A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT: RON CHISTOFFERSON

Dear SOBA Members and Boating Industry Partners:

I don’t know about you, but the past few months seem to have been absolutely packed with events, projects, meetings, and all the other items that tend to eat up all the little daily blocks of time on the schedule. One of the most rewarding events, however, was SOBA's...
30th annual National Boating Access Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee. What a great venue to bring together the nationwide talent associated with public boating facilities, and then top it off with fantastic weather and terrific Southern hospitality. A great big “thank you” goes out to Ed Poolos and his dedicated Tennessee team for making the conference a great success. And as many of you may have noticed, our multi-talented support staff from the National Marine Manufacturer’s Association (NMMA) are always working tirelessly behind the scenes to make sure everything goes smoothly. We wouldn’t have a conference without those million emails, meetings, phone calls, and hotel contract negotiations completed each year by Bernice McArdle, Libby Yranski, and all the great staff at NMMA. Don’t forget to Save the Date for next year’s conference, August 28–31st in Anchorage, Alaska!

This edition of our newsletter covers a wide range of topics, and is a pretty good example of what is on the plate of the SOBA Executive Board, our members, and our partners in terms of boating access issues. Please take note of the opportunities presented where your participation can assist us and your fellow members with the tasks at hand, and those forthcoming over the upcoming year. We will be looking for ways to improve our awards process, seeking new volunteers for revamping our technical documents, and moving forward with creating new recommendations for things such as paddlecraft access facilities.

In addition to the seasonal change of colors, this fall also saw some changes in the make-up of our SOBA leadership. During the annual conference, Preston Smith (VA) and Trey Cooksey (TX) were voted on to the SOBA Executive Board to fill the vacant Member-at-Large positions. I look forward to working with both gentlemen over the next year, and I appreciate the fact that such talented people are willing to step up and help keep SOBA in the forefront of boating issues nationwide. We bid a very fond farewell (not goodbye) to Bernice McArdle, James Adams and Pat Harrell as they start their next adventures in life after working their tails off for SOBA, NMMA, Virginia and Florida. Kate Brown resigned from the Board to concentrate on her own work in Connecticut, but promises to stay plugged in to SOBA’s activities. Member-at-Large Al Wolslegel was selected to be SOBA’s Treasurer for the remainder of his current term. I want to extend a personal note of thanks to all of the above for their dedicated work on behalf of SOBA, their member agencies and states, and the boating public.

May your hearts remain warm throughout these chilly winter months, and I wish you all the best for 2017.

Regards,

Ron Christopherson
President

SOBA 2017 ANNUAL BOATING ACCESS CONFERENCE: MARK YOUR CALENDERS!
by Paul Cyr — SOBA 2017 Conference Chairman and Host

Greetings from the Land of the Midnight Sun! The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Access Program is excited to be hosting the 31st Annual National Boating Access Conference, to be held August 28 to 31, 2017 in Anchorage, Alaska. The conference will be held at the Hilton Anchorage, which is located in the heart of the city, and is a short, ten to fifteen minute cab ride (or drive) from the Ted Stevens International Airport.

The conference theme, Pure and Wild Access, was chosen to reflect Alaska’s
unique challenges in developing and maintaining access in a state providing large tracts of undeveloped land in a rugged and unspoiled landscape. The conference will follow a format similar to recent years: a Monday workshop focusing on federal programs (SFR, BIG, CVA, and TRACS), Tuesday and Wednesday educational sessions; awards luncheon, business meeting, banquet on Wednesday; and the Thursday boating access project site trip. The project site trip will include an outing aboard a glacier tour boat in beautiful Prince William Sound and includes a review of both BIG and boating access projects. Conference educational sessions will focus on engineering techniques and topics relating to challenges in developing and maintaining access in Alaska, but that relate to all of us. If you have additional speaker or topic ideas that you would like to see presented in 2017, please email them to us at info@sobaus.org.

A room with a view! A block of rooms at the Hilton Anchorage will be available at the 2017 prevailing federal per diem rate. The exhibitor and meeting rooms are spacious and located right across the hall from each other, and most hotel rooms provide beautiful views of Cook Inlet or the Chugach Mountains.

Though travel budgets can be tight, getting to Alaska has become more affordable in recent years with additional air carriers servicing Anchorage during the summer months. Please keep in mind that federal funds through SFR or CVA grants may be able to pay the registration fee and your travel cost. If you have questions about how to incorporate this into a grant, contact your regional USFWS office.

Anchorage and the surrounding area offer plenty of activities to take part in; from microbreweries, restaurants, museums and shopping, to sport fishing, hiking, biking, and many other outdoor activities. Check out the Visit Anchorage website at https://www.anchorage.net/ for a sample of the wide variety of things you can experience.

Registration will open in early 2017!

Be sure to check your emails after the New Year for more information. We hope you will be able to head north this August and we look forward to hosting a unique and memorable conference!

2016 ANNUAL SOBA AWARDS PRESENTED IN CHATTANOOGA

by Ron Christofferson, SOBA President

The following 2016 SOBA awards for projects, programs and individual accomplishments were presented October 12th during the national conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee:

Small Access Category: City of Rhinelander, Wisconsin, for Boyce Drive Boat Landing
Medium Access Category: Town of West Point, Virginia, for West Point Landing

Large Access Category: Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources and Otter Tail County for the Pelican Lake West Water Access Site

Marinas & Harbors Category: Ohio Department of Natural Resources for Caesar Creek Marina

State Clean Vessel Act (CVA) Program Excellence Award: Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Boating Services Unit

State Boating Access Program Excellence Award: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Boating Access Program

Professional Service Award: Patricia Harrell, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (Retired)

Special Recognition Award: Bernice McArdle, SOBA Executive Director (Retired)

Outstanding Service Award: John Sprague, Marine Industries Association of Florida

William H. Ivers Award: James Adams, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (Retired)

The SOBA Executive Board would like to congratulate all of this year’s award recipients, and reminds our members to start thinking about those projects, people and programs that stand out as doing great things for the boating public. During the 2016 conference, one of the break-out sessions was dedicated to discussing and reviewing the awards process, and making every effort to recognize the good work our membership does every year. Your ideas are always welcome, and watch for follow-up opportunities to comment and participate that will be announced in future newsletters.

