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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:
Dear SOBA Friends and Colleagues:

I’m looking forward to seeing you in Vermont, September 21-24 for the 29th National Boating Access Conference sponsored by SOBA. Mike Wichrowski and his team have put together an educational and informative program for us. This conference has been a collaborative effort between many of the New England states helping with speakers, topics, and other items. During the conference you will have opportunities to meet and learn about new products, materials and techniques that pertain to boating and boating access with familiar exhibitors who faithfully support our Conference year after year, and meet some new exhibitors too! We realize many of you are encountering delays in obtaining travel authorizations and we have therefore extended our early bird registration deadline to August 31. If you have not done so, please make your hotel reservations immediately as our room block is filling up fast. You can register and obtain more information about the conference, hotel accommodation, transportation options, boating access site visits, and guest program HERE.

We are excited to announce that the 2016 National Boating Access Conference will be in Chattanooga, Tennessee and in 2017, in Anchorage, Alaska. Having the conferences scheduled this far in advance will allow the hosting state and Board the opportunity to receive additional input from you on the presentation topics that matter to you. Please see announcement in this newsletter giving exact dates for 2016 and 2017.

For me this year has gone fast, and I’ve greatly appreciated serving as your President for the past two years and working closely with the Executive 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, and when you consider that 87.3 million boaters took to the water in 2014, and 95% of boats are small trailerable boats under 26 feet, you can immediately understand the importance of the work you do.

So as the end of my term as your President swiftly draws near, I am heartened by all the progress this Board and our membership and supporters have made towards keeping SOBA relevant and meaningful over the past two years. However, there are still many things that need to be done, and I am confident that exciting forward strides will be made in 2016, under the capable leadership of the incoming Board. In closing I would like to challenge you to take an active role in SOBA: join a task force, offer to present at the next conference, write an article for the newsletter, submit your name for a board seat, or submit a nomination for a national award. Your contributions directly support the initiatives, programs and efforts that strengthen and grow boating access. You are SOBA.

SEE YOU IN VERMONT FOR SOBA’S 2015 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
by Mike Wichrowski, 2015 Conference State Host

As we move through August, SOBA’s 2015 National Boating Access conference is shaping up to be an excellent line-up of timely topics and agenda items. With the help of many New England and New York state partners, as well as the US Fish and Wildlife Service, we have will have a full 3 days of engaging and educational sessions, followed by a day of boating access site visits on Lake Champlain on Thursday, September 24th. We’ll kick off the conference on Monday September 21st with the Federal Aid Training day with WSFR staff from Washington and the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), and end the
day with an event at the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum where you can walk among exhibits that date back thousands of years. Tuesday and Wednesday sessions will hit a number of topics, including water quality, aquatic nuisance species control, green infrastructure design, non-motorized access, and accessibility issues. These sessions will include some “open forums” that encourage attendees to have interactive group discussions on the topics at hand.

SOBA has a number of established task forces which include:

- Best Management Practices for Clean Vessel Act Program: Chaired by Janine Belleque (OR)
- Non-Motorized Access Guidelines: Chaired by Ron Christofferson (AZ)
- Pumpout Boat Purchase and Operation Guidelines: Chaired by Kate Hughes-Brown (CT) and Scott Meister (SC)
- Best Management Practices for Boating Infrastructure Grant Program, Chaired by Patricia Harrell (FL)

All task forces will meet in Vermont, and provide an update to attendees, as appropriate.

Late September is the perfect time to visit northern New England as there are so many activities to get involved in from local festivals to apple picking to hiking America’s first long distance trail, the iconic Long Trail, so if time allows we encourage you to arrive early, or stay late to take advantage of all this area has to offer.

Time is running out, so I encourage you to visit SOBA’s website (www.sobaus.org) to review our agenda, as well as Basin Harbor Club’s website (www.basinharbor.com) to see what the host facilities have available. I hope to see you in Vermont in late September.

SOBA 2016 AND 2017 CONFERENCE DATES ANNOUNCED MARK YOUR CALENDARS

SOBA 2016: October 10–13: Chattanooga, Tennessee
SOBA 2017: August 28–31: Anchorage, Alaska

TRANSPORTATION BILL: SPORT FISH RESTORATION AND BOATING TRUST FUND UPDATE
from SOBA Past President and ABA Member, James Adams

SOBA is part of a coalition called the Angling and Boating Alliance (ABA). This group is made up of longstanding fishing and boating industry national leaders, and SOBA is proud to be a Stakeholder in this important group which works tirelessly with both the Senate and House committees to accomplish the reauthorization language for the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund (SFRBTF), in addition to making adjustments in the allocation of the SFR fund. Congress recently passed a three month short term extension to the Transportation Bill through December 2015. The Bill passed achieved two things: it extended the law and appropriated the funds. Nothing else was changed in the law during this process.

