Table of Contents

I. Introduction ......................................................... 4
   Boating in Washington State ....................................... 4
   Purpose of the Boating Plan ....................................... 4
   Recreation and Conservation Office ............................. 5
   Studies that Inform this Plan ..................................... 6
   Governor’s Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation ........................................... 6
II. Accomplishments Since the Last Boating Plan in 2009 ............. 7
III. Data About Recreational Boating in Washington State ............ 9
   Notes about the Data Used in this Report ....................... 9
   Economic Contribution of Boating ................................ 10
   How Many People Go Boating for Recreation? ................... 10
   How Popular is Boating Compared to Other Types of Recreation? ................................................ 12
   Who Goes Boating? .................................................. 13
   Where do People Go Boating? ..................................... 15
   What Types of Facilities Do Boaters Use? ....................... 16
   What Size are Motor Boats and Sailboats? ...................... 17
   What Other Activities Involve Boating? ........................ 17
   Are Boaters Satisfied with their Boating Experience? ........... 18
   Who Else Wants to Go Boating? .................................... 18
   Summary of Data and Findings .................................... 20
IV. Actions to Support the Boating Grant Programs ..................... 21
   Action #1 - Provide accurate and timely information to boaters .................................................. 22
   Action #2 – Work cooperatively with other state agencies on boating programs and services .......... 23
   Action #3 - Align grant program priorities with current recreational boating needs ................................. 23
   Action #4 – Create distinct and complementary grant opportunities for recreational boating ............ 23
   Action #5 - Support Stewardship and Retention of Current Boating Infrastructure ............................. 25
Action #6 - Promote Infrastructure Projects and Construction Practices that Reduce Impacts to the Environment .................................................................................................................. 25

V. Recommendations for the Future and Summary .................................................................................................................. 26
  Recommendations for the Future ........................................................................................................................................... 26
  Summary ............................................................................................................................................................................... 28

Appendix A – State Agency Boating Programs ......................................................................................................................... 29
Appendix B – Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution .......................................................................................... 30
Appendix C – Definitions Used for Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Grant Programs ......................................................... 31
I. Introduction

Boating in Washington State
Recreational boating in Washington State is important to many people across the state. Significant opportunities exist on freshwater lakes, rivers, and the Columbia River as well as on saltwater in Puget Sound and the coast. Venturing out on a boat is an opportunity to float, paddle, cruise, water ski, wake board, inner tube, scuba dive, fish and camp. Boating is an activity in and of itself and a gateway to another world of birds, waterfowl, fish, frogs, turtles, otters, dolphins, and seals.

The State of Washington provides recreational facilities to go boating, boating safety and law enforcement training, clean vessel programs, and grant funding. See Appendix A for a list programs related to boating administered by the State of Washington. Cities, counties, port districts, other special purpose districts, non-profit organizations and Native American Tribes also provide recreational boating programs, services, and facilities.

Purpose of the Boating Plan
The Boating Grant Programs Plan (Plan) is intended for use by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to inform and guide its grant funding and decision making for boating facilities. This Plan focuses on non-motorized and motorized recreational boating in Washington State. It explores current participation rates and other relevant data. The Plan also includes information on the economic contribution of recreational boating to the state’s economy.

The purpose, goal and objective of this Plan are to:

- **Purpose Statement** Inform and guide the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board’s grant funding for boating facilities.
- **Goal** Align grant funding with current recreational boating interests and needs.
- **Objective** Invest funds into boating facilities that support statewide trends while reflecting local needs and priorities.

To accomplish the above, this Plan identifies specific actions for implementation.

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted this Plan in [insert month, year] during a public meeting under the authority granted in the Revised Code of Washington 42.56.040 of the Public Records Act. The resolution adopting this Plan is in Appendix B.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board is a governor-appointed board composed of five citizens and the directors (or designees) of three state agencies – Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, and Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.
Mission of the Board
Provide leadership and funding to help our partners protect and enhance Washington's natural and recreational resources for current and future generations.

Services Provided by the Board
Statewide strategic investments through policy development, grant funding, technical assistance, coordination, and advocacy.

Values of the Board
Efficient, fair, and open programs conducted with integrity. The results foster healthy lifestyles and communities, stewardship, and economic prosperity in Washington.

The board administers seven grant programs that support recreational boating. Money from these grant programs support the acquisition of land; construction of boating related facilities; and, in some programs, construction planning and design, educational and navigation aids.