FAREWELL BUT NOT GOODBYE

by Bernice McArdle

The French have a great saying: Au Revoir (until we meet again). And so I respectfully say Au Revoir to SOBA, and not goodbye.

I had the great fortune and honor to be SOBA’s Executive Director for nine of my sixteen years at NMMA. My passion and interest in conservation and the outdoors blossomed very shortly after I started working with the SOBA board, and this group’s committed professional network.

I have a treasure trove of wonderful memories to look back on during my tenure with SOBA, thanks to the many remarkable people I met along the way. A memory recall that holds dear to me at this particular time is one where Steve Miller and I, on many an occasion, would take off in his car (which he usually had at his disposal because of his love of being on the road rather than in an airplane), at the end of our business day to explore the surrounding areas we happened to find ourselves in during our business trips. His innate knowledge, coupled with his passion for nature and conservation were contagious, and I picked up a tremendous amount of additional knowledge about
the outdoors during our brief road trips.

Words cannot express my surprise first of all, and subsequent delight at receiving SOBA's 2016 Special Recognition Award in Chattanooga in October. I was truly humbled by the fact that a group I revere and respect so much, honored me with this this acknowledgement, and for that I say thanks from the bottom of my heart.

Libby Yranski has taken over the reins at SOBA, and I couldn’t pick a more perfect candidate to work with this group.

I look forward to seeing some of you “up the road” (as they say in Ireland). In the meantime, best wishes for the upcoming Holiday Season.

2017 SOBA MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER

2017 SOBA Membership dues were sent out in November. If you need another copy of your invoice, a credit card link or any other information, please contact Nakia Rounsaville at nrounsaville@nmma.org or 312-946-6264.

SOBA BOARD SUBMITS COMMENTS REGARDING THE FAST ACT

The SOBA Board submitted a letter to Bob Curry, Deputy Assistant Director for the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) Program regarding the implementation of Clean Vessel Act (CVA) and boating infrastructure grants (BIG) funds. These funds were combined through legislative language found in the Fixing America’s Surface and Transportation (FAST) Act which reauthorized the Sport Fish and Boating Restoration Trust Fund. Prior to the FAST Act CVA and BIG were allocated 2% each of the overall trust fund, with the implantation of the FAST Act they will receive 4% for both programs. The SOBA Board expressed their concern with the combination of these funds and how state agencies will manage these programs. To read the full letter, please click here.

WRDA UPDATE

by Michael Lewan

In the fall, the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) passed overwhelmingly in both the House and the Senate, but there were some significant legislative differences and costs associated with each chamber’s version. Since Congress has returned from the Election, the bill’s leaders and their staffers have been tirelessly working to rectify the differences and deliver a final bill to be voted on and signed into law by President Obama. WRDA was passed by the House on December 8th, and was passed by the Senate over the weekend. It is expected that it will be signed without issue into law by President Obama before his term expires.

TRACS DECEMBER UPDATE

by Valerie Thompson

The Wildlife Tracking and Reporting Actions for the Conservation of Species (TRACS) evolution has seen a lot of progress in the past six months.
The Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) conducted a review of TRACS beginning in July. WMI examined a number of challenges that if not addressed will continue to adversely affect the ongoing implementation and revision of the TRACS system. The goal of the review was to assist the states and the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) Program in transitioning into the TRACS system as partners by resolving issues that are important to both parties. The following are the major issues and/or concerns that were identified as a result of the WMI review:

- Turning effectiveness measures into standard objectives and losing state project detail
- Level of mandatory performance and financial/cost reporting required in TRACS (Are states required to report actions and costs at the programmatic level, grant level or project level?)
- Access for non-state entities to TRACS data
- Degree or type of required reporting outcomes after a grant is closed
- Communication between WSFR and states
- Meeting the requirements of 2 CFR 200
- The hand-off of project data entry into TRACS from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to the states
- Possible delay of new grants submitted to Grants.gov until/unless entered into TRACS first
- Duplicative nature of TRACS

Once the WMI review identified the major issues facing the parties, several meetings were held between the USFWS, the Joint Task Force and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to formally discuss and address those specific issues.

There were three major breakthroughs as a result of those meetings this past fall:

- First, there is now a defined TRACS communication strategy. WSFR will work with all state coordinators and directors to ensure they are in the loop and have an opportunity to comment on any significant changes in TRACS prior to implementation.
- Second, WSFR has moved the financial/cost accounting required in TRACS to the grant level, not the project level. It was also clarified that TRACS is not an auditable system so cost estimates are allowable.
- The third, and one of the most important outcomes, is the opportunity to review and comment on the newly drafted Common Strategies, Standard Objectives, and required reporting levels prior to implementation within the enhanced TRACS system. Once the review and vetting of these main components is complete, WSFR will then start implementing the TRACS enhancements. It is anticipated that the programmers will require a minimum of 12 months to create the enhanced TRACS system. Based on the current review schedule, enhanced TRACS should be designed and ready for implementation in the Spring of 2018. In the meantime, the current version of TRACS is up and running and all data entered into the current system will be carried over into the enhanced version.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me at valerie.thompson@alaska.gov or 907-267-2164.

