In this issue:

- President's Message
- Celebrating the Success of the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program Tier II Project Selections: Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council Update
- News from the US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Greetings From The Association Of Fish And Wildlife Agencies
- ABYC Aquatic Invasive Species Summit Provides Forum To Effect Change
- RBFF Update
- Soba Honors 2014 Annual Award Recipients
- Oregon Marine Board Employee Recognized With Prestigious Regional Award
- 5th National Working Waterfronts And Waterways Symposium
- News From The Association Of Marina Industries (AMI)
- The Latest From The Paddlesports Community
- Update from the Capital
- Thanks To Our Platinum 2014 Conference Sponsor Gatordock

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear SOBA Members and Boating Industry Partners:
It doesn’t seem that long ago that we were enjoying the warm sun and hospitality of North Little Rock, Arkansas. The 28th Annual National Boating Access Conference was educational and meaningful, thanks to Tom Jones, his team, and the many volunteers who helped organize the conference. We greatly appreciate all of our sponsors and exhibitors who continue to participate and support the mission of our organization. If you missed the conference, the proceedings will shortly be available at www.soba.org.

The first Lacy “Nick” Nichols Education Fund award was presented to Jeff Smith, P.E. to attend the 2014 Conference. Without this award he would have been unable to attend the conference due to agency travel restrictions. Jeff commented on the value of attending the conference;

“The sessions provided valuable Professional Development Hours toward my continuing education requirements for licensure. I was also honored to be a presenter at this year’s conference on Design Challenges and Solutions for River Facilities and received a lot of positive feedback. The conference is always a great way to network with professionals from other states and federal agencies. I would recommend that others take advantage of this opportunity and apply for a conference education award.”

It is never too early to start thinking about applying for a Lacy “Nick” Nichols Education Fund award. If you have any questions contact Craig Walker at craigwalker@utah.gov or visit HERE for more information about the award itself.

The 2015 Conference will be hosted by Vermont, but will be a regional effort by many of the New England states. The Conference theme is "Green Access, Clean Boating and Blue Waters", and a few of the preliminary conference sessions will include green-environmentally sensitive boating access infrastructure, innovative products and designs, aquatic nuisance species, climate change, and Grants 101. Mark your calendars to be at the Basin Harbor Club on Lake Champlain, Vermont on September 21-24 for the National Boating Access Conference. Please stay tuned to our website www.sobaus.org for conference updates and information.

I want to welcome Kate Hughes Brown, Connecticut to the SOBA Board as a Member-at-Large. Kate has more than 20-years of experience in permitting, education, outreach, and grant administration. I value her knowledge, energy and passion about boating and look forward to working with her on the Board.

If you have ever considered becoming a SOBA Board Member, now is the time to talk to your Manager or agency Director about getting their support to serve on the SOBA Board. Being a Board member is rewarding both professionally and personally. Board members help the organization face new challenges arising from reauthorization, contribute to nationally renowned technical resources, help shape how federal programs are administered, work with the leaders of other boating industry organizations, and affect long-term positive change within the world of boating access. To learn more about being a SOBA Board member visit our website at www.sobaus.org or contact James Adams at james.adams@dgif.virginia.gov.

In closing, I want our members to know that SOBA is active, solvent and responsive. Your Board will do its best to build on the many past accomplishments of its partners and colleagues, and will strive to keep the organization vital and relevant as we look to the future, and to the changing world of recreational boating.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy and Peaceful Holiday Season, and say thank you for all you do for boating access.

Regards,
Janine Belleque
Successful partnerships can often times be hard to find: The Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, with the able assistance of SOBA members and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has found one in the selection process for the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program Tier II process. This success story has been a quiet one, so it is time to celebrate its success!

The Council's BIG Tier II subcommittee met recently with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant managers to review proposals submitted for the program's fiscal year 2015 funding. Members on the Council's subcommittee have always included representatives from SOBA. This year, SOBA President Janine Belleque and Past Presidents James Adams and Terry Boyd participated and provided their keen insight on proposals, and shared this insight with both the Council and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service counterparts. Former SOBA president Mike Hough also participated in previous years. SOBA's representatives have always provided perspectives from a boating access professional's perspective that help ensure that only qualified, well designed proposals are recommended for funding from the program. The BIG program has historically been one of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's most competitive grant programs, although the economic downturn did result in a decrease in funding proposals in recent years.