These grant programs are:

**Facilities for motor boats:**
- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (motor boats up to 10 horsepower only)
- Boating Facilities Grant Program
- Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (motor boats 26 feet or more in length only)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Recreational Trails Program

**Facilities for non-motorized boats:**
- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicles Account
- Recreational Trails Program
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Outdoor Recreation Account categories:
- Local Parks, State Parks, State Lands Development, Trails, and Water Access

For grant program purposes, motor boats include gas, diesel, and electric powered boats and personal watercraft. Non-motorized boats include sailboats, canoes, kayaks, rowboats, rafts, stand up paddleboards and other hand-powered boats. See Appendix C for complete definitions used by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in its grant programs.

Depending on the grant program, funds are available to cities, counties, special purpose districts, port districts, state agencies, federal agencies, non-profit organizations, and Native American Tribes.

**Recreation and Conservation Office**
The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) supports the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. RCO is a small state agency that manages multiple grant programs to create outdoor recreation opportunities, protect the best of the state’s wildlife habitat and farmland, and help return salmon from
near extinction. RCO implements the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board’s policies through grant program rules and evaluation instruments approved by the board.

**Vision of the RCO**
RCO is an exemplary grant management agency that provides leadership on vital natural resource, outdoor recreation and salmon recovery issues.

**Mission of the RCO**
As a responsible steward of public funds, RCO works with others to protect and improve the best of Washington’s natural and outdoor recreational resources, enhancing the quality of life for current and future generations.

**Studies that Inform this Plan**
In writing this plan, RCO relied on the following studies and data:

- [Washington Boater Needs Assessment](#), Responsive Management, 2007;
- [Improving Coordination of State Services to Recreational Boaters](#), Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Ltd., October 31, 2008;
- [Activities Supporting Recreational Boating In Washington](#), Report 10-12, State of Washington Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee, December 1, 2010;
- [Outdoor Recreation in Washington, The 2013 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)](#), Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office, May 2013; and

**Governor’s Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation**
In 2014, Governor Jay Inslee created the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation, [Governor’s Executive Order 14-01](#). The Task Force developed a number of actions for the Governor to consider and documented in the [Final Recommendations](#). The following actions specifically relate to recreational boating:

- **ACTION 11** – Continue to fund and protect current outdoor recreation grant programs, including the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Boating Facilities Program, Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicles Account, and others administered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.
- **ACTION 12** – Remove the 23-cent cap on the portion of the gas tax attributed to off-road recreation that is transferred to the dedicated accounts for off-road vehicles (Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities program), boating (Boating Facilities Program), and the snowmobiling grant program.

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board works as directed by the Governor to advance these boating related recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation.
II. Accomplishments Since the Last Boating Plan in 2009

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board last approved the *Boating Grant Programs Policy Plan* in October 2009 (2009 Plan). One of the goals in the plan stated that funding “shall encourage projects that best meet the needs of the boating public” (Policy C-1). The 2009 Plan leaned on data from the *Washington Boater Needs Assessment*, which identified needs for specific types of boating facilities, both renovation of existing boating facilities and development of new facilities.

Table 1 is a summary of the most important facility needs by the type of boater as expressed in the *Washington Boater Needs Assessment*.

**Table 1 – What is the Most Important Type of Boating Facilities that Boaters Want Improved or Built?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Boater</th>
<th>Improve Existing Facilities</th>
<th>Build New Facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>motor boaters</td>
<td>Boat launch ramps</td>
<td>Boat launch ramps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sail boaters</td>
<td>Mooring buoys or docks</td>
<td>Marinas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paddlers</td>
<td>Restrooms at boat launch ramps</td>
<td>Boat launch ramps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other hand-powered boaters</td>
<td>Boat launch ramps</td>
<td>Mooring buoys or docks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For motorized boaters, boat launch ramps were the most important type of facility to improve or build. Since approving the 2009 Plan, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board awarded grant funds to renovate 12 motorized boat launch ramps and build five new launch ramps. Note that in 2012, the legislature reduced funding in the Boating Facilities Program, one of the motorized boating grant programs, by $3.3 million. Because of this funding reduction, 3 new boat launch ramps were not funded.

