President's Message

Dear SOBA Members, Colleagues and Friends,
I'm looking forward to seeing you in North Little Rock, Arkansas, October 6-9 for SOBA's 28th National Boating Access Conference. Tom Jones and Katie Wirges have put together an educational and informative program for us that you won't want to miss. A few Conference highlights include updates from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on BIG and CVA, participation from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a presentation on the National Boating Access Report including a follow up on "Where To From Here", TRACS training, and numerous technical and environmental breakout presentations. You can view our current agenda, and obtain general information about our conference HERE.

New to this year's conference is scheduled time for conference attendees to join a Taskforce and participate by attending a face-to-face "Kick-off Meeting". On Thursday, October 9 from 8:00am to 12 noon attendees will have an opportunity to join two new Taskforce groups: 1) The Pumpout Boat Standards Taskforce and 2) Best Management Practices for the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program Taskforce. The Paddling Design Guidelines Taskforce will also meet on Thursday morning, and guests are most welcome.

And as a reminder, our annual business meeting for Members will take place on Wednesday October 8th at 10:15am. Please plan to attend this and hear about all that SOBA has been involved in on behalf of Boating Access over the past year.

During the conference you will have an opportunity to meet with many new and familiar exhibitors to learn about new products, materials, and techniques for boating facility construction, design and maintenance. The 2014 Conference has generously received Sponsorship from the following organizations:

**Platinum Sponsor:**
- GatorDock/GatorBridge

**Bronze Sponsors:**
- Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF)
- Duke Energy
- National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA)

There is still time to sponsor an event or activity – we have something to suit every budget, so if you are interested in sponsoring please contact Bernice McArdle at 312-946-6280 or bmcardle@nmma.org

The SOBA Board has had a busy year since our event in Portland last October. Did you know that your Board is represented on the following Councils, Committees and Alliances?

- RBFF Board of Directors
- Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council
- AFWA Angling and Boating Committee
- Recreational Boating Leadership Council and the
- Angling and Boating Alliance

This participation affords SOBA the opportunity to educate and inform our strategic partners on how policies, reports and issues may impact recreational boating access.

I greatly appreciate serving as your President and working closely with our dedicated and committed
Board members. The strength of SOBA however lies in you, its members and partners. SOBA is the only national organization fully devoted to the issues of providing public recreational boating access and facilities nationwide. This is a unique role for our association, and when you consider that the majority of all registered boats in the nation are small, trailerable boats under 26-feet, you immediately understand how important your role is in designing, constructing, maintaining and funding boating access.

SOBA's strength and national presence can only continue with your support. I would encourage you to consider becoming a Board Member, serve on a Task Force, or Host a future Conference. Please contact me or any Board member if you would like to discuss these issues. The Executive Board and I truly appreciate all you do to help SOBA continue its critically important role in fostering public recreational boating access.

I look forward to catching up with many of you in Little Rock in early October.

Regards,
Janine Belleque

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Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council Update — Summer 2014
by Scott Kovarovic

It is my pleasure as the newly elected chair of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council to provide an update on our activities. Longtime member Betty Huskins and I were elected as Vice Chair and Chair of the Council, respectively, at our July meeting. We thank Thom Dammrich for his previous leadership of the Council as its chair, and for his great work on behalf of the boating industry across the country and around the world. Thom will continue to serve as a member of the Council.

As a brief introduction, I am the Executive Director of the Izaak Walton League of America and I am excited to begin my third term on the Council. The League's mission is to conserve, restore and promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of our natural resources. Our more than 44,000 members belong to local chapters where they lead conservation projects and connect Americans of all ages to fishing, boating and a wide array of other outdoor recreation activities. At the national level, the League advocates for public policies that protect clean water and healthy wetlands, promote outdoor recreation, and conserve habitat and other vital natural resources for current and future generations.

The Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council was re-chartered for two years and our members have been selected by the Secretary of the Interior. There are some notable changes to the Council. New members include John Adey, President of the American Boat and Yacht Council, and Alvin Taylor, Director of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. Chris Edmonston, President of the BoatUS Foundation, was also selected as primary member of the Council. Chris had previously served as an alternate for Ryck Lydecker, who recently retired from BoatUS. SOBA representatives James Adams and Janine Belleque were reappointed as primary and alternate members, respectively.

The Council met twice in July and boating issues were an important topic at both meetings. The Council hosted a teleconference to discuss the proposed Boating Infrastructure Grant program regulations and provided our recommendations to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the draft regulations. We also met and received briefings on various boating and fishing related topics. At our late July meeting, we reviewed priorities for the 2014-2016 Council term and fishing and boating access, as well as the programs funded from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, remain as top priorities for the Council.
Members of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council look forward to working closely with SOBA to achieve common goals.

