PRESIDENT'S LETTER
I hope you're all enjoying the spring weather wherever you are. Here in the Pacific Northwest, spring came early followed promptly by the Governor's emergency drought declaration in five counties. I'm bringing this up because it relates to the upcoming National Boating Access Conference theme of "Green Access, Clean Boating, Blue Waters". We are all working to address the challenges of providing recreational boating access in response to droughts, flooding, increased storm activity and the change in boating activities as a result. This year's conference provides many educational and informational sessions on these topics, among others. Our 2015 conference host, Mike Wichrowski, Fish and Wildlife Administrator for Vermont, along with his team, has been busy planning for everyone's attendance on September 21-24 at the beautiful Basin Harbor Club on Lake Champlain. We have an excellent event planned for September, so watch for updates via SOBA's ListServ. Online registration is already open. Click HERE for more general information about the conference, agenda and hotel accommodation.

Now is also the time to take advantage of the opportunity to apply for the Lacy "Nick" Nichols Education Fund, which was set up to assist SOBA colleagues offset some of their conference attendance costs, or to bring a second person to the Conference. This is an excellent resource if you are having difficulty finding travel funds. The Lacy E. "Nick" Nichols Education Fund provides a resource to members who have a desire to further their knowledge and expertise in boating access and related issues through continuing education. Please promote this resource among your colleagues to encourage participation in Vermont. We have streamlined the application process for ease of use — click HERE for more information. If you have questions, or would like to discuss this further, contact Craig Walker at craigwalker@utah.gov.

Please note that if your particular state agency is not the designated agency assigned for SOBA membership, conference member pricing will still be extended to your agency personnel due to the fact that your State is the SOBA member, AND finally, SOBA reminds its colleagues that certain costs are eligible under USFWS grants (Boating Access, CVA), in particular, memberships and certain conference costs, so please use these resources to assist you in attending SOBA's National Boating Access Conference in October.

Please contact Nakia Hunt (nhunt@nmma.org / 312-946-6264) or Bernice McArdle (bmcardle@nmma.org / 312-946-6280) if you have questions, or if we can help you in any way.

SOBA's 2015 Call of Board Members has been announced. Being a Board member is a very rewarding experience, both professionally and personally. Board members help our organization face new challenges arising from reauthorization, contribute to nationally renowned technical resources, assist in shaping how federal programs are administered, work with the leaders of other boating industry organizations, and affect long-term positive change within the world of boating access. Please give thought to running for a board seat, or pass along the name of someone whom you think might be interested to James Adams james.adams@dgif.virginia.gov I am honored to be part of SOBA's board. Its members are a group of highly motivated, passionate people interested in improving, expanding, and promoting boating access.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all in Vermont in September, and I am always available to talk with you about the work of SOBA. You can contact me anytime at Janine.belleque@state.or.us

SOBA MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN THE TRACKING RESOURCES AND ACTIONS FOR CONSERVATION SPECIES (TRACS) RECREATIONAL BOATING WORKSHOP

by Pat Harrell

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) held a TRACS Recreational Boating Workshop in Denver earlier this year that included USFWS Region Coordinators, and representatives from USFWS offices in Washington. Three SOBA members (state representatives) attended; Ron Christofferson (AZ), SOBA VP, Valerie Blajeski, Alaska, and Patricia Harrell (FL), SOBA Board
TRACS was developed for Wildlife grant programs, and the current matrix did not demonstrate what is actually being accomplished with boating access programs. Consequently this Workshop allowed participants discuss the three (3) Boating Grant Programs, how the states delineate projects, and what we need to report on for construction, major renovations, and operation and maintenance projects.

SOBA is assisting the USFWS coordinate direct input from these programs in an attempt to save time and effort while developing a matrix that will better fit these programs. In fact, the USFWS developers for TRACS advised workshop participants that they gained a tremendous amount of valuable knowledge about boating programs that will help them meet the training and development needs of TRACS Recreational Boating users.

NEWS FROM THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE AND SPORT FISH RESTORATION PROGRAM
by Christy Vigfusson

Greetings and happy spring! We hope nicer weather has hit your part of the country, and that you are ready to welcome another boating season. Here's a bit of what's going on with the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) Boating Grant Programs. Please feel free to touch base with us if you would like more information, or would like to get more involved with any of the described activities (contact information at the end of this editorial).