The motorized boat launch facilities funded since 2009 are:

- Renovated Motorized Boat Launches (12)
  - Boating Facilities Program
    - Lake Samish (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
    - Langsdorf Landing (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
    - Don Morse Park (City of Chelan)
    - Squalicum Harbor (Port of Bellingham)
    - Oneida (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
    - Lake Sammamish (Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission)
    - Salisbury Point (Kitsap County)
    - Lighthouse Marine Park (Whatcom County)
    - Black Lake (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
    - Levee Street (City of Hoquiam)
    - Lacamas Lake (City of Camas)
    - Crow Butte (Port of Benton)

---

New Motorized Boat Launches (5)
- Boating Facilities Program
  - Newman Lake (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
  - Paterson Boat Launch (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
  - Long Lake (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
  - Lake Chelan (Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission)
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program State Lands Development Category
  - Old Highway 10 (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)

As a group, non-motorized boaters wanted to see existing mooring buoys, docks, restrooms, and boat launch ramps improved and new mooring buoys, docks, boat launch ramps, and marinas built. Since approving the 2009 Plan, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board awarded grant funds to renovate one non-motorized launch, build 7 new non-motorized launches and build 40 linear feet of new non-motorized boarding floats.

The non-motorized facilities funded since 2009 are:

Renovated Non-Motorized Boat Launches (1)
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Water Access Category
  - Hathaway (City of Washougal)

New Non-Motorized Boat Launches (7)
- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
  - Swadabs Shoreline (Swinomish Indian Tribal Community)
  - Port Angeles Waterfront (City of Port Angeles)
  - Islands Trailhead (Spokane Conservation District)
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Water Access Category
  - Don Morse Park (City of Chelan)
  - Yakima River (City of West Richland)
- Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicles Program
  - Similkameen River (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)

New Boarding Float
- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
  - Harper Pier (Port of Bremerton)

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board also awarded grant funds for other facilities and activities beyond the top indicators shown in Table 1.
III. Data About Recreational Boating in Washington State

Notes about the Data Used in this Report
The majority of the data used in this section is from Outdoor Recreation in Washington, The 2013 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), produced for the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board under contract by Responsive Management. To prepare the SCORP, Responsive Management surveyed 3,114 residents of Washington State on outdoor recreation demand by phone between August 27 and October 26, 2012. Random digit dialing selected the individuals who participated in the telephone survey.

To meet the regional planning requirements of the project, the random sample of individuals was stratified by the 10 planning regions in Washington as described below. See Appendix A of the SCORP for survey methodology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Regions in The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peninsulas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Cascades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle-King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia Plateau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Palouse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responsive Management obtained a minimum of 300 completed phone interviews in each region. Within each region, results were weighted by demographic characteristics so that the sample was representative of residents of that region when it was reported in the SCORP. For statewide results, Responsive Management weighted each region to be in proper proportion to the state population as a whole.

The SCORP defined motor and non-motorized boating differently than RCO’s grant programs. In the SCORP, motor boats do not include personal watercraft and non-motorized boats do not include sail...
boats or whitewater rafts. These alternative definitions of motor and non-motorized boating are used below in the data section of this Plan.

In addition, this Plan uses data from the *Washington Boater Needs Assessment* conducted by Responsive Management in 2007. This study was conducted on behalf of the Recreation and Conservation Office to determine the needs of Washington boaters and priorities for allocating resources. The Washington State Legislature authorized the assessment in Substitute House Bill 1651. The study entailed focus groups of boating services providers, a telephone survey of boating service providers, a telephone survey of the public in Washington, and a telephone survey of registered boaters in Washington.

**Economic Contribution of Boating**

Annually, people spend about $4.5 billion on recreational boating in Washington State (Table 2). This makes recreational boating the second highest in expenditures when compared to other forms of outdoor recreation, behind only wildlife viewing and photography.

Recreational boating makes up almost 11 percent of all expenditures for outdoor recreation in Washington State. Trip-related expenditures are the total spent on boating, including equipment, travel and lodging, entrance fees, and food and beverages.

**Table 2: Annual Expenditures for Recreational Boating in Washington State (2014 Dollars)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Boating Activity</th>
<th>Trip-Related Expenditures</th>
<th>Equipment Expenditures</th>
<th>Total Expenditures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motor boating</td>
<td>$1,648,673,371</td>
<td>$2,186,800,000</td>
<td>$3,835,473,371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-motorized boating</td>
<td>$578,668,526</td>
<td>$9,759,968</td>
<td>$588,428,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafting</td>
<td>$42,323,278</td>
<td>$9,759,968</td>
<td>$52,083,246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Boating Expenditures</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,269,665,175</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,206,319,937</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,475,985,112</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How Many People Go Boating for Recreation?**

Thirty-six percent, 2.4 million, of Washington residents participate in boating for recreational purposes (Figure 1). Washington’s participation rate is slightly higher than the national participation rate of 33 percent reported by the National Marine Manufacturers Association.