**Transportation Bill: Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund**

by James Adams, SOBA Past President

As you all know, the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund (SFR) is financed in part through the Transportation Bill. The good news is that Congress passed a bill which President Obama signed into law on Friday, August 8, 2014. The bad news is that the law only extends the bill and funding through May, 2015. The bill passed only did two things; it extended the law and appropriated funds. Nothing else was changed in the law.

I reported to you in a List Serv notice on April 30, 2014 that SOBA is part of a coalition: the Angling and Boating Alliance (ABA) which is made up longstanding fishing and boating industry national leaders. The ABA is working in support of the Transportation Bill and making some adjustments in the allocation of the SFR fund. See the information posted on the [SOBA web page](#) detailing the ABA position. Please call me or email me if you would like to discuss the ABA position and SOBA's involvement. Tel: **804-367-0183** | Email: [James.adams@dgif.virginia.gov](mailto:James.adams@dgif.virginia.gov).

**Enhancing Fishing Access Through a National Assessment of Recreational Boating Access:**

by James Adams, SOBA Past President

SOBA is excited that the first of its kind survey and report, *"Enhancing Fishing Access through a National Assessment of Recreational Boating Access"* has been completed ahead of schedule. The project, handled by Responsive Management, had four main objectives:

1. Determine whether a lack of boating access has contributed to the decline in boating/fishing participation.
2. Provide a baseline assessment of the adequacy and availability of, obstacles and challenges to, and priorities for boating access against which future access improvements can be measured.
3. Develop recommendations and strategies for improving access that address the key access-related factors limiting participation among boaters, anglers, and other outdoor recreationists.
4. Design an assessment tool (such as a survey) to evaluate boating access that can be replicated, and has universal application but is adaptable in scope and provides strategic guidance for actions by federal, state, and local agencies and not-for-profit organizations.

Regardless of the State program you manage (Boating Access, Clean Vessel Act, Boating Infrastructure Grant), there is something in this report that can provide valuable information related to your program. In addition to addressing the four main objectives mentioned above, the report organized results around six broad themes:

1. *"Importance of boating and boating access"* – this answers the question why access issues are worthy of study.
2. *"Satisfaction with boating access"*
3. *"Amount of boating access"* – includes a look at crowding, user conflicts, etiquette, travel distances to access areas and related educational opportunities.
4. *"Quality of boating access"* – includes the desired features and amenities at access areas as well as how the existing amenities are maintained.
5. *"Specific access problems"* – identifies challenges to boaters, such as boat storage and trailering, insufficient parking, lack of amenities at sites and shallow water.
6. *"Maintenance of existing access versus creation of new access"* – in this challenging budgetary climate, agency and industry wish lists are necessarily prioritized, with some funding requirements eclipsing other requirements.
Please take some time to read through the report and participate in the upcoming 2014 SOBA National Boating Access Conference (October 6 – 9, 2014, in Little Rock Arkansas) to gain insight into assistance in planning and implementing program improvements based on boater feedback. The report can be found at:
www.responsivemanagement.com/download/reports/Boating_Access_Report.pdf Information about SOBA’s conference can be found HERE.

A special thanks to SOBA’s partners for their financial contributions and support during this assessment: National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF), Boat US, the Association of Marina Industries (AMI), and Responsive Management.

AIS Summit Convened:
by Janine Belleque, SOBA President

Since the 1988 discovery of the Zebra mussel in Lake Michigan, state and federal governments have been diligently looking for solutions to all types of aquatic invasive species. Recently the American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC) was asked to be involved from the boat side of this equation to convene an AIS Summit.

To this end, ABYC will engage major stakeholders in an in-depth dialogue surrounding both the boat construction and decontamination sides of this issue. Inviting experts from all aspects of these issues, ABYC is planning a 2 day focused gathering combining small working groups with expanded whole-group sessions in order to produce several actionable plans for a way forward. A date in January 2015 in Las Vegas has been confirmed — more details to follow at a later date.

Summits like these have been effective in moving an issue from problem to solution. The mitigation of hazards such as Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning, electric shock drowning and propeller injury have all been influenced by take-a-ways from venues like the one proposed here. Events like this one, where experts are essentially sequestered for two days' time serve as a catalyst for change that lasts for months, even years beyond the original presentation. SOBA will be a strategic partner in this Summit.

Expected Outcomes:

While no one can predict the innovative and unique proposals that will be discussed during these sessions, it is envisioned that changes to boat construction, component manufacturing and decontamination practices will be thoroughly vetted and either moved forward or discounted as discussion ensues. What results from this meeting will be well documented and circulated among attendees and interested parties in the form of a final report. Actionable items will be sent to the appropriate party (e.g. Boat Design and construction issues would be ABYC's responsibility) with provision for deadlines and future reporting.

The expected final form of this information would be in an ABYC Technical Information Report. These documents follow the procedures outlined by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and would be eligible for American National Standard (ANS) status. This type of report would follow the ABYC standards making process and follow all of the necessary comment periods and participant inclusion as the rest of our ABYC Standards.