Wildlife TRACS:
As reported by Pat Harrell within this newsletter, earlier in the year representatives of WSFR held a meeting with a few members of the SOBA Board to discuss TRACS, our new performance accomplishment reporting system. Potential modifications to TRACS regarding the Clean Vessel Act (CVA) Program, Boating Infrastructure Grants (BIG), and Boating Access reporting elements were discussed. The SOBA Board recommended new activity types to capture boating facilities, such as boat wash stations, tie-up spaces, shelters, docks, slips, moorings, access roadways, and parking areas; over 30 boating activities in all. The goal of these discussions is to allow for more relevant and accurate objectives to be captured by TRACS related to the work these programs fund. We will continue our dialogue with the SOBA board over the coming months to ensure that we continue to receive feedback and recommendations for improvements.

Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG):
The BIG program offers two levels of funding, Tier 1 and Tier 2. Tier 1 may be competitive within the States and provides a maximum Federal award of $100,000 per State annually. Twenty-one States requested a total of $1,995,439 in BIG Tier 1 funds, and offered total non-Federal cost share of $1,896,306. Tier 2 is nationally competitive and typically for larger-scale projects with a maximum Federal award of $1.5 million per grant. Twelve States requested a total of $14,736,722 for 20 eligible Tier 2 projects.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Director Dan Ashe announced the Fiscal Year 2015 Boating Infrastructure Grant Program Tier 2 competitive awards at the Miami International Boat Show during the Industry Breakfast on February 12, 2015. The National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), which coordinates and hosts the Miami Boat Show, posted highlights of the meeting on their website at https://www.nmma.org/article.aspx?id=19703

Seventeen (17) Tier 2 projects were fully funded, and one (1) additional Tier 2 project was partially funded making for a total Federal share of $12,305,811 and non-Federal cost share of $16,136,040. The Tier 2 projects will contribute approximately 452 new slips, plus other amenities including
restrooms, showers, wave attenuators, fuel and pump-out stations, and navigational aids for the use and enjoyment of the transient recreational boating public.

In preparation for the Fiscal Year 2016 Boating Infrastructure Grants competition, WSFR Policy and Programs staff will be working with select members of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council to review the new BIG rule and prepare written guidance to help Tier 2 proposal applicants and reviewers understand and interpret the new criteria. Currently, the WSFR/SFBPC team is considering a meeting in Service Headquarters in Falls Church, Virginia in mid-May.

**Clean Vessel Act (CVA):**
It has been a big year for CVA so far, and we received 38 CVA applications from 27 States for FY 2015. The total Federal requested amount was $18 million, which exceeds the amount available, which is approximately $16 million. We have completed our review of the applications and sent them to the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Coast Guard, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for their review. Once we receive the review response from the other Federal agencies, we will work to get approval for the award recommendations. Keep an eye out for the awards announcement, which we anticipate posting in June, possibly sooner if possible.

**Boating Access Subprogram of the Sport Fish Restoration Program:**
The Boating Access program provides grant funds to the States, the District of Columbia and insular area fish and wildlife agencies for projects that acquire, develop, renovate, maintain, or improve facilities that provide public access to the waters of the United States for recreational boating. Each Region must spend 15% of their SFR apportionment on Boating Access over a set 5 year period. As of February 2015, $130 million has been allocated to Boating Access projects, and most regions are close to the 15% allocation for this 5 year period.

**National Coastal Wetlands:**
We have the announcement of availability and request for applications for the FY 2015 National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program posted on Grants.gov (CFDA 15.614). Applications are due by June 24, 2015.

**WSFR Branch of Policy:**
The Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG) Final rule is routing to the Federal Register, and hopefully will be published by the time you receive this newsletter. Look for an announcement through the WSFR website and the SOBA ListServ. The announcement will direct you to the BIG Final Rule at a location on the WSFR Wiki that you can also use to ask questions on implementing the rule. This is not the place for suggested changes, but rather for clarifications or further discussion on approach to BIG grants. WSFR will also be scheduling some webinars to talk about the new BIG Final rule. Stay tuned for more information.

We have decided not to host another Clean Vessel Act (CVA) webinar during the next few months. WSFR Policy Branch will be concentrating CVA efforts on an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that will publish in the Federal Register, targeting this spring. This Notice will ask the larger audience some general and some specific questions about technology, grant management, and needs. We will announce when it is published and ask that you share and respond with any information you have that will inform the Service with the proposed rule and technical guidelines. Our goal is to prepare a draft CVA Proposed rule for discussion during the SOBA conference.