**Big Tier II Subcommittee**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) staff values the contributions and expertise of the Council's subcommittee, and gives equal weight to the subcommittees ranking in the project selection process. More specifically, WSFR staff forward an internal funding recommendation memo to the Service Director based on the combined and equally weighted scores of the WSFR and Council ranking committees. The Service Director then makes a project selection based on this information. To date, the Service's Director has always accepted the recommendation in determining the final proposals selected for funding. This level of trust and cooperation speaks highly of the expertise provided by the Council's subcommittee.

Accordingly, we celebrate this success and the critical input that SOBA's representatives have provided in this process. The celebration is a hard earned one on all accounts. The Service's WSFR staff and Council subcommittee spend hours reviewing and ranking each proposal. And the Council's subcommittee's efforts come as an additional responsibility to the busy schedule of the team. Whereas this is one of the primary roles and responsibilities of the Service's WSFR staff, it is not a primary role for the Council's subcommittee members, and the Council's subcommittee members take this on as an additional duty to their normal positions. Janine, James, Terry, Mike and others have willingly given up time with their families and friends to complete these reviews. Many of the proposals exceed 100 pages in length and there are typically more than 20 proposals submitted each year. This leads to hours of advance preparation, and a couple of long days in the final ranking meeting.

So please join us in celebrating the success of this program. We thank Janine, James, Terry, Mike and other members of the subcommittee for all their hard work. This commitment ensures that boaters benefit from the Boating Infrastructure Grant program as it was intended by Congress!
REMEMBERING DAVID GOAD
(by Kim Betton, Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program)

The Service mourns the loss of David Goad, Deputy Assistant Director of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR). David was a man of goodwill and a positive spirit. While his time here at the Service was only a short four months, his upbeat attitude, energetic spirit, funny jokes, and loving soul were felt by all. David appreciated the value of family, friends and his work in conservation. But unfortunately on Friday, October 31, shortly before noon in his native Faulkner County, Arkansas, the loving father, husband, colleague and friend lost his life in a one vehicle accident. David will truly be missed, but his work through the years will forever impact wildlife conservation and habitat restoration.

David had 25 years of experience in building and leading conservation and management programs for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. He began his career as a field biologist and progressed through multiple levels to the number two position within the agency, managing biological, social, and political aspects of conservation for the people of Arkansas.

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

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

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

David's hard work had a tremendous impact on WSFR program initiatives and nationwide planning and development. We are grateful to have had him in our working family.

David is survived by his loving wife of 18 years, Wendy Barnes Goad; two daughters, Megan Goad and Mattie Goad; and one son, Ethan Goad. Official Obituary.

WSFR HQ Office Location

As we mentioned in the last newsletter, we moved offices in late July, and all of our email addresses and phone numbers have stayed the same. Our building and mailing address is:

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

WSFR HQ Staff Update: We are happy to announce that Christy Vigfusson, formerly the Clean Vessel Act, Boating Access, and National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program, and WSFR Performance Measurement Lead, was promoted to be the Chief of the Programs Branch. She moved into her new role mid-November and will continue to be the primary contact for the programs she managed for at least the next several months. She is thrilled to be in a position where she can maintain a strong connection to the States, her SOBA contacts, and the recreation, conservation, and boating related grant programs.
PROGRAM UPDATES

Clean Vessel Act (CVA): The Clean Vessel Act (CVA) program provides matching grants to the States, the District of Columbia, and insular areas for the construction, renovation, operation, and maintenance of pumpout stations and waste reception facilities for recreational boaters and also for educational programs that inform boaters of the importance of proper disposal of their sewage. The deadline for FY 2015 applications was December 3, 2014. WSFR Regional staff is in the process of reviewing applications, and the review will continue in the New Year with WSFR Headquarters, NOAA, EPA, and Coast Guard. We anticipate announcing awards by June 2015.

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

National Coastal Wetlands: The National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grant Program is part of the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act and provides funding for long-term conservation of coastal wetland ecosystems by helping States and territories to protect, restore and enhance coastal habitats. Eligible projects include the acquisition of real property interest in coastal lands or waters and the restoration, enhancement, or management of coastal wetlands ecosystems. We are in the final stages of determining the FY 2015 awards and anticipate announcing the awards in January. Conservation of this habitat will not only benefit coastal-dependent federal trust species, but will also enhance flood protection and water quality, and provide economic and recreational benefits to commercial fishermen and sport anglers.

Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG): During the first week of December, Paul Van Ryzin led the review and ranking process of the FY 2015 BIG Tier 2 applications with individuals appointed by the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (SFBPC) and with WSFR Regional staff in Clearwater, Florida. The group reviewed 24 applications requesting approximately $19 million in Federal funding. Currently, we estimate that a total of $12 million will be available in Tier 2 funding for FY 2015. Each year, the Council scores are combined with WSFR's BIG Program Coordinators' scores to determine the final award recommendations, supported by WSFR Assistant Director Hannibal Bolton and approved by the Service's Director Dan Ashe. WSFR appreciates the expertise and commitment of the ranking team in helping to select the highest-quality projects to receive BIG funding. This year, WSFR received applications from a wide variety of States proposing new slips, moorings, and related boating infrastructure to benefit the transient boating public. We anticipate announcing the awards by February 2015.

POLICY UPDATES

Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG): We are completing our comment review, responses, and draft changes leading to the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG) Final rule. Thank you to everyone who participated in this process for your thoughtful comments and suggestions. We also appreciate hearing from several State BIG coordinators, telling us that it will be helpful if we can publish the Final rule in the Federal Register early in the year so they may incorporate it into their State application process. We are setting February 1, 2015 as our goal and will advise you through SOBA should any significant delays interfere with our target.

Clean Vessel Act (CVA): Thank you for all of those who participated in the Clean Vessel Act (CVA) Open Forum at the SOBA conference in October. We will continue the dialogue using a webinar format, targeting certain topics for each discussion. The first webinar on December 8, 2014 had the topics: 1) useful life, and 2) CVA plans. You may follow the progress of the CVA regulation review, update, and consolidation by visiting our Wiki website here. The presentation and notes from the
CVA Open Forum are available on this website. You may click the eye with the word "Watch" next to it at the upper right of the home page to receive updates when others comment or new content is added.

We will post dates and topics for future CVA webinars on this site, as well as drafts for your comments. Please contact Lisa at Lisa_Van_Alstyne@fws.gov for further information or to recommend topics for future webinars.

**Wildlife TRACS Update: TRACS** stands for Tracking and Reporting Actions for the Conservation of Species. Wildlife TRACS is the tracking and reporting system for conservation and related actions funded by the Service's WSFR Program. The Service and States have been working together this year to learn the system and to start entering projects. Together we are not only building a performance reporting system, but also a way to help us to tell our story of conservation and enhanced public use. In addition to "behind the scenes" systems work, WSFR's Program & Accomplishment Reporting Branch (PAR) has a TRACS Working Group that is comprised of federal and non-federal stakeholders. The TRACS Working Group will meet in January 2015, followed by a special Boating Grant Programs Task Force meeting to formulate recommendations for information needs and best practices for boating grants in TRACS. TRACS training continues on many levels with the [TRACS Training Program](#). Training events, course materials, and User Guide information are available on the [TRACS Wiki](#) website. In addition, TRACS Guidance and Best Management Practice project examples are available on the wiki.

**WSFR TRACS Contacts:**

Dan Hogan  
Chief, Program and Accomplishment Reporting Branch  
Dan_Hogan@fws.gov  
303.275.2331

Tim Smith  
States and Stakeholders Liaison  
Timothy_smith@fws.gov  
360.790.3887

**WSFR Boating Policy and Programs Contacts:**

Tom Busiahn  
Chief, Division of Policy and Programs  
Tom_Busiahn@fws.gov  
703.358.2231

Lisa Van Alstyne  
Fish and Wildlife Administrator, Policy Branch  
Lisa_Van_Alstyne@fws.gov  
703.358.1942

Paul Van Ryzin  
Fish and Wildlife Biologist – Grants, Programs Branch  
Paul_VanRyzin@fws.gov  
703.358.1849

Christy Vigfusson  
Chief, Programs Branch  
Christy_Vigfusson@fws.gov  
703.358.1748

---

**GREETINGS FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**
AGENCIES
by Ron Reagan, Executive Director

The past few months have been extremely busy at the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), as our organization has worked on a number of letters to help shape fisheries policies and plans that several federal agencies will be implementing in 2015. AFWA and some states, independently, submitted comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a Strategic Plan being developed for its Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program. The letter highlighted state priorities, including federal hatcheries, and the National Fish Habitat Partnership, and encouraged a strong, collaborative relationship between the states and the Service during the Plan's implementation.

AFWA also submitted a letter from our President to NOAA regarding the development of a Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy. The updated version of NOAA's policy incorporated public comments and some of our priorities.