With many varied approaches to the issues of aquatic invasive species, the timing is right for stakeholders across the spectrum to gather and discuss the climate, current solutions and possible solutions. The SOBA board will keep its members and colleagues informed of progress.

SOBA Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force Meeting Making Progress
by Craig Walker
Currently comments from reviewers are being incorporated into the final draft of the AIS BMP manual. The final manual will be presented at this year's SOBA Conference in Little Rock. Our AIS coordinator here in Utah has already begun employing many of the suggested techniques in this manual successfully to address our growing AIS threat. It is hoped that the information provided in this manual will guide other boater access and AIS program administrators as they continue to develop AIS containment and interdiction infrastructure at boater access facilities across the nation.

Thanks again to all the Task Force members for participation in this process. Thanks also to all those who reviewed the BMP manual. Once the manual has been presented to SOBA members at this year's conference, the SOBA AIS Task Force is looking forward to the next step; 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.

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SOBA Revisits and Revises Its Strategic Plan
by Janine Belleque, SOBA President

In July 2014, the SOBA Board of Directors held a two day board meeting at the NMMA's offices in Chicago. During this meeting, the Board revisited, reviewed and revised SOBA's Strategic Plan, which was originally developed in 2006, and subsequently revised in 2010. This latest review is intended to carry the work of SOBA through 2017.

The emphasis and focus of SOBA's original Strategic Plan is still relevant, and will be retained as part of a renewed emphasis in the 2014 Plan update. The 2006-2008 Strategic Initiatives and Work Plan focused on "SOBA's core membership services, annual calendar, and strategic initiatives… crafted from an assessment of SOBA's mission and goals." The Work Plan identified three key goals along with associated objectives and strategies. These goals, objectives, and strategies, outlined below were discussed in detail, and will be presented to the SOBA membership at the Annual Meeting of Members in Arkansas, on October 8th.

1. Ensure SOBA continues to be a nationally-recognized voice in increasing and maintaining boating access.
2. Develop a sustainable funding model to ensure that SOBA is able to expand product and services offered to members and continues to positively affect boating access.
3. Promote the maintenance or enhancement of boater access opportunities.

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US Fish and Wildlife Service Report: Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Updates
by Lisa Van Alstyne

It has been a Summer of changes for those of us in the Service's Headquarters Office. In addition to our normal duties, we spent most of the last few months sorting, purging, and packing. In late July, we moved from our long-time home in Arlington to a new location in Falls Church. We are still getting used to our new home. It is exciting to have the Service together in one building. In addition, our new space offers some technology that will help us to expand communication with our partners. We will share more on these communication opportunities in the months to come. Thankfully, all of our emails and phone numbers will stay the same. Our new address is:

**U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS**
**MS: WSFR**
**5275 LEESBURG PIKE**
**FALLS CHURCH, VA 22041-3803**

New WSFR Headquarters Staff
In the flurry of our move, we are pleased to welcome several new staff.

In July, Charles (David) Goad joined us as our new Deputy Assistant Director. David has 25 years of experience in building and leading conservation and management programs for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. He began his career as a field biologist and progressed through multiple levels to the number two position within the agency, managing biological, social, and political aspects of conservation for the people of Arkansas.

As a wildlife biologist, David supervised wildlife management areas and staff, and worked across state lines to establish and lead the Black Bear Technical Committee for the Southeastern Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies. He played important roles in modernizing the Commission: replacing paper licensing and survey records with electronic records; helping to convince the Arkansas public to pass a conservation sales tax initiative to increase annual revenue by $30 million; developing the agency's strategic plan; and generally moving the Commission from a "hook and bullet" agency to a conservation agency.

While Deputy Director of the Commission, David oversaw fisheries, wildlife, education, and support functions of the agency. He led the charge to establish both the Arkansas Youth Shooting Sports and the state's National Archery in the Schools Programs; today these programs are the largest of their kind in the United States. He worked with political and conservation leaders to promote the Conservation & Reinvestment Act (CARA), resulting in establishment of the State Wildlife Grants program.

David has a degree from the University of Arkansas in Biology and Fish & Wildlife Management, with a minor in Criminal Justice. He is also a fellow of the inaugural class of the prestigious National Conservation Leadership Institute.

In February, we welcomed Tom Busiahn as our new Chief for the Division of Policy and Programs. Tom's conservation career spans 40 years. In the 1970s he was a fisheries management biologist with the States of North Dakota and Virginia. He served as a tribal biologist for the Red Cliff Chippewa Tribe in Wisconsin, and later as the chief biologist for the 13-tribe Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission. Tom advanced the capability of Native American governments to manage fish and wildlife in cooperation with State and Federal agencies.

