essential.”

The Modern Fish Act would finally recognize the differences between commercial and recreational fishing by allowing alternative management tools for recreational fishing that are proven in other jurisdictions; reexamining fisheries allocations; smartly rebuilding fish stocks, and improving recreational data collection. The bill aims to benefit fishing access and conservation by incorporating modern management approaches, science and technology to guide decision-making.