In September, the Association participated in a NOAA meeting for state fish and wildlife agency directors regarding co-management authority and species conservation initiatives. AFWA also re-engaged our Magnuson-Stevens Act working group in preparation for possible reauthorization in 2015. AFWA's Angler and Boating Participation Committee crafted a resolution on E-15 (Ethanol Fuel) and effects on boat motors. The resolution was accepted by state agency directors at our September business meeting held in St. Louis, Missouri.

The National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) held its November board meeting in conjunction with the Restore America's Estuaries/The Coastal Society National Summit. Kelly Hepler of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game was re-elected as Chairman of the National Fish Habitat Board and Tom Champeau, Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, was elected Vice-Chair.

At the meeting, the 2014 winners of the NFHP/American Fisheries Society (Habitat Section) Awards were honored for their extraordinary achievements in conservation of fish habitat. This year's recipients were Tim Birdsong, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Guadalupe Bass Restoration Initiative and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Alaska, This was the sixth year the National Fish Habitat Awards have been presented to recognize outstanding achievements of partner organizations.

ABYC AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES SUMMIT PROVIDES FORUM TO EFFECT CHANGE:

The ABYC’s Aquatic Invasive Species Summit (AIS) will engage stakeholders in dialogue to prevent, inspect and decontaminate boats from invasive species—a growing threat to the marine industry.

Invasive species in many areas of the country, lead to substantial economic damage and contribute to extensive changes to aquatic habitats. Once an invasive is introduced, it is extremely difficult to prevent it from permeating the entire ecosystem. Fishing, boating, and tourism are all harmed by aquatic invasive species and this puts water access—boating's lifeblood—at risk.

Members of the boating industry are urged to attend and participate. We must work together to find a solution.

WHERE? South Point Hotel, 9777 Las Vegas Blvd South, Las Vegas, Nevada – The Brunswick Room
WHEN? Tuesday, January 27 and Wednesday, January 28, 2015
TIME: 8:00am - 5:00pm

For registration and additional information click HERE. Hotel reservations must be made by Monday, December 22, 2014 to ensure the discounted room rate of $65.
RBFF UPDATE:
by Frank Peterson, President and CEO, RBFF

- **Research Update: Hispanics & Boating:** RBFF is proud to announce a boating research partnership that is studying Hispanic boat ownership and paths-to-purchase in Texas and Florida. Results, which will be announced in February 2015, will better equip the boating industry and their Hispanic marketing and sales approach.

- With the first six months of our 2015 fiscal year in the books, now is a great time to reflect on the challenges and triumphs of the year to date. Our team has been hard at work implementing the new Hispanic outreach campaign, Vamos A Pescar™, all the while achieving some impressive results for our established Take Me Fishing™ campaign. Here’s a quick highlight of some of the exciting work we've done so far:

- **Mystery Shopper Study:** In an effort to better understand the challenges the average consumer faces, we conducted a mystery shopper study across the United States to identify potential opportunities to better serve our customers.

  Between May and August 2014, RBFF conducted a mystery shopper project in Texas and Florida to assess the current retail environment for beginning, occasional and experienced anglers and boaters and to identify opportunities for improvement in customer service. Shoppers represented three main customer groups—single females, Hispanics and non-Hispanic families. In total, more than 350 mystery shopping trips were made to sporting goods stores, specialty fishing shops, and boat dealerships in Houston, Dallas, Miami, Orlando, and Tampa. The goal was to evaluate the sales approach towards the Hispanic consumer, how the consumers were educated on products, if fishing license information was shared, and if the boating sales associates shared financing options to help close the sale.

  Findings show that retail and family-owned stores and dealerships are making progress in reaching the Hispanic audience. For boating, chain dealerships fared better in making first impressions and closing the sale, while family-owned dealerships were better at greeting the customer. However, both missed addressing the ever-more important topic of boating safety, which is a big miss since small children are a big factor in most major purchase decisions. For fishing, outdoors specialty stores performed best at making the first impression, yet there was no outstanding performer in overall experience ratings.

  Additionally, sporting goods stores and family-owned fishing stores scored well throughout the sales process evaluation.

  For either category, mainstream consumer experiences scored better overall. Findings reveal that Hispanic consumer experiences lacked thoroughness in the sales process. Unlike with mainstream consumers, store associates missed opportunities to educate Hispanic consumers about various product purchases. Whether sales associates were pre-qualifying prospects or prospects failed to ask questions, this critical step was lacking.