In 1991, he joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as Project Leader of the Lake Superior office in Ashland, Wisconsin, leading efforts to restore native fishes, control aquatic invasive species, and restore habitat. He led the establishment of the Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge to protect and restore stream habitat for depleted "coaster" brook trout and worked with the Great Lakes maritime industry to prevent the transport of invasive species in ballast water.

Since 2000, Tom has served in FWS Headquarters, first as Chief, Branch of Fish and Wildlife Management, then as National Coordinator for the National Fish Habitat Partnership. In these roles, he advanced strategically-focused conservation for native fishes and aquatic habitat. On behalf of the National Fish Habitat Board, he shepherded the establishment of 18 Fish Habitat Partnerships across the nation, resulting in an unprecedented level of cooperation among State, Federal, and private entities to address aquatic conservation issues.

Tom has degrees in fish and wildlife management from the University of North Dakota and South Dakota State University. Currently, he lives in Falls Church, Virginia with his wife Robin Goree.
This summer, we also have the pleasure of working with Betsy Riley. Betsy is working with the Service's WSFR Program as a Biological Sciences Student Trainee while she works on her PhD in International Fisheries Policy at Michigan State University with her adviser Dr. William Taylor. She's both a Spartan and a Wolverine, having finished her dual Masters degrees, an MPP and MS, at the University of Michigan and her undergraduate degree at Wellesley College. Growing up in Oklahoma, Betsy spent her summers outdoors—working on her family's ranch, camping and boating along the Illinois River, and riding her bike across Iowa, where she developed a taste for the outdoors and strawberry rhubarb pie. She has had a lifelong interest in natural resource management and has developed her interest in fisheries through her previous position with the USGS Great Lakes Science Center in Ann Arbor, MI. Betsy will continue to work for WSFR during the year, even while attending college.

PROGRAM UPDATES

*Clean Vessel Act (CVA)*

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. WSFR awarded CVA funding for 31 applications to 21 States totaling $16,589,223 in FY 2014 from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. For FY 2015, we will post the Request for Applications in August 2014 with a December 2014 deadline for applications. We anticipate new money for FY 2015 to be approximately $12 million after sequester adjustments are made.

*Boating Access*

The Boating Access program 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. The Sport Fish Restoration Act mandates each state, the District of Columbia and insular areas to allocate at least 15 percent of their annual Sport Fish Restoration apportionment to boating access projects. The allocation is averaged over a five year period for each U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region. The funds apportioned annually are derived from excise taxes on fishing equipment, motorboat and small engine fuels, import duties, and interest collected in the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. These funds are apportioned to the states, the District of Columbia and insular areas based on a formula which includes land area, number of paid license holders, minimums and maximums. Nationwide, funding totaled approximately $48.86 million for FY 2014 from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, 15% of the total Sport Fish Restoration Program apportionment of $325,740,235.

*National Coastal Wetlands*

The National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grant Program is part of the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act and provides funding for long-term conservation of coastal wetland ecosystems by helping States and territories to protect, restore and enhance coastal habitats. Eligible projects include the acquisition of real property interest in coastal lands or waters and the restoration, enhancement, or management of coastal wetlands ecosystems. In FY 2014, WSFR awarded funding for 22 applications to 12 States totaling $16.5 million from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. The projects will cumulatively protect, restore or enhance approximately 11,247 acres of important coastal wetland habitat, including several miles of shoreline. Conservation of this habitat will not only benefit coastal-dependent federal trust species, but will also enhance flood protection and water quality, and provide economic and recreational benefits to commercial fishermen and sport anglers.
Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG)

In early May, the Service's Deputy Director Rowan Gould announced the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) Program's Fiscal Year 2014 Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) awards during the annual American Boating Congress' meeting in Washington, D.C. Highlights from the announcement include:

- A total of $16,760,066 in BIG funds were awarded (including both funding Tiers), from total requests of $19,326,754. The BIG awards will be matched by $12,837,172 in non-Federal funds from States and their partners.
- All 27 States requesting Tier 1 funds were awarded grants totaling $2,485,306.
- Fifteen States requested Tier 2 funds for 24 projects; WSFR awarded grants to 11 states for 16 Tier 2 projects totaling $14,274,760 (for an award ratio of 85% of Tier 2 funds requested).
- Tier 2 projects awarded funding this year will contribute approximately 489 new slips for use by eligible transient recreational boaters, plus other amenities such as restrooms, fueling stations, and navigational aids.

Members of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council's (SFBPC) scoring committee once again worked closely with WSFR staff to review and rank the eligible proposals received for the FY2014 competition. The Council committee scores were combined with WSFR's BIG Program Coordinators' scores to determine the final award recommendations, supported by WSFR Assistant Director Hannibal Bolton and approved by the Service's Director Ashe. WSFR appreciates the expertise and commitment of these committee members in helping to select the highest-quality projects to receive BIG funding.