**PUMP-OUT BOAT SELECTION AND OPERATIONS GUIDELINES NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE**

In 2013, the SOBA Board created a taskforce to assist state managers and recipients of CVA grants with recommending pumpout vessels and operating procedures. The taskforce was made up of State CVA program coordinators, CVA pumpout vessel
manufacturers, experts from the boat building industry and Federal funding partners from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The broad range of state program experience, technical expertise and federal oversight has resulted in a quality document that will assist both State programs and individual pumpout vessel programs during the process of selecting the right pumpout vessel for their area. The final goal produced a document entitled Pump-Out Boat Selection and Operation Guidelines that is now available as a reference to all interested parties, and that may be used as either a stand-alone document or included as an informational appendix to SOBA's CVA BMP document. As a benefit for being a SOBA member, members can receive a free copy of this publication. Non-Members may purchase a copy for $25.

Please submit this SOBA Publication Order Form for either your free copy, or to purchase a copy. Order forms should be returned to Nakia Rounsaville at nrounsaville@nmma.org.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE: WILDLIFE AND SPORT FISH RESTORATION PROGRAM UPDATE

by Brad Gunn

The Service’s Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) staff hopes those of you that attended the SOBA annual conference in October found it to be as useful and informative as we did! Congratulations to Ed Poolos and the TWRA team for hosting a great conference!

Many attendees at the conference found the training information imparted by Ryan Oster of WSFR’s Training Branch during the Federal Assistance Workshop to be particularly valuable. Therefore we thought it would be useful to highlight in this newsletter a key point of his presentation that generated a lot of interest.

**WSFR Grant Tip:** Be sure to apply the correct designation, subrecipient or contractor, to an entity that you work with using federal funds! One of the emerging issues for WSFR grant recipients is to correctly apply federal regulations in the 2 CFR 200 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements For Federal Awards to federal funds that pass through them to other entities.

Specifically, this necessitates correctly designating the other entity as a subrecipient or contractor. For federal funding purposes it is the nature of the relationship they have with the state agency that determines which designation is applied. This is regardless of what the state agency receiving federal funds might normally call the other entity! It is the responsibility of the state agency (pass-through entity) to make the correct determination between subrecipient or contractor. This determination is to be made on a case-by-case basis depending on the unique relationship of each individual situation.

Information from the Financial Assistance Wiki: A "subrecipient" is defined as a non-Federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-thru-entity to carry out part of a Federal program; but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such program. A subrecipient may also be a recipient of other Federal awards directly from a Federal awarding agency (e.g., a state agency might pass funds to another state agency that also receives federal funds). Some of the more common characteristics of a subrecipient relationship include when the non-Federal entity: (1) determines who is eligible to receive the Federal financial assistance; (2) has its performance measured against whether the objectives
of the Federal program are met; (3) has responsibility for programmatic decision making; (4) has responsibility for adherence to applicable Federal compliance requirements; and (5) uses Federal funds to carry out a program of the organization as compared to simply providing goods or services for a program of the pass-through entity.

A "contractor" is defined in § 200.23 as an entity that receives a contract, which as defined as a legal instrument by which a non-Federal entity purchases property, goods, or services needed to carry out the project or program under a Federal award. This term does not include a legal instrument, even if the non-Federal entity considers it a contract, when the substance of the transaction meets the definition of a Federal award or subaward. Some of the more common characteristics of a contractor relationship include when the other non-Federal entity: (1) provides goods and services within normal business operations; (2) provides similar goods or services to many different purchasers; (3) operates in a competitive environment; (4) provides goods or services that are ancillary to the operations of the Federal program; and (5) is not subject to compliance requirements of the Federal program.

Please consult with your Region WSFR grant specialist or visit the Financial Assistance Wiki at https://fawiki.fws.gov for more information on this and other federal assistance issues!

Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program: The Service received 39 BIG Tier 1 and 26 FY 2017 BIG Tier 2 applications from the States, territories and the District of Columbia. Tier 1 applications are requesting approximately $5,000,000 and the nationally competitive Tier applications are requesting approximately $20,000,000 in federal FY 2017 BIG funding. We anticipate having approximately $15,000,000 available for BIG this year so the Tier 2 applications will be very competitive. As you know, the new BIG rule allows up to $200,000 for funding eligible Tier 1 activities for each state and Tier 2 applications may apply for up to $1,500,000 on a nationally competitive basis.

Tier 2 applications are reviewed and ranked by a committee made up of Service WSFR grant specialists and industry and state representatives assembled by the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council. Subsequently, recommendations for funding are made to the Service Director. The Service Director makes final grant selections for Tier 1 and Tier 2 funding. We anticipate announcing those selections during March 2017.

Clean Vessel Act Grant (CVA) Program

The Clean Vessel Act (CVA) program provides matching grants to the States, the District of Columbia, and insular areas for the construction, renovation, operation, and maintenance of pumpout stations and waste reception facilities for recreational boaters and also for educational programs that inform boaters of the importance of proper disposal of their sewage. The deadline for FY 2017 applications was December 5, 2016. WSFR Regional grant specialists will begin reviewing
and finalize with making recommendations for funding to the Service Director. As with the BIG applications the Service Director makes the final grant selections. We anticipate announcing those selections during May 2017.

**Boating Access Subprogram**

The Boating Access subprogram provides grant funds to the States, the District of Columbia and insular areas fish and wildlife agencies for projects that provide access to America's waterways by developing new access facilities or renovation and/or improvement of existing facilities. Nationwide, funding totaled approximately $53 million for FY 2016 from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund.