  With the great information collected, stores can refine and invest in employee sales training to increase customer service ratings and sales among Hispanics. By inviting
prospects to events and workshops, stores can ensure that potential Hispanic customers have the proper boating knowledge, leading to an experience that provides every customer with the confidence to make a boat purchase.

To view the entire study and results, which also looked at shopping experiences for non-Hispanic females and families, please visit the TakeMeFishing.org resource center.

- **IBEX 2014:** RBFF hosted a lively discussion at IBEX focusing on new audiences. Attendees from businesses and organizations within the boating industry learned from agency and corporate experts from Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, ESPN Deportes, Walmart, Lopez Negrete Communications and Colle + McVoy. Panelists shared a step-by-step tutorial for customizing marketing efforts for target demographics, excerpts on best practices for engaging new audiences, a preview of boating research on the motivations of the Hispanic consumer, and a glimpse at the results of the national customer experience project. Please email Rachel Piacenza (rpiacenza@rbff.org) if you’d like a copy of the presentation.

- **The Award-Winning VamosAPescar.org:** Our Hispanic campaign microsite, VamosAPescar.org continues to bring in praise for its content and innovative design. The site was honored with two Silver Awards from the W3 Awards for both the desktop version and for the site’s use of intelligent design to adapt to an infinite number of mobile devices. More recently, the site won five Davey Awards, all which honor the best web, design, video advertising and mobile from small firms worldwide.

All of this has resulted in our team being ahead of schedule in making our company-wide metrics for FY15.

While early recognition and successes are always great to receive, RBFF won't rest easy. We will continue to innovate and push boundaries to keep engaging and retaining anglers and boaters. There should be plenty more exciting news to report on as these programs continue to develop during the rest of this fiscal year, so stay tuned for more updates.

---

**SOBA HONORS 2014 ANNUAL AWARD RECIPIENTS**

During SOBA's 2014 Annual National Boating Access Conference in North Little Rock, Arkansas in October, a wide variety of projects and professionals were recognized with national awards. The following awards were presented during the conference:

**Outstanding Project Awards**
The annual awards are presented to an agency, group, local government, or corporation for boating access projects, constructed in a SOBA member state, that are judged to be innovative, useful, of high quality, unique, and economical. Providing "on-the-ground/on-the-water" physical facilities is a major component of SOBA's mission, and it is therefore important for SOBA to formally recognize quality boating access projects each year.

1. **Small Access Category**
   Town of Three Lakes: Townline Lake Boat Landing and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin

2. **Medium Access Category**
   City of Keizer, Keizer Rapids Boating Facility, Oregon

3. **Large Access Category**
   Worcester County Department of Public Works: West Ocean City Harbor, Maryland
4. **Marinas & Harbors Category**  
Whitehouse Cove Marina, Virginia

**State Clean Vessel Act (CVA) Program Excellence Award**  
Presented to a state agency that has primary responsibility for implementing the provisions of the Clean Vessel Act of 1992 and which has excelled over time and provided outstanding service to its residents and visitors to the state. This award recognizes leadership and public service in the administration of the CVA, in the operation and maintenance of CVA facilities, and in developing innovative CVA programs and projects.  
**Recipient: Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental for providing outstanding pump-out facilities, planning, education and partnerships.**

**State Boating Access Program Excellence Award**  
Presented to a state agency that has primary responsibility for boating access development and which has excelled over time and provided outstanding service to its residents and visitors to the state. This award recognizes leadership and public service: in providing boating access site development, operation and maintenance; in providing programs that educate and inform boaters about boating access in the state; and in providing programs that resulted in innovation in all aspects of boating access management including financing.  
**Recipient: Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for the development of their "Grants to Localities for Public Boating Access Facilities Program".**

**Special Recognition Award**  
Presented to an individual, group, organization or political sub-division in recognition of activities that are singularly illustrative or supportive of SOBA's mission. These activities can take various forms ranging from providing organizational support to SOBA, completion of special assignments for SOBA, providing leadership within or on behalf of SOBA, and for general leadership in public boating access issues.  
**Recipient: Lisa Van Alstyne, US Fish and Wildlife Service in grateful appreciation and recognition of her leadership in fishing, boating and hunting programs that will endure into the future.**