You may view the topics and comments from CVA open forum discussions to date by visiting our Wiki website at [http://fawiki.fws.gov/display/CR5C8/CVA+Review+50+CFR+85+Home](http://fawiki.fws.gov/display/CR5C8/CVA+Review+50+CFR+85+Home). The power point presentation and notes on the CVA Open Forum from the SOBA meeting are also available on this site. You may click the eye with the word "Watch" next to it at the upper right of the home page to receive updates when others comment or new content is added.

**Service Provides $1.1 Billion to State Wildlife Agencies Benefiting Outdoor Recreationists, Conservation, Regional Economies:**
On April 28th the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that it will distribute $1.1 billion in revenues generated by the hunting and angling industry to state and territorial fish and wildlife agencies throughout the nation. The funds support critical fish and wildlife conservation and recreation projects that benefit all Americans.
The Service apportions the funds to all 50 states and U.S. territories through the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration programs. Revenues come from excise taxes generated by the sale of sporting firearms, ammunition, archery equipment, fishing equipment, electric boat motors, and from taxes on the purchase of motorboat fuel.

"These funds are the cornerstone of state-based efforts that are critical to the preservation of America's wildlife and natural resources," said Service Director Dan Ashe. "But they are also the fuel for a massive financial engine that benefits outdoor recreationists, hunters, boaters and anglers, equipment manufacturers and retailers, and local and regional economies. Their value cannot be overstated in providing opportunities for the next generation of Americans to get outdoors, experience our wild places and learn the importance of conserving our natural heritage."

Pittman Robertson-Dingell Johnson funds are distributed by the Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program. Since their inception, the programs have generated more than $15 billion to conserve fish and wildlife resources and support outdoor recreation opportunities for the American public. The recipient State fish and wildlife agencies have matched these funds with more than $5 billion over the years, mostly through hunting and fishing license revenues.

"The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program provides critical funding for conservation projects and outdoor recreation activities across this great nation," said Assistant Director Hannibal Bolton of the Service's WSFR program. "I can't stress enough that the key to the program's success is through our dedicated partnerships with State agencies, non-government organizations and many others."

"It is thanks to this significant financial investment made by America's sportsmen and women and the hunting, shooting sports, angling and boating industries that state and territorial fish and wildlife agencies can deliver science-based conservation on the ground," said Larry Voyles, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies President and Arizona Game and Fish Department Director. "The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program has made the difference between the survival and abundance of some species and it helps agencies, like mine, manage a vast estate of lands and waters and connect more people to wildlife-related recreation."

A state-by-state listing of the Service's final apportionment of Wildlife Restoration Funds and Sport Fish Restoration funds for Fiscal Year 2015, as well as more information on the Service's WSFR program can be found at [http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/](http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/).

**Headquarters Boating Grant Contacts:**

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

Wildlife TRACS & BIG — Paul Van Ryzin, Fish & Wildlife Biologist, Paul_VanRyzin@fws.gov CVA, Boating Access, National Coastal Wetland Grants, & other WSFR Programs — Christy Vigfusson, Programs Branch Chief, Christy_Vigfusson@fws.gov

**SPORT FISHING AND BOATING PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL UPDATE**

by Scott Kovarovics

The Council's February meeting featured a special session on boating access and project permitting. Council member John Sprague arranged a panel of government and private industry representatives to discuss the status of government permitting processes associated with boating access projects. In addition, panel members provided insights into ways to make these processes more efficient and effective. SOBA President and Council member Janine Belleque presented the results of SOBA's recent survey of state boating access coordinators on the status of project permitting. The Council has proposed the establishment of a pilot project in Florida and Oregon that seeks to improve the effectiveness and efficiency in the federal permitting review processes. The proposed pilot project remains under consideration by the Secretary of the Interior and the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR).
The Council meeting also included updates on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' Fish and Aquatic Conservation program's strategic plan, updates from the U.S. Coast Guard on poaching that is occurring in federal waters in south Texas and the Gulf of Mexico, a final report on the Council's assessment of the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, an update on reauthorization of the Highway Bill, and other issues.

The Council's next meeting is scheduled for early October in Bozeman, Montana.