As you know, the SFRTF is financed in part through the Transportation Bill. The good news is that this may be the last extension by Congress, and there is hope that the next act will result in a six year Transportation Bill. For additional information, visit SOBA’s website which outlines the ABA position. Please call me or email me if you would like to discuss the ABA position and SOBA’s involvement in more depth. James Adams, SOBA Past President Phone 804/367-0183, James.adams@dgif.virginia.gov
Greetings and happy summer! The boating season is in full swing so we hope you’re finding time to get out and enjoy some time on the water. At the end of the day, after all the hard work of managing grant funds and projects is done, there’s nothing like the experience of boating to melt away stress and reconnect with the great outdoors. Thank you for everything you do every day, to make that possible for so many.

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 more information at the end of this editorial.

We want to congratulate Lisa Van Alstyne as she transitions into her new role with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as the Chief, Financial Assistance Policy and Oversight in Headquarters, Falls Church, Virginia. Her contributions to the Service’s boating grant programs have been immeasurable. We thank her for her service, hard work, and cheer. Lisa still plans to attend the SOBA conference in September.

We hope that many of you will be at the SOBA annual conference. We look forward to sharing more information about our program at the conference.

Wildlife TRACS:  
WSFR is pleased to announce that Wildlife TRACS is online and available to you, your partners and stakeholders. Visit [http://tracs.fws.gov](http://tracs.fws.gov) to view information on hundreds of projects, including many funded through WSFR’s boating programs. From the home page (image at right), click the “Search by State” button at the top right. Select your state from the map by clicking on it, then click the “Go To State Portal” link on the right. You can view BIG, CVA, and Boating Access project information, which you can use to communicate success stories to the media and your stakeholders.

At last count, there were nearly 300 CVA, Boating Access, and BIG approved projects visible to the public, suggesting that the system is experiencing significant use. Now, the public can view project information and learn about some of the many great things being done for boating in every state through our unique Federal/State partnership. System development continues in an ongoing effort to improve the TRACS user experience and great strides have been made over the past year in achieving a reporting system that is transparent and fully accessible to the American public.

Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG):  
In July, WSFR Policy and Programs staff held a webinar for state program managers and members of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council to review the new BIG rule and discuss resulting changes that will impact application requirements and proposal scoring. Lisa Van Alstyne presented the key changes resulting from the new rule. Paul Van Ryzin provided background information on the BIG program and discussed funding trends and application requirements. The webinar and the slideshows are available on [WSFR’s Federal Assistance Wiki](http://tracs.fws.gov).

WSFR is currently accepting applications for BIG Tier 1-National and BIG Tier 2-State projects that will benefit transient boaters. To obtain application materials and instructions, go to [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) and click the “Search Grants” tab. For Tier 1-State projects (with a total Federal cost of $200,000 or less) enter Funding Opportunity Number F15AS00281. For Tier
2-National projects (with a total Federal cost of up to $1.5 million) enter Funding Opportunity Number F15AS00278. We recommend you carefully read the application instructions. Contact your Regional BIG Program coordinator for technical assistance. More information is available at this link.

![Charleston Maritime Center (Fiscal Year 2013 BIG Tier 2 Project)](Image)

Photo: Scott Meister, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

**Clean Vessel Act (CVA):**
WSFR is currently accepting grant applications for the CVA program through December 2, 2015. The Notice of Funding Opportunity can be found by searching on Grants.gov for CFDA 15.616 or by looking at the [WSFR homepage](https://www.fws.gov/). CVA provides funding to States, the District of Columbia, Commonwealths, and territories for the construction, renovation, operation, and maintenance of sewage pumpout stations, waste reception facilities, and pumpout boats for recreational boaters and for educational programs that inform boaters of the importance of proper disposal of their sewage. We anticipate having approximately $12 million to award in FY 2016, so please consider applying and participating in helping the Service keep our waters clean. More information is available at [this link](https://www.fws.gov/).

**Boating Access Subprogram of the Sport Fish Restoration Program:**
Thanks to each of you who help make this program such a huge success. Through this program, the Service has provided millions of dollars to State fish and wildlife agencies to make sure people have a place to boat and access the nation’s great waterways. Keep up the great work!!

![Boating Access Subprogram of the Sport Fish Restoration Program](Image)

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 at least 15% of their SFR apportionment on Boating Access over a set 5 year period. More information is available at [this link](https://www.fws.gov/).

**National Coastal Wetlands:**
We received a number of applications for the FY 2016 National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program posted on Grants.gov (CFDA 15.614). We are reviewing applications and anticipate announcing awards by January 2016. This program provides funding for restoration and acquisition of coastal wetland ecosystems. Although it isn’t one of our “boating programs,” coastal wetland conservation and restoration is key to maintaining our resilient coastlines. More information is available at [this link](https://www.fws.gov/).

**WSFR Branch of Policy:**
**Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG) Final Rule:** The Service published the BIG Final rule in the Federal Register May 6, with an effective date of June 5, 2015. WSFR extends a huge thank you to the Board and members of SOBA for your interaction and support throughout the rulemaking process. Together we worked for a BIG rule that adds new dimensions to help us build even better projects. We look forward to working with States and
subgrantees through the transition and encourage you to continue to share your suggestions and thoughts for improvements. You may view documents related to the Final rule and post comments at this link.