**Outstanding Service Award**  
Presented to an individual or an agency that has made either a one-time or continuing contribution to provide improved access for boaters and anglers to our nation's public waters. These contributions can relate to such activities as: obtaining funding at the national or a state level for boating access acquisition or improvement; enactment of legislation or policies that protects and improves the public's right to access the nation's waters; and similar activities.  
**Recipient: Steven Miller, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for his commitment to boating access, and his exceptional leadership of the boating community.**

**William H. Ivers Award**  
Presented to an individual who has significantly contributed over at least 15 years to the design, construction, management or administration of boating access facilities or programs. The nominee's contributions will exemplify high standards of professionalism and outstanding achievement.  
**Recipient: Terry Boyd, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for his commitment to managing the clean-up and boating access rebuilding efforts for the State of Alabama after Hurricanes Ivan and Katrina; In grateful recognition of steadfast service to recreational boating and with thanks for dedication to boating access design and construction; For his participation on the SOBA Executive Board, the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; For Chairing SOBA's Design and Construction publications, and being a SOBA Conference Chair and an avid supporter of SOBA conferences. And, finally, for lifelong commitment and advocacy on behalf of SOBA with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the US Access Board.**
The NW Marine Trade Association recently recognized the efforts of the Oregon Marine Board's Janine Belleque, with the Robert F. Rittenhouse Award during their annual meeting in Seattle on November 12, 2014. This regional award is given to a person from Oregon in the boating industry who has made a significant contribution to recreational boating during the past year.

For more than two decades, Belleque has worked tirelessly for Oregon boaters, helping provide grant funding to waterway managers for boating facility development and renovation; expanding a Maintenance Assistance Program to enhance existing levels of maintenance at boating facilities; working with waterway managers and boaters on waterway and boating access planning efforts; and advocating for all recreational boaters. Belleque is well-versed in local, regional and national issues relating to planning, permitting, constructing and funding boat access. Belleque is currently serving in her second term as the States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA) President and filling the role of Interim Boating Facilities Section Manager, in addition to her primary role as the Marine Board's Grants and Contracts Coordinator. Belleque also serves on a multitude of Marine Board advisory committees to help with future agency initiatives that integrate all boating user groups.

Belleque was completely surprised to receive such a prestigious award, "I feel very honored and humbled to receive this recognition and look forward to serving recreational boaters for many more years.

Background: Robert F. Rittenhouse was appointed Marine Director to the Oregon State Marine Board when the board was first formed in 1959. Rittenhouse served for 27 years with the U.S. Coast Guard, which gave him knowledge of boating matters that appealed to the state as it began interviewing candidates. The Oregon State Marine Board was founded and is to this day supported by Oregon State recreational boaters for the purpose of overseeing boating safety programs and developing boating access. Rittenhouse served as Director from August, 1959 until he died on September 2, 1973.

Pictured: Janine Belleque being presented the Robert F. Rittenhouse Award by Director of Government Affairs, Peter Schrappen.

The 2015 NWWS Symposium, November 16–19 in Tampa, Florida, will utilize several presentation formats to create an educational and interactive forum where emerging ideas, best practices, and information may be shared and bring together representatives from across the US to network with others who are involved in the same type of professional issues to develop strategies.

The 2015 Symposium theme will be "Accessing the Coast", and will feature the Gulf Coast communities and their waterfronts, focusing more on the recreational boating aspects of working waterfronts, and will incorporate Florida's Stem to Stern: Boating and Waterway Management in Florida, which will include discussions on waterway management, boating safety education, marinas, mooring fields, and more.

SOBA will bring you more updates on the program and agenda as they evolve, and include our members in oral and poster abstract submission requests. Click HERE for more information.
Fall has been busy for the Association of Marina Industries (AMI) with events, partnerships and publications rolling out the door.

AMI's Intermediate Marina Management course sold out with 27 attendees from 13 states, Rio de Janeiro and Canada. The number of attendees at the association's training events has been steadily increasing—a sign that the industry is recognizing the value of certification and well-trained staff.

Our affiliates program is expanding with the latest addition of Boating BC (British Columbia) taking our affiliate number to four states. One benefit for affiliates is that AMI assists with their events, as we did recently with VA Marine Trades Association. Their 2014 Annual Conference attracted a record number of exhibitors and attendees and included more educational sessions than ever before.