**WSFR POLICY UPDATES**

Thank you all for a wonderful conference! We are happy to be talking about our path forward for the Clean Vessel Act regulations. The WSFR Policy Branch is working with the Sportfishing & Boating Partnership Council (Council) to develop a Team to assist WSFR in discussing and developing approaches on several of the more complicated topics that we will include in the updated rulemaking. We are extending the nomination period to December 31, 2016 to allow extra time for interested parties to get supervisory approvals. You may find more information and submit nominations on our [CVA Wiki page](https://www.fws.gov/lists/listinfo/wsfr_pop_news). If you are not able to serve as a Team member, but have an expertise or strong interest in a topic and would be available to help with that topic, please add your name and indicate after your name “Team Support” and indicate your area of expertise/interest.

We are looking forward to working with this focused Team, but whether or not you are able to participate as a Team member or topic expert, you still have a strong voice in this process. We will post more information on the CVA Wiki site that will offer ways to communicate and be involved. We will send out drafts, have some webinars, and are exploring other tools/approaches that will offer opportunities to engage in the process. Please sign up for the WSFR Policy & Programs ListServ ([https://www.fws.gov/lists/listinfo/wsfr_pop_news](https://www.fws.gov/lists/listinfo/wsfr_pop_news)) to stay connected to current news.

WSFR continues to work with the Council on our approach to Technology and WSFR Boating Programs. We hope to have some exciting news to share in the next SOBA Newsletter.

**WSFR Headquarters Boating Grant Contacts:**

**Tom Busiahn**  
Chief, Division of Policy and Programs  
[Tom_Busiahn@fws.gov](mailto:Tom_Busiahn@fws.gov)  
703.358.2231

**Lisa E. Van Alstyne**  
Chief, Branch of Policy  
[Lisa_Van_Alstyne@fws.gov](mailto:Lisa_Van_Alstyne@fws.gov)  
703.358.1942

**Christy Vigfusson**  
Chief, Branch of Programs  
[Christy_Vigfusson@fws.gov](mailto:Christy_Vigfusson@fws.gov)  
703.358.1748

**Brad Gunn**  
Fish and Wildlife Biologist—Grants, Programs Branch
RBFF UPDATE
by Stephanie Vatalaro

Industry Rallys Around 60 in 60

Earlier this year, RBFF announced a new aspirational goal of increasing fishing participation from the current 46 million to 60 million anglers in 60 months. And since then, key leaders in the industry have stepped up to support 60 in 60, and spread the word about this important goal. 60 in 60, as it's known industry-wide, comes at a critical time for our sport. Fishing has been attracting few of the younger and diverse audiences that are emerging across the country, while older white males are continually aging out of the sport. The 60 in 60 goal places importance on engaging these key audiences, while also encouraging effective Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (R3) efforts throughout the industry.

Many stakeholders, including the American Sportfishing Association and the Congressional Sportmen’s Foundation, have recognized the importance of reaching this goal, which could contribute to a $200 million annual increase in fishing license sales, a $35 billion annual increase in economic contributions from anglers, and a $10 billion annual increase in economic contributions from boaters. RBFF is working on a toolkit for stakeholders to help support 60 in 60. For more information on how you can get involved now, head to takemefishing.org/60in60.

RBFF Program Gets Lapsed Boaters Back on the Water

Preliminary numbers are in; this year’s Boat Registration Marketing Program is another successful campaign! The program, which RBFF runs on behalf of state agencies across the country, brought nearly 50,000 boats back to the water. These renewed registrations brought in more than $1.8 million in program revenue, which goes directly to state agencies. In all, more than 438,000 letters were mailed to lapsed boat owners in 18 states. Results for two remaining states are still being captured. Once all of the results have been analyzed, RBFF will share the full report with stakeholders.

Hispanic Toolkit: Marketing Materials You Can Use to Engage the Hispanic Audience

All of RBFF’s Hispanic marketing resources are now available for download in the new Hispanic Marketing Toolkit. The Hispanic market is growing in both size and importance. It’s expected to reach 20% of the U.S. population by 2020 and the audience’s buying power increased by 167% from 2000 to 2015, compared to the 82% increase in buying power on the whole.

Download and utilize the free materials in the RBFF Resource Center, including Bilingual How-To Videos, Spanish-Language PSAs, Vamos A Pescar Logos and more to take your consumer marketing campaign to the next level.
SPORT FISHING AND BOATING PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL SPRING FORTH ON MANY FRONTS

by Brian Bohnsack

The Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council met in Washington DC on November 29 and 30 to set its tentative focus areas for both the near and long terms. The meeting was the first for the newly appointed members for the 2016–2018 Council term. Council members appointments for the 2014–2016 time period expired in the early summer of 2016. Council members for the 2016–2018 term include:

**John Arway**, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

**Janine Belleque**, Past President, States Organization for Boating Access

**Doug Boyd**, National Board member, Coastal Conservation Association

**Chris Edmonston**, President, BoatUS Foundation

**Barb Gigar**, President, Aquatic Resources Education Association

**Fred Harris**, Past President, American Fisheries Society

**Betty Huskins**, Past Chair, Southeast Tourism Policy Council

**Scott Kovarovics**, President, Izaak Walton League of America

**Mac McKeever**, Senior Public Relations Representative, L.L. Bean

**Jerry McKinnis**, Co-owner, B.A.S.S. LLC

**Mike Nussman**, President, American Sportfishing Association

**Collin O'Mara**, President, National Wildlife Federation

**John Sprague**, Past President, Marine Industry Association of Florida

**Alvin Taylor**, Director, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

**Nicole Vasilaros**, Vice President, Federal and Legal Affairs, National Marine Manufacturers Association

**Jim Zorn**, Executive Administrator, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission

**Ron Regan**, President, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Scott Kovarovics and Betty Huskins were re-elected as the Council chair and vice chair, respectively, for the 2016-2018 term.