Clean Vessel Act Grant Program, Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (CVA ANPR): Be watching for an announcement soon as we prepare to publish the CVA ANPR. What is an ANPR? It is a document that an agency may choose to issue prior to a proposed rule as a vehicle for getting greater public participation. We greatly appreciate the Open Forum discussions we have with States, SOBA, and the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, but realize that everyone who has a connection to CVA doesn’t participate in these discussions. When the ANPR publishes, we ask that you send it out to everyone you know that has ANY interest in CVA — vendors, engineers, marina/boater organizations, other State or local agencies, etc. We want to hear from a large audience! Here are a few of the questions we ask, but there are more:

- How important is it for States to monitor the amount of waste removed through pumpouts?
- Should floating restrooms be allowed to be connected to docks or land?
- Should maximum fees be increased? Decreased?
- How should we define “recreational vessel?”
- How should we define “useful life?”
- What new technology or approaches exist and how should they inform our rulemaking?

The CVA rulemaking will combine the current final rule at 50 CFR 85 with the Technical Guidelines and the Pumpout Symbol Final rule — all under 50 CFR 85. We look forward to working with everyone to help craft CVA for the future!

Headquarters Boating Grant Contacts:
Paul Van Ryzin, Fish & Wildlife Biologist, Paul_VanRyzin@fws.gov, Wildlife TRACS & BIG
Christy Vigfusson, Programs Branch Chief, Christy_Vigfusson@fws.gov
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SPORT FISHING AND BOATING PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL NEWS
by Scott Kovarovics

The Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council is continuing its efforts to initiate a pilot project with federal and state agencies to improve the permitting processes associated with boating infrastructure projects. The Council arranged and hosted a successful panel of government and industry experts on this topic at its February meeting, including a presentation by SOBA president Janine Belleque on the findings of a survey of SOBA members. The Council submitted a detailed letter to the Secretary of Interior and to the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR) in late May with its findings and recommendations on ways to improve the efficiency and transparency of the permitting processes. FICOR has responded to the letter and is recommending setting up meetings to discuss this topic further with appropriate agencies. The Council is in the process of scheduling these meetings. Copies of the Council’s letter and FICOR’s response are available on the Council’s web site: http://www.fws.gov/sfbpc/. In addition, Council member John Sprague has arranged a special session on this topic at the upcoming National Working Waterfronts and Waterways Symposium in November.

The Council completed an assessment of the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) and presented its findings and recommendations at their February meeting. The Council’s assessment is for years 2010-2012. The assessment was delayed to various unforeseen complications, including the federal government shutdown. As a result, the
Council is beginning an assessment for years 2013-2015. The primary focus of the new assessment will be RBFF’s progress with performance measures that were established as a result of previous Council assessments. Copies of the recently completed assessment can be downloaded from the Council’s web site.

Council members and their respective agencies are committed to the issue of preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species by boats. As a result, the interest in this topic is growing exponentially. State agencies are benefitting from the clarification regarding the eligibility of wash down stations with boating access funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Council members John Adey (president of the American Boat and Yacht Council) and Thom Dammrich (president of the National Marine Manufacturers Association) are helping to spearhead these efforts. The Council will be updated on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s programs with aquatic invasive species at their upcoming fall meeting.

The Council’s fall meeting is scheduled for October 6-7 at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Bozeman Fish Technology Center in Bozeman, Montana. The Council’s meetings are open to the public and SOBA members are encouraged to attend. If there are specific topics that SOBA members believe the Council should be updated on or act upon, please feel free to share these with SOBA’s Council members James Adams and Janine Belleque.

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**BOATING AND FISHING PLAY LARGER ROLE IN GREAT OUTDOORS MONTH™ 2015**

by Benjamin Nasta, American Recreational Coalition (ARC)

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, and 2015 was the biggest year yet! June was proclaimed Great Outdoors Month by President Barack Obama and by each of the 50 governors — a remarkable demonstration of bipartisan support for healthy, active fun outdoors.

Over the course of the month, an estimated 16,000 events occurred with hundreds of thousands of people getting outdoors on land and on the water. Americans of all ages and backgrounds sampled recreational activities from fishing to kayaking to rock-climbing, played new outdoor games and hiked with park rangers, camped out in really unusual places and more.

Hundreds of organizations, businesses and government agencies teamed up as never before, working together to help the outdoors compete for the hearts and minds of an increasingly technology-focused, urban and more diverse America. Great Outdoors Month Founding Sponsor The Coleman Company donated hundreds of tents, sleeping bags, lanterns, coolers, chairs and grills to state park agencies for new family “learn to camp” programs. They were joined by other key outdoor businesses including Bass Pro Shops and Field and Stream stores in supporting the month’s activities. The President put a special plug in for America’s public lands and waters and the month featured a brand new series of events: “Get into Your Sanctuary,” highlighting marine sanctuaries across the country.