The most popular type of boating is motor boating, with nearly 1.7 million Washington residents, or around 25 percent of the state population participating. Eleven percent, or 740,000, of Washington residents use non-motorized boats; 5 percent, or 34,000, use personal watercraft; 4 percent, or 270,000, go sail boating; and 3 percent, or 200,000, raft whitewater.

---

3 Ibid.
4 Based on US Census data from 2010.
7 In the 2013 SCORP, “motor boating” does not include use of personal watercraft.
8 In the 2013 SCORP, “non-motorized boating” does not include sailing or whitewater rafting. It also does not include other water-related activities such as surfboarding, wind surfing, water skiing, inner tubing or floating.
Over the past ten years, the relative rank of Washington resident participation in non-motorized boating increased while the relative rank of motor boating and personal watercraft use slightly decreased. There was no marked difference in the rank for sailing or whitewater rafting.

In terms of frequency, boaters other than whitewater rafters participate in boating an average of 15 days a year. Whitewater rafters participate in rafting an average of 6 days a year.

*Figure 1: Washington State Resident Participation Rates in Recreational Boating, by Type of Boat*

While the overall participation rate for all boating recreation is 36 percent, participation rates vary by planning regions as described previously (Figure 2).

---

9 2013 SCORP, 74-75. Because of differences in the survey methodology between the last three SCORPs, a direct comparison of the recreational boating participation rates over time is not possible; however, a comparison of the relative rank of each activity can be made.

10 2013 SCORP, 19.

Figure 2: Washington State Resident Participation Rates in Recreational Boating, by Region

How Popular is Boating Compared to Other Types of Recreation?
Compared to other types of outdoor recreation, boating activities rank in the middle range in popularity among Washington residents (Table 3).  

Table 3: Rank of Boating Activity Compared to Other Outdoor Recreation Activities in Washington State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Boating Activity</th>
<th>Percent of Washington Residents Participating</th>
<th>Rank Compared to All Outdoor Recreation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motor boating</td>
<td>25.8 percent</td>
<td>22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-motorized boating</td>
<td>11.1 percent</td>
<td>29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riding personal watercraft</td>
<td>5.2 percent</td>
<td>46&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td>3.5 percent</td>
<td>52&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitewater rafting</td>
<td>2.8 percent</td>
<td>56&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 2013 SCORP, 48-49.
Who Goes Boating?

Ownership
Not all boaters own boats. For those boaters surveyed in 2007, 58 percent of boaters own a boat and 42 percent do not. Of those who own boats, 44 percent registered their boats with the State of Washington Department of Licensing and 14 percent did not.¹³ Note that in Washington State, all boats 16 feet or more in length or with 10 or more horsepower are required to be registered.

Gender
Boaters in Washington State are primarily male. When compared to other types of outdoor recreation, the gender gap in participation for boating ranks fourth (behind fishing or shell fishing, hunting or shooting, and golf). Forty-two percent of the male population in Washington participates in boating, compared to 29 percent of females (Figure 3). The majority of the gender difference is in motor boating, with participation by 30 percent of the male population compared to 19 percent of females. There is less of a gender gap in participation for other types of boating such as sailing, riding personal watercraft, non-motorized boating and whitewater rafting (less than 5 percentage points difference).¹⁴

Ethnicity
Thirty-seven percent of Washington residents who identify themselves as white go boating, compared to 22 percent of non-white residents (Figure 4). This is the largest difference between white and non-white participation rates of any outdoor recreation activity for which data was available. The majority of the difference is in motor boating and non-motorized boating. There is less of a difference in ethnicity for other types of boating such as sailing, riding personal watercraft, and whitewater rafting (less than 5 percentage points difference).¹⁵

Age
The adult boating population in Washington is distributed across age groups, with the majority of boaters between the ages of 25-54 (Figure 5).¹⁶ Motor boaters tend to be slightly younger than other types of boaters.¹⁷

---

¹⁴ 2013 SCORP, 64; supplemented with additional data received from Responsive Management, 2014.
¹⁵ 2013 SCORP, 66. According to the SCORP, non-white survey participants “included black/African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Native Americans, Asians, and other ethnicities.”
¹⁶ Data received from Responsive Management, 2014.
**Figure 3: Washington State Resident Participation Rates in Recreational Boating, by Gender**