WSFR published the Fiscal Year 2015 Requests for Proposals (RFP) for Tier 1 and 2 Boating Infrastructure Grants on June 18 at Grants.gov. You must submit your Tier 1 (Grant Opportunity # F14AS00240) or Tier 2 (Grant Opportunity # F14AS00241) proposals by September 19.

WSFR encourages State applicants and their partners to work closely with the Regional program staff before the deadline, to ensure that the proposals you submit are complete and eligible. Stay tuned for an opportunity to join a teleconference with WSFR Region and HQ BIG Specialists, tentatively planned for late August. You'll have the opportunity to ask questions about the Program and discuss a variety of grant application and management issues. Contact Paul or your Regional BIG Coordinator to receive final call details via email.

2015 Tier 2 projects will be scored using the current BIG rule. However, please note that you must include a budget narrative along with the project statement, budget, standard forms, and letters of commitment from partners. We make this change to comply with new Service-wide standards published by WSFR's Branch of Financial Assistance Policy and Oversight (FAPO) in April of this year.

In a budget narrative, be sure to give as much detail as you can on project costs the method you use to prorate these costs (if needed). Describe expected contributions from partners, other sources of non-Federal match, and any other information that will help reviewers understand how you will spend the Federal funds you are requesting and the matching funds you bring to the project. The narrative will help WSFR and SFBPC reviewers to more carefully evaluate and score proposals submitted for the FY2015 BIG award cycle.

Remember to contact your Regional BIG Coordinators if you have questions. We're looking forward to reading your proposals.
**Policy Updates**

**Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG)**

We proposed updates to the BIG Final Rule and published in the Federal Register in 2012. The changes were extensive and we received many comments, as well as requests for more time to review. The comments we received gave us some good insights into what changes were supported and what we needed to take a harder look at. We again published a BIG Proposed Rule on April 25, 2014 with a 90-day comment period. At the close of the comment period on July 24 we received 13 comments, which included remarks from SOBA, BoatUS, the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, several States, and one marina owner. You may view all comments we received at [regulations.gov](http://regulations.gov). We appreciate the time that commenters took to review the rule, give us thoughtful feedback, and let us know areas where you support the changes. We expect to publish the BIG Final Rule by the end of the calendar year.

**Clean Vessel Act (CVA)**

The current Clean Vessel Act Grant Program Final Rule was published in March 1994. We will update the regulations to include legal changes, new program approaches, technical improvements, and clarifications needed. We will combine the grant program updates with updates for the Clean Vessel Act: Pumpout Station and Dump Station Technical Guidelines that we published in March 1994 and the Clean Vessel Act Pumpout Symbol, Slogan and Program Crediting Final Rule that we published August 1997. All will be located at 50 CFR 85 when we complete this comprehensive update.

We want to get as much input from our partners and stakeholders as possible, so we will be using some new approaches, as well as some tested approaches, to receiving feedback on the direction for the updates. Earlier this year we used the Financial Assistance Wiki to receive comments on the current final rule. We will be scheduling some Open Forum sessions using Adobe Connect as well as a collaborative session at this year’s SOBA Conference. We encourage all States to participate—even if you do not have a CVA program in your State. We want to know why not! Perhaps we can consider some changes to the rule that will help your State to participate. Stay tuned!

**Wildlife TRACS Update**

TRACS stands for Tracking and Reporting Actions for the Conservation of Species. Wildlife TRACS is the tracking and reporting system for conservation and related actions funded by the Service’s WSFR Program. The Service and States have been working together this year to learn the system and to start entering projects. Together we are not only building a performance reporting system, but also a way to help us to tell our conservation story.

In addition to "behind the scenes" systems work, WSFR's Program & Accomplishment Reporting Branch (PAR) is working on bringing together participants for a TRACS operational committee that is comprised of federal and non-federal stakeholders. The TRACS Working Group will meet for the first time on August 20, 2014 and quarterly thereafter. In July, PAR development efforts focused on mapper performance improvements, user and group management updates, and legacy data. PAR staff continue to respond to requests for help and to resolve access issues.
TRACS training continues on many levels with the **TRACS Training Program**. Training events, course materials, and User Guide information is available on the **TRACS Wiki** web site. In addition, TRACS Guidance and Best Management Practice project examples are available on the wiki. PAR will host a training session at the upcoming SOBA Conference in Little Rock. Class size is limited to 15 and participants must sign up in advance [HERE](#).

The PAR Branch recently hired two new system trainers:

**Yonah Cohen** joined the WSFR team in July 2014 as a technical trainer for the Wildlife TRACS application. Her role includes developing and delivering TRACS training courses in a variety of formats (classroom, web-based and online training).

Prior to working with WSFR, she worked as a corporate trainer for SCL Health System where she trained for Medical Records software, developed curriculum and training materials, and provided technical support to medical professionals in a tri-state region. She also worked as a Wildlife Technician at Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, where she gave care to orphaned and injured wildlife, trained volunteers and interns, and helped facilitate educational programs for the public.