AIS SUMMIT REPORT

The American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC) sponsored the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Summit in Las Vegas, Nevada on January 27–28. SOBA Vice President Ron Christofferson presented at the summit, giving an overview of SOBA's mission and accomplishments, as well as a boating access perspective on AIS. In some locations, the discovery of AIS has directly and adversely affected boating access, such as one recent example where all boating was banned at a California lake. In addition, the cost of fighting the spread of AIS has the potential to detract from boating access funding, such as for the installation of boat wash stations, personnel to man them, and boater information programs to educate the public. The summit was well-attended by a wide variety of boat and trailer manufacturers, as well as state and federal personnel involved in AIS programs. Break-out groups discussed various aspects of boat, trailer, and boat motor designs, with the goal of limiting the potential to transport AIS and increasing the efficiency with which watercraft and trailers can be decontaminated. Proceedings from the summit are available by contacting Bernice McArdle at bmcardle@nmma.org.

SOBA AWARDS 2015

by Ron Christofferson

An important role of SOBA is to recognize outstanding projects and professionals in the world of boating access. Please take a moment to review the award categories HERE and see if a particular project or person comes to mind as you read through these descriptions. National recognition through the SOBA awards program not only serves as a morale boost for those involved, but also leads to greater agency, inter-agency and local support for boating access projects and the Boating Access fund as a whole. Please lend your support to this program to ensure that good projects and people don't go unnoticed! All awards will be presented at SOBA's upcoming conference in Vermont, September 21–24, 2015.

SOBA AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES TASK FORCE MAKING PROGRESS

by Craig Walker

It's here! SOBA has completed its incorporation of comments from all our reviewers and the AIS Best Management Practices (BMP) manual is ready for your reading pleasure. The final manual, titled Construction and Integration of AIS Prevention Areas at Recreational Boating Facilities, is now available on the SOBA website at http://www.sobaus.org/pdf/Best-Management-Practices.pdf free of charge for members and nonmembers alike.

This manual is now being used by AIS and boating coordinators in multiple states to guide them during the development of AIS containment and interdiction facilities at boater access sites. The next step is to gain endorsement of the manual by the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF). For more information on ANSTF and other regional AIS control programs, visit the SOBA website or go to http://anstaskforce.gov/default.php.
NOMINATIONS BEING ACCEPTED FOR 2016 SOBA EXECUTIVE BOARD

SOBA has a seven-member Board, which includes the Past President. Nominations may be submitted for President, Vice President, Treasurer and three Members-At-Large. Terms for officers and at-large positions are one year (renewable) beginning after the annual conference.

A slate of officers and at-large Board members for 2016 will be elected at our annual conference at the Basin Harbor Club, Lake Champlain, Vermont during the business meeting on Wednesday, September 23rd. The Nominating Committee will select the slate based on nominations received from member states.

Individuals nominated to serve on the SOBA board must be a SOBA member and must secure a letter of support from the director of the member state agency.

The SOBA board is a working board and members are expected to participate in monthly teleconference meetings, travel to face-to-face meetings (two to three annually), one which takes place during the annual conference, and take on committee or task force assignments. Travel expenses are covered by SOBA for most face-to-face meetings.

Being a Board member is rewarding both professionally and personally, and we encourage you to consider serving, or submitting the name of someone you feel would be interested. Nominations close Monday June 8th, 2015. Full details about submitting a nomination can be had HERE. Please send your nominations to James Adams, SOBA Past President and Chairman of SOBA's Nominating Committee: james.adams@dgif.virginia.gov.

ANGLING AND BOATING ALLIANCE, REVISED COORDINATED (POSITION) STATEMENT

by James Adams

SOBA is a member of the Angling and Boating Alliance (ABA), and for the past eighteen months, I have provided SOBA members and colleagues updates via Newsletters and List Serv notices on SOBA's involvement in the Reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. The ABA recently completed revisions to their Coordinated (Position) Statement on the Reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund (SFRBTF) which is embedded in the Transportation Bill. The ABA worked tirelessly in March through emails and conference calls to make and complete this very important revision deadline and to deliver the revisions to Congress in order to provide the markup of five bills for Committee executive sessions. Senator John Thune (R-SD) has sponsored one of the bills (S-2028), the Sport Fish Restoration and Recreational Boating Safety Act of 2015 in which the ABA is coordinating with the US Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation staff for a positive reauthorization of the SFRBTF.