Affiliate state programs are not the only ones to benefit from AMI. The Marine Trades Association of Maryland and the Rhode Island Marine Trades Association were awarded AMI's 2014 Neil Ross Scholarship Awards. The Neil Ross scholarship was formed in recognition of the numerous contributions that Neil Ross has made to the AMI and to the marina industry overall. The award is given to two trade associations each year who have shown excellence in promoting, supporting and sponsoring marine education and training. Each association is awarded $1000 to give to one of their members who they feel would benefit from AMI training programs.

AMI has completed two surveys with reports soon to be distributed. The Wage Rate Survey is a report on wages for marina positions from across the country. Each position is broken into high, low, and average wage for the US and by region.

The Association also completed its annual Marina Trends Survey which asks marinas to report on various aspects of their facility from size and ownership, to profitability and rates. The idea is to build a snapshot of the industry as a whole and by region. The reports will be available for purchase from www.marinaassociation.org/publications.

Finally, we have opened registration for the International Marina & Boatyard Conference to be held January 28–30 in Tampa, FL. This year's event features an exhibit hall of about 130 vendors, a pre-conference Marina Design Course sponsored by the American Society of Civil Engineers, a clean marina workshop, and numerous educational sessions. For more information visit www.marinaassociation.org/imbc.

THE LATEST FROM THE PADDLESPORTS COMMUNITY

by Chris Stec, American Canoe Association

In order to fulfill our mission of making the world a better place to paddle, the ACA relies on the collaborative efforts of thousands of volunteers across the country as well as a wide range of partner organizations. Whether it pertains to stand up paddleboards, canoeing, kayaking, rafting or rescue, the ACA plays a vital role in improving the paddlesports experience.

Access
One of the many 'hot topics' today is the question of access for paddlers to various bodies of water. Since there are several different viewpoints involved with this issue, the ACA routinely serves as a bridge between local paddlers and the entities that have jurisdiction over water access points. In regards to making access points truly accessible for people of all abilities, the ACA has compiled a significant resource list of accessible docks and launches (www.american canoe.org/AdaptiveResources). In addition, under a U.S. Coast Guard grant, the ACA is revising our free Paddle Ready app, available on both the App Store and Google Play, to include an interactive component pertaining to access points. For more information, about this mobile opportunity to connect with paddlers on their smartphones, please visit: www.american canoe.org/PaddleReady.
**WaterTrails**
The ACA has developed an extensive online Watertrail Directory with over 500 trails. The value of this directory goes beyond simply offering a comprehensive listing. We use this tool to assist groups in establishing their own water trails, helping to not only increase waterway access, but to protect important environmental resources. For more information, please visit: [www.americancanoe.org/Watertrails](http://www.americancanoe.org/Watertrails).

**Stewardship**
Since one of our founding tenets of the ACA is stewardship, we've launched our Stream to Sea Initiative in partnership with NOAA ([www.americancanoe.org/StreamtoSea](http://www.americancanoe.org/StreamtoSea)). This is a unique program where we work with local partners, including co-branding of Paddle Green Bags, to prevent trash from ever entering the ocean environment.

**State Director Program**
In order to increase the outreach and effectiveness of paddlesports at the grassroots level, in 2014, the ACA initiated a State Director program. This program is comprised of elected volunteers who focus on improving all facets of paddlesports in their state. Additional information about your respective State Directors can be found at: [www.americancanoe.org/StateDirector](http://www.americancanoe.org/StateDirector).

The heart of the ACA is the people who paddle, cherish and protect the rivers, lakes, streams, bays and oceans of the United States and beyond. If we can assist you, or your organization, we would love to hear from you.

Paddle safe—paddle often.
[www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org)
[cstec@americancanoe.org](mailto:cstec@americancanoe.org)

---

**UPDATE FROM THE CAPITAL:**
by Lauren Dunn, NMMA

**Elections shape boating industry's top 5 priorities on Capitol Hill for 2015**
The Midterm Election in November reshaped Washington, bringing Republicans into control of the Senate and increasing the party's majority in the House. As part of the recreational boating community, we can use the election as a catalyst to shape policy that affects our interests.

As NMMA's government relations staff works to reach out to new Members of Congress and introduce them to our industry and our issues, we also need your help. Together we can address the industry's top 5 priorities in 2015:

1. Reform the ethanol mandate and stop the sale of dangerous E15 fuel
2. Preserve boating access in America's national parks and federally managed waters
3. Promote recreational fishing, so that boaters can fish responsibly without needless restrictions
4. Modernize waterways with new recreational dredging projects designed to meet future needs
5. Improve water and boating access infrastructure so all boaters have safe access to the water

Join with Boating United at [www.boatingunited.com](http://www.boatingunited.com) in changing Washington. With your support, 2015 can be a major year for boating in Congress, creating a better, lasting environment for boating, fishing, watersports and fun on the water! Questions? Contact Michael Lewan at [mlewan@nmma.org](mailto:mlewan@nmma.org).