Yonah was born and raised in the Colorado Rocky Mountains with the Indian Peaks Wilderness in her backyard. She enjoys hiking, fishing, photography, and reading. She studied wildlife biology and environmental studies in college and holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

**Evan Lockwood** has conducted training for more than 25 years. His training experience includes the finance, telecommunication, medical, and software industries. Evan believes humor is a significant factor for a good learning environment and his classes display his off-beat style. Teaching his grandsons to enjoy the outdoors keeps him young and exhausted. He lives in Denver, Colorado with his wife Deb and Max the wonder dog.

Evan and Yonah will begin delivering TRACS classroom and online instruction in September 2014.

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**SOBA Taskforce Updates:**

**Non-Motorized:** The SOBA work group tasked with developing design and operation recommendations for non-motorized boating access facilities has been formed and is gathering existing data for review and comparison. A central storage location for digital data is being set up for this information and will be available shortly. Watch for an update on this topic during the 2014 conference in North Little Rock, as well as a forthcoming request to the SOBA membership for input on this topic.

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**SOBA Represented at the Fish and Wildlife Business Summit**

by Patricia Harrell, SOBA Treasurer

On April 28-30, I attended the Fish and Wildlife Business Summit in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, as a representative of SOBA. Attendees included agency directors, association representatives, boating...
Ron Regan, Executive Director, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), really set the tone for the Summit with his presentation: **Partnership with Industry.** This continued with a panel discussion that included three (3) states that had previously held State Summits, and ended with open dialogue on **How We Better Communicate with Industry?** We all have a part to play in educating and informing our stakeholders and users on what we do, and ensuring that we partner with associations and industry entities that have a vested interest in boating and boating access. Here in Florida, our agency has strong support from the Marine Industry Association of Florida, and they have been an important strategic partner of ours in helping with funding, legislative, and program issues important to boating and boating access in Florida. As we all face a funding drop in Sport Fish Restoration, engaging industry and association partners at federal and state level will play a crucial role in our collective future efforts.

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**Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) Update**
by Steve Miller, SOBA RBFF Representative and SOBA Board Member

SOBA members should periodically visit [takemefishing.org](http://takemefishing.org) and review the activities of RBFF. The [RBFF News Room](http://www.rbff.org), is where you can find news and resources related to RBFF and its’ award-winning consumer campaign **Take Me Fishing.** The **Take Me Fishing** campaign helps individuals learn, plan and equip for a day out on the water. The RBFF News Room helps further communicate this message with valuable tools for media such as key recreational statistics, fishing- and boating-related images, instructional videos, relevant industry news and more.

RBFF’s 2014 Annual Report provides a detailed summary on the Foundation’s projects and accomplishments during fiscal year 2014. The report includes a progress overview of our boating and fishing initiatives, industry and state agency partnerships as well as the Foundation’s goals in the coming year.

View the Annual Report [HERE](http://www.rbff.org).

A current major emphasis of RBFF is outreach to the Hispanic Community, and on Aug 20, 2014 RBFF released a new video documentary to encourage Hispanic boating and fishing. Click [HERE](http://www.rbff.org) to view RBFF’s new video documentary that encourages Hispanic participation in boating and fishing.

Also on July 16, 2014 the **2014 Special Report on Fishing** was released by the RBFF and the Outdoor Foundation at the International Convention of Allied Sportfishing Trades show (ICAST) in Orlando, Fla. The report reveals there were 4.1 million newcomers to fishing in 2013, an increase from the 3.5 million average new anglers per year between 2007 and 2012. Additionally, women, children and Hispanics showed increases in participation.

**The TOP 10 REPORT LEARNINGS were:**

- **Women anglers** – Almost 42% of first-time fishing participants are female
- **Number of outings for Hispanic participants** – Hispanic fishing participants average 24.4 days on the water per year; almost five days more than the average for all fishing participants (19.7 days)
- **Youth** – Fishing participation as a child has a powerful effect on future participation – 83.7% of adult anglers fished as a child
- **Influencers** – Parents, siblings and friends continue to be the largest influencers to the introduction of fishing; specifically, parents introduce 81.8% of 6-12 year olds and 76.6% of 13-17 year olds
- **Social** – Over 83% of fishing trips involve more than one person
- **Most popular** – Freshwater fishing remains the most popular type of fishing (almost 38 million), with more than 3x the number of participants as saltwater fishing
• **Fly fishing** – 14% percent of fly fishing participants were new to the sport
• **Spontaneous** – Most fishing trips are spontaneous or planned within a week of the trip (79%)
• **Reasons to fish** – Catching fish and enjoying the sounds/smells of nature. Over 80% of participants report catching fish during their last fishing trip
• **License purchase** – 27% of fishing participants (of license-buying age) are not buying fishing licenses, which means revenue used for conservation is being left on the table

RBFF is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to increase participation in recreational angling and boating, thereby protecting and restoring the nation's aquatic natural resources. RBFF developed the award-winning Take Me Fishing™ campaign to create awareness around boating, fishing and conservation, and educate people about the benefits of participation. Take Me Fishing helps boaters and anglers of all ages and experience levels learn, plan and equip for a day on the water. The campaign website, [TakeMeFishing.org](http://TakeMeFishing.org), and its new Spanish-language counterpart, [VamosAPescar.org](http://VamosAPescar.org), feature how-to videos, information on how to get a fishing license and boat registration, and an interactive state-by-state map that allows visitors to find local boating and fishing spots.