Click HERE for copies of the revised ABA position statement and supporting documents. The ABA position moves the $3 million multistate conservation grant program back to its original place as an off the top deduction; currently the grant program is in the Sport Fish Restoration account. The ABA position resulted from feedback that AFWA received from the State Wildlife and Fish Directors during the North American meeting the week of March 9th. Another ABA request calls for a maximum allowance of not more than 25% of state-apportioned Clean Vessel Act (CVA) program dollars (allowed not required) to be spent on projects to support facilities that meet state requirements for minimizing the introduction of pollutants into the waterways (power washdown stations, containment & treatment stations at marinas). This and other positions, adjusted the percentages for the Clean Vessel Act, Outreach (RBFF), Sport Fish Restoration, Recreational Boating Safety and Coastal Wetlands accounts (please reference the two Trust Fund charts, one representing the current funding levels and the one proposed).
NEWS FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES (AFWA)

by Ron Regan

Bipartisan Sportsmen's Package Introduced in the Senate
On February 5, Senators Murkowski (AK) and Heinrich (NM) were joined by the Senate Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus Leadership: Senators Risch (ID); Fischer (NE); Manchin (WV); and Heitkamp (ND), in introducing the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act of 2015, S. 405. The bill contains the same provisions from last year with a couple of additions, specifically allowing the concealed carrying of weapons on Army Corp lands and allowing bows in National Parks. While the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act (NFHCA) was not included in the original bill, there is bipartisan support for including an updated version of NFHCA in the package. We continue to work closely with Hill staff to capitalize on this opportunity.

Since jurisdiction of the bill is split between the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Committees, provisions of the bill will move first through the appropriate committee of jurisdiction under regular order then likely be rejoined into a package before floor action. Passage of this bill is a priority of state fish and wildlife agencies and several conservation organizations in this session of Congress.

Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund Reauthorization: Moving Forward
During the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, multiple committees exercised on and adopted the Angling and Boating Alliance’s (ABA) reauthorization proposal with a few recommended modifications. The proposal was adopted at the Business Meeting and Association staff immediately commenced negotiations with other ABA members. A final position was agreed to and is consistent with the direction provided by the Association’s committees.

On March 25, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation's Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard held a mark-up of S. 834, the Sport Fish Restoration and Recreational Boating Safety Act of 2015, Sponsored by Chairman John Thune, Ranking Member Bill Nelson (FL), Chairman James Inhofe (OK, chair of EPW), and Senator Ben Cardin (MD). The Manager's amendment unanimously adopted during the subcommittee mark-up is the ABA's position on reauthorization.

There are a few legislative improvements we intend to make to the bill that we expect to resolve before a full committee mark-up is scheduled in the coming weeks. With funding for the federal Highway Trust Fund and the current Transportation bill expiring at the end of May it is highly possible that Congress will pass a short term extension before a longer term funding solution is passed.

On March 27, the US Coast Guard released the Administration's legislative proposal to reauthorize the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund (SFRBTF). Once again, the President proposed yet a higher increase in administrative funds for the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to administer the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program. New to this year's proposal is a provision would make boater education a federally mandated requirement for all recreational vessel operators.

The FWS is seeking over $25m to administer the WSFRP: $25.18m in FY16 and $25.76m in FY17, collectively, with $12,590,000 coming from each of the Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration Programs in FY2016. For FY2017, the FWS proposes to use $12,881,000 from each fund for administration.

The FWS currently receives $21,596,918 total to administer the WSFRP in FY15, $10,798,459 from each Trust Fund. Their latest proposal would mean an increase in administrative funds by $4,165,082 from FY15 to FY17 to fund same the 114 full-time equivalents they sought last year. Today, WSFR is approved by the Office of Management and Budget to have 104.5 FTEs but can
only afford 87. The ABA's proposal meets the FWS half way and proposes to fully fund the current approved 105 FTEs.

Furthermore, on April 1, the President released the *Grow America Act,* his blueprint for reauthorizing the entire Transportation bill. Therein, the FWS is a straight reauthorization with no increases at all. Now, the administration has sent two disparate legislative proposals for SFRBTF reauthorization to the Hill in less than one week.

**The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies is Moving!**
On June 1, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies will be moving to new digs on 1100 First Street NE, Suite 825, Washington, DC 20002 (The Mathematica Building) for those in DC. The new office is located just a few blocks North from Union Station and is 2 blocks from the NOMA-Galludet U stop on the Metro (red line).

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**REGISTRATION OPENS FOR WELCOME TO THE WATER ON NATIONAL MARINA DAY**
by Wendy Larimer

As the days get warmer, and boaters begin to come out of hibernation, every marina owner should begin thinking about creative ways to welcome boaters back on the water, and entice new boaters to the water. A day was created for this very purpose: National Marina Day.

On Saturday June 13th, the Association of Marina Industries (AMI), which produces National Marina Day (NMD), is asking marinas to open their doors to everyone in their communities and kick-off the boating season with a celebration of all things marina.