Highlights of the November meeting included an update on the progress of the Council's efforts to improve the timeliness of the federal boating infrastructure construction permit processes. Council members Janine Belleque and John Sprague...
have spearheaded this effort. They have made slow but gradual progress with improving the timeliness of federal agencies’ review of construction projects and permit requests associated with boating projects. Other meeting highlights included a presentation of the impacts of the FAST act on federal boating grant programs. The Council approved developing a letter expressing the Council’s recommendations on the administration of the grant programs by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Council recommends a status quo approach be taken with the management of these programs, even though the FAST act provided the Fish and Wildlife Service with some administrative flexibility to transfer funds between these grant programs.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Deputy Director Steve Guertin updated the Council on the status of the Service in light of the pending change of administration.

In addition to the full Council meeting, the Council’s sub-committee of the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program Tier II ranking committee met with members of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program to review and rank projects submitted for Tier II funding in fiscal year 2017. Members of the Council’s sub-committee included John Sprague, Janine Belleque, Terry Boyd, Ed Poolos, and James Adams. Chris Edmonston is a member of the sub-committee but was unable to attend the ranking meeting. The Council’s recommendations will be forwarded to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for their consideration with selecting the final award recipients for the fiscal year 2017 funds.

A January teleconference Council meeting is planned. Among the topics that will be discussed will be the finalization of the Council’s recommendations for the incoming administration and also the Council’s consideration of the sub-committee’s recommendations.

NMMA GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
by Sarah Salvatori

Federal/General News

Closing Out the Obama Administration and the 114th Congress
With so much focus and coverage on the election, it would be easy to forget that President Obama is still in the White House. NMMA remains hopeful that Congress and the President can move forward on three issues before the end of the year:

- Maintain access in Biscayne National Park by including the Sportsmen’s Act in the final agreement to pass the comprehensive Energy Bill.
- Passing the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) out of conference committee and signed into law by President Obama.
- Reaching a deal to call votes for and to pass the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

The outgoing Congress’s primary focus will be passing a budget (in some form) and funding the government into 2017. Passing comprehensive and controversial legislation—like the aforementioned TPP—will be hard to accomplish in light of the election. Many of the outstanding pieces of legislation will likely be tabled or outright rejected until the Trump Administration comes into power. Legally, bills cannot carry over from one Congress to the next, meaning that many good bills will go back to square one come the New Year. It’s important that our priorities are addressed now rather than wait an indeterminate amount of time under the Trump Presidency and our next Congress, and NMMA will be working diligently to accomplish our goals on behalf of the industry.

NMMA joins forces with outdoor groups to create Outdoor Recreation Industry
**Roundtable**

NMMA has joined forces with more than 10 other outdoor recreation groups, representing nearly 90 percent of the outdoor economy, to call attention to the collective breadth and positive impact of our nation’s recreation and outdoor industry. The outdoor recreation industry contributes approximately $646 billion per year to Gross Domestic Product, about 4% of the entire U.S. economy (Outdoor Industry Association, Outdoor Recreation Economy Report, 2012).

The Roundtable is dedicated to working alongside President-elect Trump and his administration to grow jobs and ensure all Americans have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors. Initiatives the group will focus on include growing diverse participation, expanding access, and promoting conservation. As such, in one of its first endeavors, the Roundtable sent a letter on November 16 to the Trump administration transition team outlining four strategic efforts it will pursue on behalf of the outdoor industry. [CLICK HERE](#) to read the letter.

Over the coming weeks, the group will share numerous white papers that address important areas of focus for maintaining a healthy outdoor economy. NMMA will make these available in Currents and on nmma.org and encourages all industry stakeholders to take note and get involved. To get involved, make your voice heard by planning to attend the American Boating Congress, May 15-17 in Washington, DC; learning more about [BoatPAC](#); and signing up to stay informed on critical issues at Boating United by [CLICKING HERE](#).

Outdoor industries involved in the Roundtable include recreational vehicles (RVs), boating, angling, hunting, camping, archery, shooting sports, both towable and motorized recreational vehicles, powersports and outdoor equipment gear, and apparel. In addition to NMMA, these industries are represented by the American Horse Council, American Recreation Coalition, American Sportfishing Association, Archery Trade Association, International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association, Motorcycle Industry Council, Outdoor Industry Association, National Park Hospitality Association, Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association, National RV Dealers Association, Recreational Vehicle Industry Association and Specialty Vehicle Institute of America.

Contact NMMA’s Nicole Vasilaros to learn more at nvasilaros@nmma.org

**Senate, House Pass REC Act, Counts Outdoor Recreation Economy as Part of U.S. GDP**

Last month, the Senate joined the House of Representatives in unanimously passing the [Outdoor REC Act](#), a critical bill that quantifies the true size of the outdoor economy, including recreational boating which represents billions of dollars in economic activity and hundreds of thousands of jobs. NMMA looks forward to President Obama signing this legislation into law before the end of the year.

The REC Act directs the Secretary of Commerce, through the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), to “conduct an assessment and analysis of the outdoor recreation economy of the United States.” A temporary pilot program was enacted by the Secretary of the Interior in April, and the passage of the REC Act was needed to make sure that the outdoor economy—and its estimated 6 million jobs and $646 billion in economic activity—receives official government recognition for years to come.

NMMA is an active part of the team that will work with the Bureau of Economic Analysis to shape how outdoor recreation is defined and ensure our reach and impact are recognized.
EPA Increases Final 2017 Ethanol Volume Mandates

Last month, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reversed course from its initial proposal and acted to increase the mandated ethanol volumes for 2017. Its decision to finalize the 2017 Renewable Volume Obligations (RVO), as part of the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) program, increases the amount of ethanol in our fuel supply to record levels and puts boaters at a significant risk of misfueling.