![Bar chart showing participation rates by gender for all boaters and motor boating in Washington State.](chart1)

**Figure 4: Washington State Resident Participation Rates in Recreational Boating, by Ethnicity**

![Bar chart showing participation rates by ethnicity for all boaters, motor boating, and non-motorized boating in Washington State.](chart2)
Motivation
When a boater needs assessment was last completed in 2007, boaters said their main motivation to go boating was for relaxation (49 percent of respondents), followed by to fishing (29 percent), to be with friends and family (26 percent), for general recreation (14 percent), and to be close to nature (11 percent).\textsuperscript{18}

Where do People Go Boating?
Fresh Versus Saltwater
Overall, more than twice as many boaters in Washington State recreate in fresh water compared to saltwater (Figure 6).\textsuperscript{19} Over 6 percent boat in both fresh and saltwater.\textsuperscript{20}

Body of Water
When looking at individual bodies of water, the Puget Sound is the most popular at 25 percent of the days boated in the past two years when boaters were surveyed in 2007. Following Puget Sound was the Columbia River (12.7 percent), Lake Washington (8.7 percent), Lake Roosevelt (3.5 percent), and the Snake River (2.2 percent).\textsuperscript{21} Note that the sum of the freshwater bodies outweighs Puget Sound.

\textsuperscript{19} 2013 SCorp, 161.
\textsuperscript{20} 2013 SCorp, 161. This total was calculated by aggregating the total participation rate of saltwater and freshwater boaters and subtracting the total participation rate of all boaters.
Location
When surveyed in 2007, a majority of boaters (62 percent) went boating in the same county in which they lived in the previous two years. King County leads the way in the most days where boaters went boating (18.4 percent boated the most days there), followed by Pierce County (8.2 percent), Snohomish County (6.6 percent), Clark County (4.4 percent), and San Juan County (4.3 percent).²²

What Types of Facilities Do Boaters Use?
Twenty-three percent of residents in Washington use a boat launch ramp and 8 percent use a marina.²³

In the 2007 boater needs assessment, boaters ranked the management of existing ramps ahead of the development of new launch ramps in terms of importance for boaters. Similarly, boating service providers also ranked management of existing ramps ahead of development of new launches.²⁴ Improved parking and launch ramps were also cited as priorities by boaters and boating service providers.²⁵

²³ 2013 SCORP, 161.
What Size are Motor Boats and Sailboats?
More than four times as many Washington residents motor boat in a boat less than 26 feet in length compared to boats 26 feet or more in length. For sailboats, the lengths are more evenly distributed (Figure 7). Similarly, 95.9 percent of boats registered in 2012 were less than 26 feet in length.

Figure 7: Washington State Resident Participation Rates in Recreational Motor Boating and Sailing, by Length of Boat

What Other Activities Involve Boating?
Almost 19 percent of Washington residents fish from a private boat and 3 percent fish using a guide or charter boat. Almost five percent of Washington residents camp with or in a boat.

When boaters were surveyed in 2007, they did the following activities while boating: fishing (53 percent), sightseeing/fish and wildlife viewing (35 percent), water skiing (19 percent), relaxing or entertaining friends (17 percent), being with family and friends (17 percent), and water tubing (15 percent). When asked what motivates someone to go boating, the most common answers were:

---

26 2013 SCORP, 161. Results for motor boats do not include personal watercraft because the data was not available. Results do not include non-motorized boating because the data was not available.

27 Washington Department of Licensing and Washington Sea Grant Program

28 2013 SCORP, 160.

29 2013 SCORP, 163.
relaxation (49 percent), fishing (29 percent), to be with family and friends (26 percent), general recreation (14 percent), and to be close to nature (11 percent).\textsuperscript{30}

**Are Boaters Satisfied with their Boating Experience?**

There is a high level of satisfaction among boaters concerning the opportunities to go boating and the facilities available. Of the Washington residents who participated in a 2012 survey, 86 percent of those who boat were highly satisfied or satisfied with the facilities for boating in Washington State. Similarly, 90 percent were highly satisfied or satisfied with the opportunities for boating in Washington State.\textsuperscript{31}

When surveyed in 2007, 72 percent of boaters indicated that access issues, such as crowding at boat launches, had taken away from their boating satisfaction and they cited boat launch ramps as the specific reason. Similarly, a majority of boating service providers indicated that more time and money should be directed toward public access (70 percent), including the development of new boat launch ramps (70 percent) and the management of existing boat launch ramps (55 percent).\textsuperscript{32}