The goal of the day is to entice people to take the helm by attending events where they can get hands-on experience, and also learn more about boating and the marine industry through landside activities and entertainment.

Providing on-water opportunities will get newcomers interested in boating, motivate lapsed boaters to reconsider their decision to leave boating and re-energize existing boaters. There is a 41% greater likelihood of a boat purchase if individuals get behind the wheel of a boat. A boat purchase can easily translate into a new slip holder.

The emphasis of National Marina Day is to put people on-board, however landside activity is equally important to giving visitors a great experience. Marinas should offer a day of fun and festivities that includes anything that can be imagined and managed. Emphasize the fun of boating, the value of marinas as community gathering places, and the role boaters and the boating industry can play in keeping our waters clean for worry-free on-water recreation.

Past events have included tours of military or rescue vessels, opportunities to paddle kayaks and canoes, on-water training, boat shows, brunches, nautical flea markets, kids’ zones, boat parades, tall ship visits, fireworks, dancing, live bands and more.
As in year's past our website, www.nationalmarinaday.org will have a resource guide filled with templates for promotions, invitations, activity ideas, and groups who may be willing and able to help. It is also filled with pictures from past events to spark ideas for your own event.

This website will also be the home to register your business as a host or participant in Welcome to the Water on National Marina Day. Registration is important because it allows potential visitors and the media to find you, and also others marine businesses in your area who might be interested in partner opportunities. Over the years marinas in the same region have pooled their resources to create even bigger and better events, and draw more people. State trade associations have helped facilitate these larger events as well.

If you have participated in National Marina Day previously, jump on board again. If you have not, this is the year to open your doors and show solidarity with the marine industry in making efforts to grow the boating public and ensure a healthy future for all of us who make a living "on the water".

**UPDATE FROM THE CAPITOL**
by Lauren Dunn, NMMA, DC Office

**Sheetz to sell E15 at 60 North Carolina locations: Contact Congress and Stop E15**
The Altoona, Pennsylvania based convenience store chain Sheetz announced on January 21 that it would offer E15 fuel — gas containing up to 15% ethanol — at 60 of their North Carolina locations beginning in early 2015. NMMA and the recreational boating community agree that E15 causes problems for marine engines as well as other small engines.

One of the greatest concerns facing the recreational boating industry today relates to the federal government's Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), specifically the introduction of E15 into the marketplace. There are no marine engines warranted to run on E15 and according to AAA, most automobile manufacturers say any damage due to the use of this higher ethanol blend fuel will void the warranty.

The RFS is a broken law which sets unrealistic fuel mandates and requires a long term fix from Congress. The recreational boating community as a whole knows first-hand the problems associated with the RFS. This damage hurts manufacturers during a time of important economic recovery and places the burden of unnecessary risks upon the shoulders of American consumers.

Senators Toomey (PA) and Feinstein (CA) recently introduced legislation into the Senate that would reform the ethanol mandate and stop E15 from spreading across the country. The bill (S. 577) coincides with the house bill (HR 704) introduced in early February; together they show real momentum in the fight against the ethanol mandate.

Both bills are championed by NMMA and a diverse coalition of stakeholder groups, but need the support of more members of Congress.

**Contact your Congressional delegation** and ask them to join our efforts in stopping the spread of E15 (now in 16 states and counting!). All it takes is two minutes: [Click here and let your voice be heard in this important fight](#).

**American Boating Congress speakers announced**
The 2015 American Boating Congress agenda is filling up fast and we have some fantastic speakers in store! Still haven't registered? Contact Courtney Erhardt at cerhardt@nmma.org for your personal registration link. Don't miss out on hearing from these industry and policy experts:

- **David Gregory, former NBC Meet the Press moderator**
  When the major figures in Washington went before the country to discuss the current state of affairs in America, they faced David Gregory. With a reputation as a journalist that asks the
tough questions, Gregory served as the host and moderator of NBC's Meet the Press, where he had the remarkable gift for holding leaders to account and getting answers on issues that matter to audiences.

- **Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-1)**
  Rob Wittman was first elected to serve the First Congressional District of Virginia, America's First District, in December of 2007. He was re-elected for his fourth full term in the House of Representatives in November 2014. As a member of the House Committee on Natural Resources, Rob brings his professional expertise in water quality, fisheries, and other natural resource issues.