NMMA’s Thom Dammrich issued a statement, which was included in the comprehensive Smarter Fuel Future coalition release: “Today’s decision by the EPA directly threatens the safety of millions of American boaters. EPA ignored the overwhelming evidence presented by the boating industry in its decision to increase the 2017 ethanol mandate to record highs. EPA’s misguided decision not only denies the public choice at the pump to purchase ethanol free fuels, but they are now increasing the spread of a dangerous, prohibited fuel blend that will cause damage to marine engines and raises serious safety concerns. It’s clear that the EPA has failed in its duty —now more than ever NMMA urges the new Congress and the Trump Administration to work together to deliver actual reforms that fix this broken law and protects the millions of American boaters.”

In light of this decision, it is clear that the RFS is broken. NMMA will be actively working with the next Congress and Trump Administration to deliver a reformed, workable RFS. To learn more about the decision and/or NMMA’s efforts to reform the RFS, please contact Michael Lewan at mlewan@nmma.org.

Stay Involved with Public Policy — Save the Date for American Boating Congress

If you caught the political bug this election season there’s many ways for you to get involved or remained involved in the policy process. Want the opportunity to meet with the Trump Administration, the 115th Congress and other key policy makers? Join the industry in Washington at the 2017 American Boating Congress this coming May 15-17!

And to stay active 24/7, 365, join the industry’s growing army of advocates at Boating United—the hub to show Washington that boating matters!

New Statistics Section Live on NMMA.org

NMMA has launched a new statistics section on NMMA.org, providing a more robust, easy-to-navigate research and data hub for the boating industry. Features and enhancements to www.nmma.org/statistics include:

- Finding data is now easier than ever with enhanced navigation and search options.
- Users can preview reports before buying.
- Streamlined e-commerce functionality allows users to purchase reports online and get immediate access.
- All upcoming data releases can be found here.
- Latest statistics news can be found here.
- A new library of data and research specific to the recreational marine industry includes: wholesale boat shipments, new boat registrations, boating’s economic impact, industry expenditures, Canadian data, and more.
- Members have free access to nearly all reports on the site.
- If you aren’t an NMMA member, much of the research is also available for purchase.
Contact Vicky Yu, Director of Industry Statistics and Research, at vyu@nmma.org with questions.

**Center for Coastal Conservation Becomes Center for Sportfishing Policy**

The Center for Coastal Conservation announced last month that effective immediately, its name has changed to the [Center for Sportfishing Policy](#) to more accurately reflect the Center’s purpose, which is to organize, focus and engage recreational fishing stakeholders to shape federal marine fisheries management policies. NMMA is a founding and active member of the Center for Sportfishing Policy.

“Under the new name, the Center for Sportfishing Policy will continue to advocate for sound fisheries policy and communicate with Congress on behalf of the saltwater recreational fishing and boating community,” said Center for Sportfishing Policy President Jeff Angers. “Our new name gets to the heart of our purpose at the Center, which is to help drive legislation that serves to conserve America’s coastal fisheries, while allowing fair and equitable access to America’s marine resources for recreational anglers and boaters.”

In addition to announcing the new name, the Center launched its new website ([SportfishingPolicy.com](http://SportfishingPolicy.com)), which illustrates the organization’s focus and purpose and includes key details of its “Let America Fish” campaign.

**2017–2021 Recreational Boating Safety Program Strategic Plan Available**

The Strategic Plan of the National Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Program for 2017 to 2021 was signed last Friday and accessible by clicking here. The National RBS Program Strategic Plan describes the U.S. Coast Guard's goals and strategies to ensure the public has a safe, secure, and enjoyable recreational boating experience by implementing programs that minimize the loss of life, personal injury, and property damage while cooperating with environmental and national security efforts.

**New Report Urges Modernization in Federal Fisheries Management**

The Center for Sportfishing Policy (previously the Center for Coastal Conservation), along with NMMA and other leading marine conservation and trades associations, yesterday released a landmark series of recommendations for the incoming Administration and the new Congress that strive to balance improving access to public waters, creating economic growth, and enhancing the conservation of marine fish stocks. The guidance for federal policy makers in [A Vision for Marine Fisheries Management in the 21st Century: Priorities for a New Administration](#) calls for an end to antiquated federal policies that have inhibited a vital source of economic growth and a proud American tradition.

The Vision report highlights the economic value of recreational fishing in coastal waters. Today, 11 million American anglers fish for recreation in saltwater. From license sales to retail sales, the recreational saltwater fishing industry contributes more than $70 billion annually in economic activity and generates 455,000 jobs. However, outdated federal management policies threaten to stem this positive economic trend. The report recommends a shift away from using the same tools to manage commercial fishing and recreational fishing at the federal level. New approaches should reflect the reality of demand for recreational access to our marine fishery resources, the current economic activity associated with that access, and the scientific data of the light footprint recreational access has on our fishery resources.

Additional contributors to the report include [American Sportfishing Association](#), [Coastal Conservation Association](#), [Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation](#), [Guy Harvey Ocean](#).
NMMA’s Libby Yranski Appointed to Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force

Libby Yranski, Manager, State Government Relations for the NMMA, has been appointed by the White House Federal Advisory Committee Act Liaison to serve on the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force. NMMA is a new Ex-officio member of the ANS Task Force, expanding its role as a leader in working with state and federal officials to reduce the risk of harm caused by ANS to the country’s natural resources, economy and public welfare.

The Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force is an intergovernmental organization dedicated to preventing and controlling aquatic nuisance species, and implementing the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act (NANPCA) of 1990. The various NANPCA mandates were expanded later with the passage of the National Invasive Species Act (NISA) in 1996. The ANS Task Force consists of 13 Federal agency representatives and 12 Ex-officio members, and is co-chaired by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The ANS Task force coordinates governmental efforts dealing with ANS in the U.S. with those of the private sector and other North American interests via regional panels and issue specific committees and work group.