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**Update from the Capital:**

by Lauren Dunn, NMMA

**NMMA testifies before Chicago City Council finance committee, opposes E15 proposal**

On Monday, July 28, NMMA's David Dickerson testified before the Chicago City Council's finance committee and opposed a proposal requiring most gas stations to carry E-15. The proposal's stated goal is to lower fuel prices in city, some of the highest in the US, and reduce pollution. In testifying against the measure, NMMA said that its opposition was shared by BoatUS, boating clubs across the city, marine retail merchants, AAA, the Sierra Club and many other organizations who oppose the expanded use of E15.

The boating industry has long known the hazardous effects of E15 on marine engines. NMMA argued that mandating the sale of E15 in Chicago is likely to cause boaters who make a purchase based on the possibility of a lower price at the pump to accidentally fuel their boat with harmful E15. Similarly, if a consumer were to fill a car and boat during the same transaction, the likelihood of misfueling increases. Misfueling will not only void warranties, but can cause expensive damage to marine engines and their components and threatens to put boaters in dangerous situations on the water due to potential engine failure. The city is currently planning no consumer education programs and suggests using only the most basic, highly inadequate, signage to denote the differences between E15 and what currently is dispensed at most pumps, E10. NMMA also argued that the mandate should not apply to any pumps at marinas, as the EPA explicitly forbids the use of E15 in marine engines.

The issue is an important one for the city, especially for boaters and the 13,000 boats registered in Chicago. NMMA encourages all residents to continue to contact city officials directly, or use Boating United's action alert, here to contact Mayor Emanuel and tell him to stop the proposed E15 mandate. For more, read opposition editorials in the Illinois Observer and the Chicago Sun-Times.

The bill is currently being sponsored by the chair of the finance committee, Alderman Ed Burke, the most senior member of the City Council. Support for the proposal comes largely from ethanol manufacturers, labor unions and health organizations.

NMMA's efforts have determined uncertainty about the proposal among several committee members. No vote has yet been taken and Chicago's mayor has yet to take a position. NMMA will continue to be actively engaged as this proposal takes shape and will report on updates.

**Did you know? Boating United gains 9 new advocates daily!**
Boating United is gaining 9 new advocates each day—are you included? If you're interested in learning more about how Boating United works, or helping us spread the word about why it is important, download our infographic to share with colleagues, employees or peers. Share, tweet or email the infographic to anyone who might be interested in joining the growing number of boating industry advocates.

Sign up to receive timely, local action alerts about important legislative issues like ethanol, safety and boater access at boatingunited.com. Your voice makes a difference! Questions? Contact Michael Lewan at mlewan@nmma.org.

House Appropriations Adopt E15 Amendment

Last week during the House of Representative's Committee on Appropriation's Interior and Environment markup, which directs Fiscal Year 2015 funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), an important amendment affecting the sale of E15 was unanimously adopted and will now be considered by the full House.

NMMA's Washington office was heavily involved in passing the amendment, which will require the EPA to do more comprehensive E15 public education outreach on the dangers of E15 to non-approved engines, like boats, motorcycles, and lawn equipment. NMMA also remains involved in numerous other E15 related efforts, including litigation against the EPA for its failure to establish a robust misfueling mitigation plan. For more information on NMMA's E15 efforts, please contact Michael Lewan at mlewan@nmma.org.

American Boating Congress 2014 Photo Gallery now Available!

Did you attend this year's American Boating Congress? Or maybe you missed out but still want to see what all the buzz was about? Check out the 2014 American Boating Congress photo gallery! Click here to see photos of you, your colleagues and your Members of Congress at the industry's premiere advocacy event. All photos are courtesy of John Nelson Photography.

Don't forget! If you want to be a part of this important event next year—SAVE THE DATE! The 2015 American Boating Congress will be held on May 11-13 in Washington, D.C.

Association of Marina Industries: (AMI) Update
by Wendy Larimer

INTERNATIONAL MARINA & BOATYARD CONFERENCE 2015:
Save the Dates — January 28-30, 2015 • Tampa, Florida

The International Marina & Boatyard Conference (IMBC) will return to Tampa, Florida, January 28-30, 2015, at the Tampa Convention Center. IMBC is the leading marina and boatyard conference and is produced by the Association of Marina Industries (AMI).