- **Congressman Curt Clawson (FL-19)**
  Congressman Curt Clawson moved to Southwest Florida in 2011 after a successful business career and soon became involved in local water issues. Urged by local leaders and motivated by his family's generations of service to their country, Clawson decided in 2014 to run in a special election to fill the vacated seat in Florida's 19th Congressional District. Clawson was sworn into office by House Speaker John Boehner on June 25, 2014.

- **Mayor Tomas Regalado, City of Miami**
  Born in Havana, Cuba, Mayor Regalado moved to Miami, FL at the age of 14. He began his career in journalism reporting for WLTV Channel 23 and serving as News Director in charge of all programming for La Fabulosa, WFAB. In 1983, Regalado became the first Cuban American member of the White House Press Corps. Regalado previously served as City Commissioner beginning in 1996 before being elected as mayor in 2009. In addition, he spearheaded the rejuvenation of Miami Marine Stadium Park and Basin, home of the 2016 Progressive Insurance Miami International Boat Show.

- **Rear Admiral Paul Thomas, U. S. Coast Guard**
  Rear Admiral Paul Thomas serves as the Assistant Commandant for Prevention Policy overseeing three Coast Guard directorates, Inspections and Compliance, Marine Transportation Systems, and Commercial Regulations and Standards. The programs under his leadership include: waterways management, navigation and boating safety, ports and facilities, merchant mariner credentialing, vessel documentation, marine casualty investigation, commercial vessel inspections, and port state control.

- **Eileen Sobek, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA**
  Ms. Sobeck was appointed Assistant Administrator for Fisheries in January 2014. In this role, she oversees the management and conservation of marine fisheries and the protection of marine mammals, sea turtles, and coastal fisheries habitat within the U.S. exclusive economic zone. Her focus is on rebuilding the nation's fisheries and the jobs and livelihoods that depend on them by promoting management approaches that will achieve both sustainable fisheries and vibrant coastal communities.

For more information on ABC, and how to make accommodation reservations click [HERE](#) or contact Laura Genovese at [igenovese@nmma.org](mailto:igenovese@nmma.org); 202-737-9764.

Don't forget to visit [@therealnmma](#) on Twitter for breaking conference updates! #ABC2015

**S.C. Bill to Increase Trailering Size**
On March 3, a bill was introduced to increase the size of noncommercial boat trailers towed without a permit. SB 494 would increase the width of boat trailers that can be towed without a permit from 96" to 120". The bill would allow trailers from 102" to 114" to be towed anytime of the day and trailers from 114" to 120" to be towed from sunrise to sunset. Trailers between 102" and 120" would need amber lamps at their widest point to make the boat trailer's dimensions clearly visible. This bill is currently in South Carolina's Senate Committee on Transportation. Current law allows trailers with a beam of 96" or less to be towed without a permit. NMMA staff will monitor this bill and engage its readers accordingly. For more information please contact Libby Yranski at [lyranski@nmma.org](mailto:lyranski@nmma.org).

**Missouri Bill Could Exempt Fuel Tax from Marinas**
Missouri's House of Representatives is currently awaiting floor action on a bill that would exclude the fuel purchased at a marina from the state fuel tax. Under existing Missouri law, a taxpayer must pay the motor fuel tax when purchasing their fuel at a marina and then request a refund from the Department of Revenue within one year of the purchase. Current law also allows boaters who
purchase fuel for their boat anywhere other than a marina to file a claim for a tax refund. This process is burdensome, and it requires customers to maintain receipts of purchases. Both the House Ways and Means Committee and the Select Committee on Financial Institutions and Taxation passed HB 132. NMMA staff will continue to support passage of this bill. For more information please contact David Dickerson at DDickerson@nmma.org.

NEW POWERBOAT SALES IN PACIFIC REGION UP 15.9% YOY IN 2014

NMMA’s recently released New Powerboat Registrations Report show new powerboat sales for states in the Pacific region (AK, CA, HI, OR, and WA) were up 15.9% YOY in 2014, with growth across all major segments except sterndrive boats that remain weak both regionally and nationally.

To order the complete report, visit http://www.nmma.org/statistics/publications/quarterlypowerboatinventoryreport.aspx or contact Vicky Yu, Director, NMMA’s Industry Statistics and Research, Tel: 312.946.6261 or vyu@nmma.org

GREAT OUTDOORS MONTH™ INVITES PEOPLE TO THEIR GREAT OUTDOORS

by Ben Nasta

Spring is finally here! Soon, the sights and sounds of healthy, active outdoor fun will fill the air as families everywhere look to enjoy their summers. American Recreation Coalition (ARC) — as well as other public and private partners will be there every step of the way, helping people get outdoors during Great Outdoors Month™ 2015.