Twenty-two governors specifically urged participation in National Fishing and Boating Week in their proclamations and nineteen highlighted National Marina Day helping both of these events be very successful in 2015. Free fishing days, boating safety programs and more attracted the attention of people looking to have fun on the water. Governors of 13 states hosted Capital Campouts, with urban youth offered chances to sleep outdoors — often for the first time and in many cases on the front lawn of the governor’s residence! But
the kids did more than just camp. They kayaked and climbed aboard displayed boats in Missouri, kayaked and paddleboarded on the James River in Virginia and fished in Boston Harbor. And they cooked with First Families and top chefs from recreation businesses like Delaware North.

Other Great Outdoors Month events introduced people to outdoor fun on the water as well. The eighth annual National Get Outdoors Day (GO Day) enjoyed a record number of sites and participants. Led by the Forest Service and the American Recreation Coalition, GO Day sites specifically seek to reach urban youth and their families. Fishing and boating were incorporated into many of the events, along with climbing walls and RVs on display, archery and outdoor safety instruction and wildlife demonstrations. And as part of the American Hiking Society’s National Trails Day, 3,500 paddlers launched kayaks and canoes on 40 paddling trips on rivers, lakes and streams, paddling a distance of 13,600 miles.

Great Outdoors Month 2015 wrapped up with a bang as 50 4th grade Girl Scouts pitched tents, climbed rocks, tied knots, stargazed and more on the South Lawn of the White House. First Lady Michelle Obama — Honorary National President of the Girl Scouts of the USA — hosted the campout as part of the Let's Move! Outside campaign and Great Outdoors Month on June 30. The kids were joined later that night by NASA astronaut Cady Coleman for stargazing through telescopes led by NASA staff and scientists. And they got a big thrill when President Obama showed up for some campfire songs!

June included a major planning session hosted by seven federal agencies and the American Recreation Coalition called Partners Outdoors 2015, with a key presentation by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation on outreach to Latino Americans. In addition to the 125 invited participants, the Partners Outdoors sessions were livestreamed nationwide and have been viewed by more than 1500 individuals and groups. Watch for yourself at this link.

Great Outdoors Month has earned the active support of the White House and the federal and state agencies managing America’s public lands and waters, as well as other public and private partners across the country. Prospects for even bigger success in 2016 and beyond are exciting. To see videos and images of the month’s events, the Presidential and gubernatorial proclamations and more, visit www.greatoutdoorsmonth.org.

**NEWS FROM AFWA**

by Ryan Roberts

**Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies 105th Annual Meeting**
The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies will be hosting their 105th Annual Meeting from September 13-16 at the JW Marriott Starr Pass, Tucson Arizona. This annual event provides a forum for conservation leadership and brings together more than 700 leaders from fish and wildlife agencies and conservation groups from all 50 states, U.S. Territories, Canada and Mexico in order to discuss conservation policy and management issues and accomplishments. Attendees include key decision makers in the field of fish and wildlife, including; directors, assistant directors, program managers, and others involved in fisheries, wildlife habitat, law enforcement, legal affairs, industry, as well as public affairs (information and education). For more information regarding the Annual Meeting, please visit: [http://www.afwaannualmeeting.org/](http://www.afwaannualmeeting.org/)

**Reauthorization of the Sportfish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund**
Before leaving for August recess, the House sent the Senate a bill that would extend the current Transportation bill for five months, until December 18, 2015. The Senate passed a six-year Transportation bill that only has three years of funding, but it will not likely be taken up by the House. Senate rejected the House’s five-month extension of the Transportation bill,
and the House subsequently passed a three-month extension on July 29. The Senate promptly passed the three-month extension sent to the President for enactment before the law expired on July 31. The fate for the Trust Fund reauthorizations provisions that were amended into the US Coast Guard reauthorization bill, remain uncertain. The Senate’s six-year Transportation bill includes a straight reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, but the House does not seem inclined to move a straight reauthorization. We will likely see policy changes to the Trust Fund in the House Transportation bill. The House is expected to introduce and move its Transportation bill promptly after the August recess in an effort to conference and enact a long-term Transportation bill before the current extension expires.

**AFWA is Hiring**

AFWA is hiring!! Please check out our current openings and an opportunity to work for a great team. AFWA is hiring for the following positions:

- **Communications Director**
- **Legislative Assistant**

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**BOAT US — HQ UPDATE**

by Susan Shingledecker

Even though summer is drawing to a close, some of the busiest boating days are still ahead. Things at BoatU.S. are as busy as ever! Earlier this summer we announced an exciting change for our West Coast boaters. Those of you out west have known and loved our Vessel Assist towing fleet and have come to rely on theme in times of trouble. This year we have rebranded those ports and boats under the TowBoatU.S. brand for consistency nationwide. So look for the familiar red boats on the water, under a little different name, but the same great service and reliability.