State News

EPA Outlines Difficult Path to Expanding Ethanol Free Fuel Access in Virginia

An effort to make ethanol free fuel (E-0) available at more Virginia marinas would require significant reviews and tradeoffs in some areas and would be untenable in Northern Virginia, according to the EPA. As directed by the state legislature, the Department of Environmental Quality sought an exemption from the federal Reformulated Gasoline Program (RFG) for marinas located in the areas of Hampton Roads, Richmond-Petersburg and Northern Virginia.

The EPA's response: before marinas around Hampton Roads and Richmond can opt-out of using RFG, the state must request that EPA remove RFG mandates for all engine types in these areas. Additionally, the state would have to show that these areas still meet Clean Air Act standards, which likely would require the state to identify offsets to the increased pollution caused by E-0. The use of gasoline-ethanol blends is mandated by the Clean Air Act in Northern Virginia because of past air quality issues faced by the Washington DC region.

For more information, contact David Dickerson, ddickerson@nmma.org.

New Economic Impact Infographics Available, Feature 2015 Abstract Data

New versions of NMMA's economic impact infographics are here and ready for you to download, featuring the latest data from NMMA's 2015 Recreational Boating Statistical Abstract. These infographics are available for the total U.S., all 50 states and a selection of Congressional districts, and are great tools to use in meetings with decision makers or marketing the importance of recreational boating to the local and national economies. Infographics include:

- Total economic impact
- Number of direct and indirect jobs supported by the industry
- Number of businesses supported by the industry
- Number of recreational boats in each specific location
ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES
by Ryan Roberts

Report on Nation's Waterways Provides Insight into Habitat Change

2015 Assessment Report Expands on First Ever Assessment Completed in 2015


This report summarizes the results of an unprecedented, nationwide assessment of human effects on fish habitat in the rivers and estuaries of the United States. The assessment assigns a risk of current habitat degradation scores for watersheds and estuaries across the nation and within 14 sub-regions. The results also identify the major sources of habitat degradation.

The 2015 report updates and revises the 2010 "Status of Fish Habitats in the United States," that summarized initial results of a first-ever comprehensive national assessment of aquatic habitats at an unprecedented scale and level of detail. The 2015 report provides even greater detail and improves our knowledge of the condition of fish habitat in the United States. The 2010 inland streams assessment characterized fish habitat condition using stream fish data from more than 26,000 stream reaches, while the 2015 assessment was based on fish data from more than 39,000 stream reaches nationally. To increase accuracy, the 2015 inland stream assessment incorporated 12 additional human disturbance variables into the fish analysis, when compared to the 2010 assessment. Additional variables incorporated into the 2015 assessment and their summary within catchments and buffers allowed for more explicit characterization of the diverse set of disturbances to stream fish habitats occurring across the Nation than what occurred in 2010, and this was made possible due in part to advances in available GIS layers. With the incorporation of these additional disturbances, managers and decision makers can use assessment results to more explicitly identify limits to stream fish habitats.

Please visit the Assessment website at: http://assessment.fishhabitat.org

Resilient Lands and Waters Initiative

The Resilient Lands and Waters Initiative was created in 2014 to recognize seven partnerships across the country as opportunities to build upon existing efforts to conserve and restore important lands and waters in discrete geographies and to make them more resilient to a changing climate. Each partnership identified a deliverable to be complete by October 2016. At a White House event last week, AFWA helped release a report on the culmination of this Initiative.

This report and the companion website summarize the experiences of each of the partnerships and highlight some key challenges, successes, lessons learned, and
recommendations to carry forward large landscape-scale conservation planning. It also highlights many of the dynamic maps and tools that the partnerships have produced to help them identify priority conservation areas and actions in their landscapes. The report recommends that future landscape-scale conservation planning efforts address the challenges that climate change is likely to pose in meeting conservation and restoration goals. It also suggests that the Joint Implementation Working Group of the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy promotes the best practices demonstrated in this Initiative, takes the lead in transferring the lessons learned, tools, and practices from this Initiative to other areas, and works with conservation partnerships to identify and address specific tools, information, and guidance that they may need to continue to strengthen the resilience of our nation’s natural resources into the future.

The seven landscapes are: California Headwaters, California's North-Central Coast and Russian River Watershed, Crown of the Continent (northern Rocky Mountains), Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands (Lakes Huron & Erie), Hawai‘i (West Hawai‘i, West Maui, and He‘eia (O‘ahu)), Puget Sound’s Snohomish River Watershed, and Southwest Florida.

Resolution Passed by AFWA Directors to benefit Hunting, Shooting and Angling Recruitment at 2016 AFWA Annual Meeting

Resolution 2016-01 Promotion of Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (R3) Activities within State Fish & Wildlife Agencies

WHEREAS, The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies would like to emphasize with their constituents, being hunters, anglers, boaters and recreational shooters, the importance of recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) efforts, particularly those marketed by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) and the Council to Advance the Hunting and Shooting Sports (CAHSS) to ensure that hunting, fishing, boating and recreational shooting remain viable sporting activities in the future to help both grow hunting, fishing, boating and recreational shooting in the future and maintain engagement of customers.

WHEREAS, since 1937, hunters and sport shooters, and since 1950, anglers and boaters, have been the primary source of funding for fish and wildlife conservation through license fees, motor boat fuels and an excise tax on sporting goods (made possible through the hunting, fishing, boating and sporting arms industry).

WHEREAS, since the 1980s, participants in hunting, angling, boating and the shooting sports have been declining, resulting in less funding for conservation. The decline in participation poses an ever increasing threat to fish and wildlife conservation and management. Creation and use of partnerships and strategic models must continue to be utilized to halt and reverse the declining trend in hunting, angling, boating and shooting sports participation.