**Who Else Wants to Go Boating?**

The demographic data described above depicts the current boating community. However, other Washington residents want to go boating but have not done so. Almost six percent of Washington residents said they would like to canoe or kayak and the same percentage of people said they would like to boat generally (Figure 8).\textsuperscript{33} These rank sixth and eighth, respectively, out of all of the outdoor recreation activities identified. Over four percent of Washington residents who already go boating desire to boat more (Figure 9).\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{31} Responsive Management, *Results of General Population Survey in Support of the Development of the Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (2012), xv. Results do not include whitewater rafters because the data was not available.
\textsuperscript{33} 2013 SCORP, 72.
\textsuperscript{34} 2013 SCORP, 73.
Figure 8: Percent of Washington Residents who would like to Participate in an Outdoor Recreation Activity

Figure 9: Percent of Washington Residents who would like to Participate More in an Outdoor Recreation Activity
Summary of Data and Findings

Highlights of the data and findings this section are:

- One out of three residents in Washington State goes boating during the year.
- Boating ranks in the middle range in popularity among Washington residents compared to other types of outdoor recreation.
- More people boat in freshwater than saltwater, and in boats less than 26 feet in length.
- More men boat than women, more white people boat than non-white people, and most boaters are around the age of 46.
- Over the past ten years, non-motorized boating increased in popularity.
- Non-motorized boating has less of a difference between the gender and age of the participant.
- Boating is one of the most expensive types of outdoor recreation, particularly motor boating, which ranks second only to wildlife viewing for its economic contribution to the state.
- Overall, existing boaters are satisfied with the boating facilities and opportunities in Washington State.
IV.  Actions to Support the Boating Grant Programs

As previously stated in Section I, the purpose, goal and objective of this Plan are to:

**Purpose Statement**  
Inform and guide the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board’s grant funding for boating facilities.

**Goal**  
Align grant funding with current recreational boating interests and needs.

**Objective**  
Invest funds into boating facilities that support statewide trends while reflecting local needs and priorities.

To accomplish the above, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will implement the actions in Table 4 to support motorized and non-motorized boating in Washington State.

**Table 4: Actions to Support the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Boating Grant Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 - Provide accurate and timely information to boaters.</td>
<td>#1A – Maintain and improve the Washington Water Cruiser. (New)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#1B – Maintain the boat.wa.gov Web site. (New)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#1C – Participate in the Washington Boaters Alliance. (New)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#1D – Participate in education and training seminars. (New)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 – Work cooperatively with other state agencies on boating programs and services.</td>
<td>#2A – Coordinate and participate in the Agency Boating Committee. (New)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 - Align grant program priorities with current recreational boating needs.</td>
<td>#3A – Support facilities for transient public recreational boating uses. <em>(Previously Policy A-3)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#3B - Update grant program evaluation criteria to reflect current boating participation rates. <em>(Previously Policy C-1)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4 – Create distinct and complementary grant opportunities for recreational boating.</td>
<td>#4A – Emphasize consistency with grant funding sources when determining boating grant programs’ priorities. <em>(Previously Policy A-1)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#4B – Allow for compatible uses of boating facilities only if the use does not impair or displace the primary boating use of the grant program. (New)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5 - Support stewardship and retention of current boating infrastructure.</td>
<td>#5A – Encourage projects that maximize the efficient use of existing boating access sites and facilities. <em>(Previously Policy C-2)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#5B – Encourage projects that use design standards and construction techniques intended to maximize the service life of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6 - Promote construction practices that reduce impacts to the environment.</td>
<td>#6A – Satisfy user needs in an environmentally responsible manner. <em>Previously Policy A-2</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#6B - Adopt the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board’s policy on sustainability in all its boating grant programs. <em>New</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#6C – Support actions related to recreational boating and invasive species prevention and control in the Invasive Species Council’s Strategic Plan. <em>New</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Action #1 - Provide accurate and timely information to boaters.**

**Strategy #1A – Maintain and improve the Washington Water Cruiser.**
In 2013, RCO launched the Washington Water Cruiser to provide the recreational boating community with a resource to locate boating facilities and services. This application, available on a Web site and through a mobile application, was in direct response to a recommendation to create a digital map of public boating facilities statewide.**35** RCO will seek partners and sponsors to assist with storage costs, maintenance of the application and updating the data over the next three years.