The BoatU.S. Government Affairs team continue to keep up the fight against ethanol in our boating fuels. BoatU.S. is also a partner with SOBA and other members of the Angling and Boating Alliance (ABA) on the reauthorization of the Sportfish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. While we anticipate several policy changes to these programs, we continue to work hard to ensure that the fundamental integrity of BIG/CVA funds remains intact.

Over at the BoatU.S. Foundation there’s a lot going on. This year we have launched a number of new specialized online courses in addition to the Basic Boating Safety Course offered in most states. Added this year: **Weather for Boaters, Hurricane Preparation, and All About Marine Radios** with more title coming soon. Visit: [http://www.boatus.org/courses/](http://www.boatus.org/courses/) to learn more. We also expanded our life jacket loaner program to over 575 sites nationwide and have developed a new mapping tool that shows the location of all loaner sites, ones that are supplied by us, but also those run by other groups as well. Our [lifejacket loaner program website](http://www.boatus.org/courses/) includes all the information you need to start a loaner site including how to purchase discounted life jackets.

The BoatU.S. Foundation is also excited to partner with PFDMA (Personal Flotation Device Manufacturers Association) and the NMMA again on our third rendition of the **Life Jacket Design Competition**. We received innovation entries from around the world from designers and engineers who think they can make a better life jacket. The winner will be announced in just a few weeks at IBEX in Louisville, Kentucky.

Last but not least BoatU.S. released a new version of our smartphone app for iPhone and Android. This convenient app allows boaters to access their position and call for assistance but now also includes weather and tide information.
I look forward to seeing you all in Vermont next month!

THE ASSOCIATION OF MARINA INDUSTRIES IS GEARING UP FOR A BUSY FALL
by Wendy Larimer, AMI

We are holding a study tour in West Palm Beach November 3 and 4th to give current and potential marina operators a chance to see some of the latest technology and management techniques at local marinas.

As the management team for the Virginia Marine Trades Association, AMI will be producing their annual conference on November 10 to include a small exhibit space and six educational sessions including information on the state of the industry, ABYC certification, pressure washing compliance, tidal mapping for flood prevention, and human resources. For more information visit www.vamarinetrades.org.

There will be an intermediate marina management course held in November for those on track to becoming certified marina managers. These classes have seen a large uptick in participants over the past two years and we are expecting to continue that trend.

Staff will be attending the National Working Waterfonts conference in Tampa to learn what has been happening around the country to our working waterfronts and methods used to prevent any losses. This topic is of interest to marinas as they are part of our working waterfronts and in recent years were facing competition from condo developers for prime water access. In addition as the industry pushes towards retirement marinas are losing their owners and may be left with little option but to sell to the highest bidder.

We will also be attending the Boating BC and KY/TN annual conferences this fall to communicate the benefits and services of AMI to their members who are now AMI members through our new affiliate agreement.

Finally AMI has awarded the annual Neil Ross scholarship to Boating BC and Marine Association of Texas. The award goes to two associations each year that exemplify the value of trade associations through training, effective lobbying and grassroots efforts, and strong commitment to the marina industry.

DISCOVER BOATING MARKETING CAMPAIGN IN FULL SWING THIS SUMMER
by Kelly Kaylor, NMMA
The **Discover Boating** campaign is already exceeding expectations by generating positive results in awareness for the boating lifestyle, website traffic to DiscoverBoating.com/ca and manufacturer websites. The campaign is still underway and runs through September. Through mid-July, the popular *Stories of Discovery* documentary-style video series, featuring real boaters talking about priceless moments while on the water, have been featured across 10,000 websites, with nearly a 90% increase in views from last year’s results. DiscoverBoating.com/ca sites have seen an increase of 17% in comparison to last year’s results. What’s more, website traffic from Discover Boating to manufacturer websites is up nearly 60% from this time last year. Public relations efforts have generated high-profile coverage for boating, including a three-page story in *Men’s Health* magazine, an appearance on the national Fox & Friends morning show, a feature on *RollingStone.com* and appearance on County Music Television’s Hot 20 Countdown with Discover Boating ambassador and country music star **Jake Owen**, as well as coverage in local and regional news media around the U.S. A complete overview of 2015 Discover Boating campaign results will be available at the end of September.

**I-CAST REPORT**

*by Patricia Harrell*

The International Conference of Allied Sportfishing Tackle (ICAST) was held in Orlando at the Orange County Convention Center, July 15–17. More than 12,000 exhibitors from the sport fishing tackle and related industries attended. In addition, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources had booths to inform the manufacturer how we use Sport Fish Restoration dollars. Other federal agencies such as US Fish and Wildlife Service, Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration; US Fish and Wildlife Fisheries; and National Ocean and Atmospheric Agency Fisheries also had booths. Other state representatives from nearby states also attended.

Connecting with the manufacturers and informing them of how we use SFR funds was worth the 9 hours on a concrete floor!