**NMMA Reacts to EPA's Delay of Renewable Volume Obligations**
The Environmental Protection Agency announced on Friday, November 21 that it will delay the final rule for the Renewable Volume Obligations (RVO) that tell refiners how much ethanol must be blended into the nation's fuel supply. The National Marine Manufacturers Association's director of federal and legal affairs Nicole Vasilaros says, "NMMA is dismayed by today's announcement from
the EPA delaying their decision on the final 2014 Renewable Volume Obligations until 2015. The delay clearly demonstrates why Congress must act to fix the broken mandate. The move creates even more uncertainty in the marketplace and adds to the confusion surrounding the implementation of the Renewable Fuel Standard. It is also a failure on the part of the EPA to honor their legal obligation to set the RVO levels annually."

"By punting its decision, the EPA has done nothing to alleviate concerns regarding the continued availability of low-ethanol fuel blends relied upon by the boating industry. Consumers remain at high risk. We have serious, well-documented and data-driven concerns with the safety of high ethanol fuel blends which have been proven to cause damage to marine engines. This damage hurts manufacturers during a time of important economic recovery. The RFS is a broken law which sets unrealistic fuel mandates and requires a long term fix from Congress."

Recreational boating, fishing and conservation industries send comments to National Park Service
In October, recreational boating, fishing and conservation industries took the opportunity to once again offer comments to National Park Service opposing the implementation of a marine reserve at Biscayne National Park in favor of a more balanced approach.

As stated in previously submitted comments, the recreational boating and fishing community is opposed to Alternative 4 and its establishment of a 10,000 acre marine reserve and vast coastline non-combustion engines zones. Alternative 4 would implement management principles that vastly restrict boating and fishing access. Biscayne National Park is the nation's largest marine park in the National Park System.

The boating and fishing communities believe Alternatives 6 and 7 provide workable solutions and urged NPS to consider pursuing these options which include permitting and seasonal closures which help to alleviate resource burdens while ensure continued public access to park waters. NMMA and its partners believe that national parks should be maintained for the use and enjoyment of the American people. Management practices to preserve and protect the National Parks are valid endeavors. However, management plans must balance the interests of conservation with public access. Questions? Contact Nicole Vasilaros at nvasilaros@nmma.org.

House Passes Coast Guard Reauthorization and a Tax Extenders Bill as Lame Duck Winds Down
As the 113th Congress winds down, lawmakers have been busy to accomplish some important bi-partisan legislation for the benefit of the country as a whole. On Wednesday, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved of two such bills; H.R. 5769, the Howard Coble Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2014 and H.R. 5771 – Tax Increase Prevention Act. The House passed H.R. 5769 on a vote of 413-3. The bill will reauthorize the Coast Guard in fiscal 2015 and is named after retiring Rep. Howard Coble, the only member of Congress to have ever served in the Coast Guard. The Senate expected to take up and pass the bill before year's end, clearing the measure for the president's signature into law. With respect to H.R. 5771, the House voted 378-46 today to renew a set of about 50 corporate and individual tax breaks that include a business research credit, energy breaks, a state and local tax deduction among others. The breaks have mostly expired, but the bill will allow taxpayers to claim the benefits on their 2014 tax returns. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said this week he will take a look at the House bill as soon as it is sent over. Questions? Contact Jeff Gabriel at jgabriel@nmma.org.

THANKS TO OUR PLATINUM 2014 CONFERENCE SPONSOR GATORDOCK:

Our grateful thanks are extended to our Platinum sponsor GatorDock.
Let’s Get to Work

As this year comes to a close, Gator wishes you and yours a happy holiday and merry new year. We thank you for your support in 2014 and the many years before. We look forward to engineering new designs for your boating projects in the years to come.

Marinas  
Boat Launches  
Gangways  
Fishing Piers  
Boardwalks

Kayak Launches  
Custom Docks  
Pedestrian Bridges  
Industrial Bridges  
Custom Walkways

GatorDock
Marine Access Solutions

GATORDOCK.COM  CMILC.COM  GATORBRIDGE.COM