"We are looking forward to returning to Tampa," AMI Chair Jeff Rose, CMM, says. "The show has seen success in Tampa and the city offers numerous waterfront properties for conference events."

IMBC will host most conference events, such as receptions, seminars, and workshops, at the Tampa Convention Center. Discounted room blocks will be offered at the Marriott Tampa Waterside and The Westin Tampa Harbor Island.

"Tampa's many restaurants, activities, and entertainment opportunities make it a desirable location for IMBC participants," Rose continues. "In addition, Tampa is readily accessible for many, and the area around the Tampa Convention Center is easy to navigate. We are excited to return."

For more information on IMBC 2015, please visit MarinaAssociation.org/IMBC.
IMI 2014 FALL CONFERENCE WILL FOCUS ON BOOSTING REVENUES

Marina conference promises 10 ways to increase profits.

The International Marina Institute (IMI), a subsidiary of the Association of Marina Industries (AMI), has scheduled its annual Fall Conference for October 26–27, 2014. This year's topic is "Ten Ways to Increase Your Revenues: Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is" and the event will be held at the Lago Mar Resort & Club in Fort Lauderdale, FL.

The workshop style conference will feature topics geared toward all industry professionals including suppliers such as improving sales techniques, sharpening networking skills, persuasive communications, marketing, and branding. Participants will engage in each session and leave with detailed takeaways that they can implement right away.

Held in south Florida prior to the Southeast Florida Marina and Boatyard Study Tour and the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, IMI's annual Fall Conference is dedicated to providing marina industry professionals with continuing education on current issues and business topics. For more information, please visit MarinaAssociation.org or call 401-247-0314.

Looking Ahead to Great Outdoors Month in 2015 and Beyond

by Ben Nasta, American Recreation Coalition

Great Outdoors Month has always aimed to encourage all kinds of people—outdoor rookies and experts alike—to connect with and enjoy America's Great Outdoors. 2014 was our most successful celebration yet, and prospects for 2015 and beyond are even more exciting. A report on our 2014 achievements is available at www.greatoutdoorsmonth.org.

The Great Outdoors Month Co-Chairs have met with leaders at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of the Interior and Capitol Hill to develop plans for 2015. The response from these meetings was overwhelmingly positive. Best of all, the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR) has committed active support for Great Outdoors Month.

Dave Allen, President of Coleman USA and one of Great Outdoors Month's most valued leaders, took part in recent meetings in Washington, D.C. He laid out what Coleman believes are the three most important questions the Great Outdoors Month coalition needs to answer for the public: "Where to go?", "What to bring?" and "What to do?" We think Dave has it right and we will be working hard, as a team, to use resources ranging from greatoutdoorsmonth.org to recreation.gov. We will also be adding Coleman's new "Coleman Park Expert" to our own communications channels to make it easier for people to find parks, trails, campgrounds, fishing spots and other great outdoors places near them, to make reservations, and to learn more about what to bring with them.

We are excited that it's not just the recreation community driving Great Outdoors Month forward. Exciting new partnerships opportunities are emerging in the health care and education sectors as well. The largest National Get Outdoors Day event—in Denver—is a great example. Its primary sponsor in 2014? United HealthCare! The health care and outdoor industries are natural allies. It's no secret that America currently faces an obesity epidemic that means today's kids will live shorter lives than their parents. Health care professionals from around the country have already touted active fun outdoors as the very best remedy to these trends and their tremendous personal and economic costs—and they want to do more.

Of course, outdoor recreation doesn't have to be landlocked. America has a vast network of public waters, and reconnecting outdoor rookies and veterans alike with their waters is a huge part of Great Outdoors Month. Two of the key events aimed at doing just that during Great Outdoors Month were
National Fishing and Boating Week and National Marina Day.

Coordinated nationally by *Take Me Fishing*, National Fishing and Boating Week introduced kids and families to different kinds of outdoor fun on and around the water. States around the country had free fishing days along with hundreds of kids' fishing events. New this year was *Take Me Fishing's* Spanish-language website, aimed at reaching out to the Hispanic community and getting a whole new group of Americans young and old out on the water.

**National Marina Day**—organized by the Association of Marina Industries—celebrated its 13th year during Great Outdoors Month 2014. With 160 events including free boat rides in 33 states, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Canada, **National Marina Day** was an invitation people of all ages and backgrounds to use marinas as the gateway to America's wide variety of public waters. The 2014 events were huge successes, and we are committed to making them even bigger and better in 2015.

Let's get back to Coleman's three questions—where to go, what to bring and what to do—the key questions facing people as they try to connect with the Great Outdoors. These questions strike at the very core of the mission of Great Outdoors Month. We and our partners stand ready and willing to help all Americans enjoy fun in the Great Outdoors – and learn a bit about the importance of conservation.

Get Outdoors—all year long!