Traditionally proclaimed by the President and all 50 governors, Great Outdoors Month™ is a celebration of the outdoors and all it offers — including annual economic impact of $650 billion nationwide. Great Outdoors Month™ 2014 was a record breaking success, and 2015 looks to be even better!

A key element of ARC’s efforts to introduce more people to healthy, active outdoor fun close to home is our Capital Campout program. Capital Campouts allow Governors to take an active role in Great
Outdoors Month™ by hosting young campers at an appropriate location in each state capital. These campouts can be at the governor’s residence, at the state capitol or at an urban green space in the capital city. Capital Campouts began in Hartford, CT, and in 2014 were successfully piloted in Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Kansas and Washington.

At least twice as many states will host Campouts in 2015! States currently hosting Capital Campouts include: Delaware, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, Rhode Island, Virginia, Washington and Wyoming. Thanks to help from Great Outdoors Month™ Founding Sponsor Coleman Company, these states will introduce youth to great outdoor opportunities located close to home. For more information on Capital Campouts, including a schedule of events, go to http://www.greatoutdoormonth.org/#capital-campouts/cb41.

Capital Campouts aren’t the only way people can get out and enjoy their great outdoors this June. Signature Events are taking place throughout Great Outdoors Month™ that will get people of all walks of life outdoors. Starting with the National Park Trust’s Kids to Parks™ Day on May 16 and ending with the National Wildlife Federation’s Great American Campout™ on June 27, at least one signature event per week offers people a multitude of ways to get outdoors. Events like National Trails Day, National Fishing and Boating Week, National Get Outdoors Day, National Marina Day and the Great Outdoors Month Day of Service offer something for everyone. For more information on these events — including finding one near you — visit www.greatoutdoormonth.org.

June is a special time to get out and celebrate our outdoor heritage. Capital Campouts and Great Outdoors Month™ Signature Events are just some of the ways people can get involved. Ride a bike, hike a trail, paddle a river, cast a line or pitch a tent. Do whatever your heart desires, just so long as you get outdoors!

NEWS FROM BOATU.S.
by Susan Shingledecker

It has been a busy winter at BoatU.S., and we are gearing up for spring and the busy boating season nationwide. We are currently working on a number of issues that relate to SOBA activities.

Invasive Species:
We were pleased to participate with ABYC, NMMA, SOBA and many state invasive species managers in the Invasive Species workshop held in Las Vegas earlier in the year. This meeting brought state and federal officials who deal with the challenges of invasive species together with the boating industry to look as ways we can address the challenges of the spread of invasive species. It was two very productive days and points to a promising future of further collaboration.

Grants:
After a recording breaking voting period, the BoatU.S. Foundation has awarded four (4) grants for 2015 to the following groups to conduct safe and clean boating education activities:

- Chesapeake Conservancy of Annapolis, MD to create a mobile Chesapeake Boaters Guide.
- Kandiyohi County AIS Task Force of Willmar, MN to create an aquatic invasive species education and prevention app.
- Lake Hopatcong Foundation of Lake Hopatcong, NJ to create the Lake Hopatcong Guide Map, including the location of pompous facilities.
- The Lake George Association of Lake George, NY for the multi-prong Lake George Invasive Species Education & Outreach program.

Life Jacket Loaner Program:
In 2015 the BoatU.S. Foundation will be adding up to 50 new loaner sites to its Life Jacket Loaner
Program. This brings the total number of sites nationwide to well over 600! The new locations are currently being reviewed and will be up and running before National Safe Boating Week in May. Visit www.boatus.org to see if you have a loaner site in your area. Ideal loaner sites are waterfront businesses or organizations that are staffed, will sign the jackets in and out, store the jackets in an indoor and secure location and can provide assistance ensuring the proper fit of a life jacket. We will soon be releasing a new video educating parents how to properly fit a child's life jacket.

Life Jacket Design Competition:
The BoatU.S. Foundation has partnered with the Personal Flotation Manufacturers Association (PFDMA) and the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) to launch the 2015 Innovations in Life Jacket Design Competition which seeks to find alternatives to the traditional life jacket. Designs will be judged on wearability, reliability, cost and innovation. Public voting will be a part of the judging criteria, and the judges will select the final winner who will be announced in September during the 2015 IBEX Exhibition & Conference in Louisville, Kentucky.