This event will also be in Orlando next year, July 12–15! Try to attend. It is amazing!

**UPCOMING NATIONAL WORKING WATERFRONTS & WATERWAYS SYMPOSIUM**

*by Patricia Harrell*
The National Working Waterfronts & Waterways Symposium is shaping up to be an informative and stimulating gathering of people, coming together and connecting with one another for the sharing of innovative solutions to waterfront issues across the nation.

The agenda is still tentative because of changes to speakers and presenters, but the topics have been finalized. View the agenda here. Speakers and presenters are from diverse areas, representing state, federal, and private organizations. Read about the speakers and presenters here.

Early bird (discounted) registration ends August 24, but the regular reduced registration does not end until October 19. Early bird is a savings of $100 and the regular reduced is a savings of $50. More registration info here.

The meeting location and hotel promises to top off the experience at the Symposium. The Hilton Tampa Downtown is located downtown and is a short trolley ride to Channelside on the Hillsborough River. The hotel rate for the convention is $99. Hotel and reservation info here.

SOBA PARTICIPATES IN FISH & WILDLIFE BUSINESS SUMMIT
by Kate Hughes Brown, SOBA board member

The Wildlife Management Institute convened an annual business summit to discuss a wide range of issues involving Fish and Wildlife issues including marketing and brand awareness of the WSFR program, shooting range funding, administrative fees the USFWS, exemption on certain youth archery products and ensuring that excise taxes are fair and equitable, and appropriately applied. It was an opportunity for state agencies and fish and wildlife industry partners to learn what each about ongoing efforts and to discuss these topics. It also provided breakout sessions for groups to brainstorm ideas regarding the topics listed above. A tour of the Mossberg gun manufacturing facility was also included in the two-day summit.

NEWS FROM CAPITOL HILL
by Lauren Dunn, NMMA's Washington DC Office

Hearing takes place surrounding Biscayne National Park General Management Plan
The National Parks Service has released a General Management Plan (GMP) for Biscayne National Park in South Florida, which significantly restricts boating access. The proposed GMP closes off over 10,500 acres of the park to recreational boating and fishing, devastating the local economy and greatly limiting boaters access to the scenery, wildlife, and fishing which the park is known for. This extreme closure is not based off of verified scientific evidence, and has not been sanctioned by the Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), which has publicly come out against the plan. “This disregard for both the scientific process and the value of public access is the main reason why the FWC cannot support the marine reserve” stated the FWC in their public comments. Florida holds the title of “Fishing
Capital of the World,” and Biscayne National Park is one of the most popular fishing destinations in the state, seeing nearly 10 million recreational angling trips a year. Closure of such a large portion of the park would greatly harm the state and local economy, costing nearly 500 boating-related jobs and $40 million in product-revenue.

On Monday, August 3rd, the House Committee on Natural Resources and the House Small Business Committee held a joint hearing in Homestead, Florida titled “Restricted Access at Biscayne National Park and Implications for Fisherman, Small Businesses, the Local Economy, and the Environment.” This hearing addressed the concerns of the local fisherman and small businesses who depend on the park and the tourism it draws for their livelihood. Numerous local citizens attended the hearing to show their concern for the proposed GMP. Two members of the American Sportfishing Association, including local business owner Carl Liederman of Captain Harry’s Fishing Supply, spoke at the hearing.

GOP Representatives from South Florida, including Rep. Carlos Curbelo, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, and Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart have rallied together against this misguided GMP and proposed H.R. 3310, which would ensure state and local authorities have a say over the closure of national parks. To learn more about the hearing, click here

**Boating Industry continues work to reform Renewable Fuel Standard**
The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced their proposed Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), which would call for 14 billion gallons of blended ethanol into the United States fuel supply in 2016. At that level, the United States would breach the “blend wall,” meaning fuel with 15% ethanol (E15) would be widely available in the market. E15 is unsafe for marine engines, causing corrosion and having a negative effect on their performance, power, and durability. For this reason, ethanol blends above 10% are not allowed in small marine engines, as well as outdoor power equipment, motorcycles, and other small engines.

NMMA assisted boaters in fighting this misguided mandate through Boating United, allowing them to submit comments to Congress and the EPA explaining the dangers of ethanol to recreational boating. Additionally, NMMA member Mercury Marine sent their Director of Engine Design and Development, Tim Reid, to testify against the RFS to Congress this July. Reid, along with a panel of experts, told Congress the dangers of ethanol for small marine engines. NMMA has endorsed an alternative to ethanol, Isobutanol, as a safer alternative for the recreational boating industry.

**NMMA Hosts Biofuels Stakeholders Event to Promote Biobutanol Endorsement**
On Wednesday, June 17th, NMMA hosted an informative event for stakeholders regarding the recent endorsement of biobutanol at the Washington Marina in D.C. This event saw participants ranging from the Department of Energy to the American Motorcycle Association, as well as many other organizations who are concerned with the introduction of marine engine friendly biofuels into the energy market.