**Strategy #1B – Maintain the boat.wa.gov Web site.**
In 2009, RCO launched the boat.wa.gov Web site to provide the recreational boating community with a centralized place to find boating related information such as boat registration, boating laws and education, fishing licenses, moorage and launch sites, weather, and tide information. RCO created the Web site in response to recommendations to increase communications with recreational boaters through a cross-agency Web portal.**36** RCO will continue to maintain this Web site for the next five years and regularly update information in coordination with other state agencies.

**Strategy #1C – Participate in the Washington Boaters Alliance.**
RCO will actively participate in the Washington Boaters Alliance (WBA) as a non-voting member. The mission of the Washington Boating Alliance, an all-inclusive alliance of boating-related organizations, is to develop, advance, and implement consensus positions and proposals to enhance the recreational boating experience in Washington. RCO participates in the WBA to share information with the recreational boating community and learn about emerging issues and concerns from recreational boaters. Information on the WBA is on the Web at [http://washingtonboatingalliance.com/default.htm](http://washingtonboatingalliance.com/default.htm).

**Strategy #1D – Participate in education and training seminars.**
RCO will actively participate in educational and training seminars for the recreational boating community hosted by other organizations such as the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Washington Boater Alliance, and the Northwest Marine Trade Association. The focus of

---

this effort is to foster communication between RCO and boaters and to receive feedback from a broad audience. This goal is in direct response to a recommendation to participate in regular conferences about recreational boating services.\textsuperscript{37}

**Action #2 – Work cooperatively with other state agencies on boating programs and services.**

**Strategy #2A – Coordinate and participate in the Agency Boating Committee.**

RCO will coordinate regular meetings of the Agency Boating Committee (ABC). The state agencies created the ABC in January 2013 in direct response to recommendations for better coordination among the state agencies.\textsuperscript{38} The ABC is comprised of staff members from Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Licensing, Department of Natural Resources, State Parks and Recreation Commission, and RCO. Agencies use this forum to coordinate boating programs, grant opportunities, and services targeted to the recreational boating community.

**Action #3 – Align grant program priorities with current recreational boating needs.**

**Strategy #3A – Support facilities for transient public recreational boating uses.**

Facilities supported by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants must be available for the “transient” use by the general boating public. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board defines transient use as a maximum of 14 consecutive days of moorage.\textsuperscript{39}

**Strategy #3B - Update grant program evaluation criteria to reflect current boating participation rates.**

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will revise its grant program evaluation criteria for the 2016 grant cycle to reflect the data in this plan. For example, the board should consider whether grant funding should be prioritized based on the information that most boating occurs on freshwater in boats less than 26 feet in length and that non-motorized boating is increasing in popularity. The board could also include evaluation criteria to encourage funding projects that will meet the needs of underserved communities such as minorities and women.

**Action #4 – Create distinct and complementary grant opportunities for recreational boating.**

**Strategy #4A – Emphasize consistency with grant funding sources when determining boating grant programs’ priorities.**

Each grant program will strive to fund boating facility projects that are consistent with the source of funds that support the program. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board accomplishes this objective by adopting policies to guide the funding priorities in each grant program. A summary of each grant program’s priorities for the boating community are listed in Table 5.


\textsuperscript{39} The United States Fish and Wildlife Service defines transient moorage as ten days or less for the Boating Infrastructure Grant programs.
Table 5: Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Boating Grant Programs and Types of Boats Served

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Program</th>
<th>Types of Boats Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account</td>
<td>Motorized up to 10 horsepower and non-motorized boats&lt;sup&gt;40&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boating Facilities Program</td>
<td>Motorized boats&lt;sup&gt;41&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boating Infrastructure Grant</td>
<td>Motorized boats 26 feet or more in length&lt;sup&gt;42&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicles Activities - Nonhighway Road Category</td>
<td>Non-motorized boats at sites accessed via a nonhighway road&lt;sup&gt;43&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Trails Program</td>
<td>Motorized and non-motorized boats using water trails in a backcountry experience&lt;sup&gt;44&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program - Water Access Category</td>
<td>Non-motorized boats&lt;sup&gt;45&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – Local Parks, State Lands Development, State Parks, and Trails Categories</td>
<td>Motorized and non-motorized boats&lt;sup&gt;46&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and Water Conservation Fund</td>
<td>Motorized and non-motorized boats&lt;sup&gt;47&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>40</sup> Manual 21: Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account Grant Program (March 1, 2014).
<sup>41</sup> Manual 9: Boating Facilities Program (March 1, 2014).
<sup>42</sup> Code of Federal Regulations Section 86.11
<sup>43</sup> Manual 14: Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicles Activities Program (May 1, 2014)
<sup>44</sup> Manual 16: Recreational Trails Program (May 1, 20140)
<sup>45</sup> Manual 10a: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – Outdoor Recreation Account (March 1, 2014)
<sup>46</sup> Ibid
<sup>47</sup> Manual 15: Land and Water Conservation Fund (March 1, 2014)
Strategy #4B – Allow for compatible uses of boating facilities only if the use does not impair or displace the primary boating use of the grant program.