WHEREAS, to improve R3 efforts in the hunting, angling, boating and shooting sports communities, state agencies are being asked to prioritize and improve their R3 capacity leading to more effective R3 efforts. Completion of state self-assessments, resources committed and implementation of R3 recommendations is important for increased R3 success.

WHEREAS, understanding that AFWA and member state agencies are critical in the recruitment, retention and reactivation of hunters, anglers, boaters, and shooting sports participants, and developing and implementing state R3 plans.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOVED, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife
Agencies and its member state agencies, recognize the importance of R3 efforts through both the CAHSS and RBFF, as the efforts of these organizations are critical to the future of the sports of hunting, angling, boating and shooting.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that development and implementation of plans, such as the National Hunting and Shooting Sports Action Plan and RBFF’s R3 efforts to reach the goal of 60 million anglers in 60 months, will be dependent on cooperation and participation from state agencies, to help us all collectively move recruitment, retention and reactivation of hunters, anglers, boaters, and shooting sports participants in a positive direction.

(Promotion of Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (R3) Activities within state Fish & Wildlife Agencies)
Submitted by the Angler and Boating Participation Committee and Hunting and Shooting Sports Participation Committee

---

**AMI UPDATE**
by Eric Kretsch

The months since our last update have been busy, as will those leading up to AMI’s International Marina and Boatyard Conference (IMBC) in January. Since August, AMI successfully held the first Marina 101 — Walk the Docks, First Impressions course and the 10th Annual Southeast Florida Marina Study Tour. In December, we expect to release Version 2.0 of the Marina Economic Impact Calculator (MEIC). With January comes the IMBC.

Marina 101 — Walk the Docks, First Impressions was held in Miami, Florida. This marina industry introduction course, which will be offered annually, was geared toward individuals with no or little marina experience. It covered marina operations, including taking a look at not only what is needed today, but what will be needed in the future, to run a successful marina. Attendance in the event was higher than expected and those attending found the topics covered interesting and valuable. Coinciding with Marina 101, those attending the 10th Annual Marina Study Tour found themselves basking in the sun on two 80 plus degree days. Tour attendees visited seven marinas throughout the Miami/Fort Lauderdale region, visiting multiple types of marinas ranging from mega-yacht facilities to five-story dry-stack facilities. The two events were very successful and plans are already underway to offer them again next year in new locations.

We are very excited about the MEIC version 2.0 which can be used by individual marinas to justify expansions and renovation and as part of loan and grant applications. But the benefits do not stop there. The calculator also provides an opportunity to showcase the marina industry’s benefit to the U.S. economy. The MEIC uses seven regional input/output models to evaluate the interdependencies between different sectors of the economy and to calculate the ripple effects a marina has on these. The calculator, which was developed for AMI by the University of Florida and the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences, helps highlight how every dollar a marina makes and spends impacts another industry; and how every dollar spent by a marina helps support another job. To access the calculator, visit [https://marinaassociation.org/meic](https://marinaassociation.org/meic).

The 2017 IMBC will be held Jan. 25-27 in Fort Lauderdale, at the Florida the Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward Country Convention Center. Formed in 2002, at the National Marina & Boatyard Conference, IMBC is the leading show catering specifically to marina and boatyard owners, operators and managers as well as dockmasters, harbormasters, boat builders and repairers, and industry consultants. It is where marine professionals gather to exchange information, talk about the future of the
Discover Boating campaign sees success in 2016

by Kelly Kaylor

Discover Boating, the North American recreational boating industry’s national marketing campaign, wrapped another successful year helping more people find ways to get on the water. The campaign consists of digital advertising, public relations outreach and social media efforts. The digital advertising campaign is focused on driving positive perceptions about boating and boat ownership in the next generation of first-time boat buyers, and consists of search marketing, social media engagements, banner ads and website referrals, which is when someone is coming to a website, from another website, to shop and/or find more information on a product or brand.

Highlights aimed at getting new boaters on the water include:

- Discover Boating’s 2016 national media buy generated more than 3 million web visits to brand websites as part of its website referral program, helping bring new people into boating.
- The Discover Boating referral program via the boat selector tool continues to drive more shoppers to manufacturer websites, with 3.2 million referrals in 2016, an increase of 7 percent from last year.
- A study conducted by Discover Boating, consisting of a control group of manufacturers representing approximately 300,000 website referrals, used Google Analytics to analyze total traffic to brands' websites against referral traffic from Discover Boating. The analysis showed:
  - Discover Boating referrals conducted more dealer searches than the brands’ overall website traffic (5.8% vs. 4.8%)
  - Discover Boating referrals requested more brochures than the brands’ overall traffic (.36% vs .27%)

If you’d like to learn more about website referrals watch this short video housed on the homepage of GrowBoating.org HERE.

Check out DiscoverBoating.com and don’t forget to join the boating conversation on social media! Follow Discover Boating on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest.

Many thanks to our 2016 Platinum Sponsor: GatorDock

SOBA would like to say thank you to our 2016 Platinum Sponsor, GatorDock for their unwavering support for SOBA, the annual conference and all that our member’s do.

Host site needed for 2019!
You may think that 2019 is off in the future but really, it's right around the corner! SOBA is excited that the 2017 Annual Conference will be held in Anchorage, Alaska and the 2018 Annual Conference will be held in Duluth, Minnesota. We are currently looking for volunteer states to host the 2019 conference. Our partnership with NMMA has benefited past conference hosts by reducing the hosting state's staff time negotiating with the hotel, handling registrations and processing payments. If you are interested in hosting a conference or would like more information on what the process and responsibilities are, please contact any SOBA Board member for more information http://www.sobaus.org/board/board.html.