The event featured two speakers; NMMA’s own John McKnight, Senior Vice President of Government Relations, and Jeff Wasil, Engineering Manager for Emissions Testing, Certification & Regulatory Development at Evinrude. The two explained their extensive testing of biobutanol over the past five years, and the positive results they found. Both speakers highlighted their dual purpose of keeping emissions down while being safe for engines, and on both accounts biobutanol fit the bill. “We’ve looked at the situation and offered a real solution for the industry and consumers” stated Jeff Wasil.

Throughout its testing, biobutanol was compared with ethanol, currently the most researched and available form of biofuel on the market. Since gasoline containing more than 10% ethanol has proven harmful to marine engines, biobutanol was looked at to be a better alternative for the maritime market. In all cases, biobutanol proved to be as environmentally friendly and useable as ethanol, without being harmful to marine engines. “The recreational boating industry is proud to be on the leading edge of renewable fuel research as we continue to work
towards a solution for our industry and the many others that are impacted by the RFS,” said John McKnight. “This fuel is a safe, viable alternative to ethanol.”

To learn more about biobutanol and this event, click here

**Legislative success a DIRECT result of American Boating Congress attendee action**

Thanks to all who attended this year’s American Boating Congress — This important advocacy work on Capitol Hill is ALREADY making a difference! Save the date for 2016: May 9-11, Renaissance Hotel, Washington, D.C.

Take a look at some of the advocacy wins we’re already seeing since ABC came to a close.

- The House of Representatives passed the U.S. Coast Guard Reauthorization bill, HR 1987! Language included in the bill supports model year and engine weight updates for the recreational boating industry.
- A series of successful Hill meetings took place including:
  - Conversations with Paul Ryan, Chairman of Ways and Means, to discuss tax reform as it relates to the boating industry.
  - Discussions with Rep. Duncan Hunter (CA-52) who chairs the Transportation Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation to thank him for his work towards passing the Coast Guard Reauthorization.
  - Face to face meetings with Congressman Jeff Duncan (R-SC-3), Kiel Weaver, Majority Staff Director of House Natural Resources’ Subcommittee on Water, Power, and Oceans and Bill Ball, Professional Staff with the same Subcommittee to discuss the Magnuson-Stevens bill.

Three members of Congress have agreed to join the Congressional Boating Caucus since ABC! Please join us in welcoming the following:

- Rep. Jody Hice (GA-10)
- Rep. Ted Lieu (CA-33)
- Rep. Stacey Plaskett (VI)
- Rep. Austin Scott (GA-8)

**AWARDS UPDATE**

by Ron Christofferson, SOBA Vice President

**Congressman Rob Wittman Honored at ABC with SOBA Congressional Award**

On May 12, 2015, at the American Boating Congress in Washington DC, the States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA), presented its 2015 Congressional Award to Congressman Rob Wittman. The SOBA Executive Board awards this honor annually to a member of Congress or State Representative who has made significant contributions to public boating access in the nation.

Over the years, Congressman Wittman has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment as a pragmatic conservationist and a true supporter of recreational boating and boating access. This award was presented for his strong leadership in conservation, for promoting boating access and boating opportunities in the Commonwealth Virginia and nationwide, and for his commitment to and support of the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization and the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund.

Past recipients include Congressman Bill Shuster, PA, Senator James Inhofe, OK,
STATE OF THE CLIMATE IN 2014 REPORT AVAILABLE ONLINE
(Credit: NOAA — July 16, 2015)

In 2014, the most essential indicators of Earth’s changing climate continued to reflect trends of a warming planet, with several markers such as rising land and ocean temperature, sea levels and greenhouse gases — setting new records. These key findings and others can be found in the State of the Climate in 2014 report released online by the American Meteorological Society (AMS).

The report, compiled by NOAA’s Center for Weather and Climate at the National Centers for Environmental Information is based on contributions from 413 scientists from 58 countries around the world (highlight, full report). It provides a detailed update on global climate indicators, notable weather events, and other data collected by environmental monitoring stations and instruments located on land, water, ice, and in space.

The report’s climate indicators show patterns, changes and trends of the global climate system. Examples of the indicators include various types of greenhouse gases; temperatures throughout the atmosphere, ocean, and land; cloud cover; sea level; ocean salinity; sea ice extent; and snow cover. The indicators often reflect many thousands of measurements from multiple independent datasets.

Key highlights from the report include:

- **Greenhouse gases continued to climb**: Major greenhouse gas concentrations, including carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, continued to rise during 2014, once again reaching historic high values. Atmospheric CO2 concentrations increased by 1.9 ppm in 2014, reaching a global average of 397.2 ppm for the year. This compares with a global average of 354.0 in 1990 when this report was first published just 25 years ago.

- **Record temperatures observed near the Earth’s surface**: Four independent global datasets showed that 2014 was the warmest year on record. The warmth was widespread across land areas. Europe experienced its warmest year on record, with more than 20 countries exceeding their previous records. Africa had above-average temperatures across most of the continent throughout 2014, Australia saw its third warmest year on record, Mexico had its warmest year on record, and Argentina and Uruguay each had their second warmest year on record. Eastern North America was the only major region to experience below-average annual temperatures.

- **Tropical Pacific Ocean moves towards El Niño—Southern Oscillation conditions**: The El Niño—Southern Oscillation was in a neutral state during 2014, although it was on the cool side of neutral at the beginning of the year and approached warm El Niño conditions by the end of the year. This pattern played a major role in several regional climate outcomes.

- **Sea surface temperatures were record high**: The globally averaged sea surface temperature was the highest on record. The warmth was particularly notable in the North Pacific Ocean, where temperatures are in part likely driven by a transition of the Pacific decadal oscillation — a recurring pattern of ocean-atmosphere climate variability centered in the region.

- **Global upper ocean heat content was record high**: Globally, upper ocean heat
content reached a record high for the year, reflecting the continuing accumulation of thermal energy in the upper layer of the oceans. Oceans absorb over 90 percent of Earth's excess heat from greenhouse gas forcing.

- **Global sea level was record high**: Global average sea level rose to a record high in 2014. This keeps pace with the $3.2 \pm 0.4$ mm per year trend in sea level growth observed over the past two decades.

- **The Arctic continued to warm; sea ice extent remained low**: The Arctic experienced its fourth warmest year since records began in the early 20th century. Arctic snow melt occurred 20–30 days earlier than the 1998–2010 average. On the North Slope of Alaska, record high temperatures at 20-meter depth were measured at four of five permafrost observatories. The Arctic minimum sea ice extent reached 1.94 million square miles on September 17, the sixth lowest since satellite observations began in 1979. The eight lowest minimum sea ice extents during this period have occurred in the last eight years.

- **The Antarctic showed highly variable temperature patterns; sea ice extent reached record high**: Temperature patterns across the Antarctic showed strong seasonal and regional patterns of warmer-than-normal and cooler-than-normal conditions, resulting in near-average conditions for the year for the continent as a whole. The Antarctic maximum sea ice extent reached a record high of 7.78 million square miles on September 20. This is 220,000 square miles more than the previous record of 7.56 million square miles that occurred in 2013. This was the third consecutive year of record maximum sea ice extent.

- **Tropical cyclones above average overall**: There were 91 tropical cyclones in 2014, well above the 1981–2010 average of 82 storms. The 22 named storms in the Eastern/Central Pacific were the most to occur in the basin since 1992. Similar to 2013, the North Atlantic season was quieter than most years of the last two decades with respect to the number of storms.

[CLICK HERE](#) to download a copy of the report

**CORPS OF ENGINEERS ATTEND HAWAIIAN SITE-BLESSING**

Officials from the Honolulu District and contractor, Honolulu-based American Marine Corporation, attended a traditional Hawaiian site-blessing at Laupahoehoe Harbor on the Hamakua Coast in July to inaugurate the start of the Laupahoehoe Small Boat Harbor Repair Project.

Rev. Daniel Akaka, Jr. officiated the blessing at the event, which was attended by members of the community, the contractor's team, and Corps officials. Rev. Akaka, the son of former U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka, led two blessings, one at the harbor itself and one at the "10-ton" bridge (about 1/2 mile from the site). The Corps and their contractor conducted a $2.5 million repair job on the breakwater at Laupahoehoe Harbor. The purpose of this construction was to perform maintenance repairs on the existing project. These maintenance repairs will rehabilitate and repair the existing breakwater and wave absorber and will require grouting of the breakwater centerline (ocean floor to crest) and repair dislodged armor stones. The contractor will also install a temporary bridge over the existing county bridge leading to Laupahoehoe Point. That work is included in the approximately half year project timeline. The temporary bridge will support the weight of the construction equipment and materials, and will
remain in place for the duration of the project. The Corps is absolutely committed to quality construction and the safety of the public and our workers, and truly appreciate the public’s Kokua and patience during this project. One Team — Building Strong®!

NASBLA'S OPERATION DRY WATER DRAWS NATIONWIDE PARTICIPATION
by Ron Sarver

NASBLA and hundreds of local, state and federal law enforcement agencies participated in Operation Dry Water 2015, a national boating under the influence awareness and enforcement campaign. This year’s event took place June 26-28.

The goal of Operation Dry Water is to bring awareness to the dangers of boating under the influence as well as reduce the number of alcohol- and drug-related accidents and fatalities on our nation's waterways through heightened enforcement during the Operation Dry Water weekend.

Reports are still coming in, but early numbers indicate another successful year for the BUI campaign. As of July 13, 48 percent of registered agencies have submitted their reports. From those reports, we know that 210 BUI arrests were made, 98,950 boaters were contacted, and 9,256 boating safety warnings and citations were issued during the three-day weekend. These numbers are expected to increase significantly as the remaining agencies submit their reports.

For more information, visit www.operationdrywater.org.