While boating facilities are primarily for the intended users in the grant program, public use of the facility by other types of recreationists, including non-boating recreationists, is allowed as long as it does not impair or displace the targeted boating community in that grant program. For example, it is compatible to allow non-motorized use or fishing use of a motorized boating facility as long as the non-motorized use or fishing use does not impair or displace the motorized boating use at the facility. In this example, the non-motorized use and fishing use is a secondary or minimal benefit to the public because of the motorized boating project. Allowing compatible uses of publicly funded boating facilities maximizes government budgets while protecting the facilities’ primary uses.

Action #5 - Support Stewardship and Retention of Current Boating Infrastructure

Strategy #5A – Encourage projects that maximize the efficient use of existing boating access sites and facilities.

Around 86 percent of those who boat are highly satisfied or satisfied with the facilities for boating in Washington State. Therefore, boating grant programs should focus on maximizing the efficient use of the existing facilities rather than the acquisition of land for and construction of new facilities. Use of existing sites avoids time-consuming and costly land acquisition. Renovation can extend facility service life and reduce need for costly maintenance and repairs. This objective is consistent with recommendations that prioritized funding to maintain existing boating facilities rather than build new ones.

Strategy #5B – Encourage projects that use design standards and construction techniques intended to maximize the service life of the facility and minimize its routine maintenance.

Projects can often incorporate design elements and construction standards that reduce maintenance needs. Adequate consideration of maintenance during the design phase can result in long-term savings that far outweigh most short-term construction cost increases.

Action #6 - Promote Infrastructure Projects and Construction Practices that Reduce Impacts to the Environment

Strategy #6A – Satisfy user needs in an environmentally responsible manner.

In making funding available to facility providers, RCO recognizes its responsibility as a partner in the stewardship of the natural environment. To this end, RCO will work cooperatively with regulatory and permitting agencies to address environmental issues at the grant program level. For example, RCO will work with the Department of Natural Resources to implement DNR’s Aquatic Lands Habitat Conservation Plan, if adopted. RCO will also work with Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission to coordinate needs for funding boating pump out facilities. RCO’s grant sponsors will work to ensure funded projects meet regulatory and permit requirements. This objective is in direct response to a recommendation to consider environmental issues when administering boating programs.

---


Strategy #6B – Apply the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's policy on sustainability in all its boating grant programs.

In 2014, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted an evaluation criterion to address sustainability and applied it to the following grant programs in which boating activities are eligible for funding:

- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicles Activities
- Recreational Trails Program
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program categories:
  - Local Parks
  - State Lands Development
  - State Parks
  - Trails
  - Water Access

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will consider adding an evaluation criterion on sustainability to the Boating Facilities Program and Boating Infrastructure Grants program. The evaluation criteria for the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account grant program already addresses sustainability.

Strategy #6C – Support actions related to recreational boating and invasive species prevention and control in the Invasive Species Council’s Strategic Plan.

The Washington State Invasive Species Council provides coordination for combating harmful invasive species throughout the state and preventing the introduction of others that may be potentially harmful. The Council will adopt a new strategic plan in 2015. RCO will work with the Council to incorporate into its grant programs specific strategies that prevent the spread of invasive species at boating facilities. RCO will also recommend policy changes to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in response to the new strategic plan, as appropriate. This objective is in direct response to a recommendation to consider environmental issues when administering boating programs.\(^{51}\)

V. Recommendations for the Future and Summary

Recommendations for the Future

The ideas that follow would further assist and guide the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in making funding decisions based on current needs and trends in recreational boating. The board will consider implementing these recommendations as time and funding allow.

Update the Boater Needs Assessment

To understand the boating population and the types of facilities they need, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board should prepare a boater needs assessment periodically, perhaps once every five years in conjunction with the SCORP survey. The needs assessment would assist the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in making funding decisions based on current needs and trends in recreational boating.

Conservation Funding Board with identifying funding priorities for its grant programs. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board produced an initial assessment in 2007 in response to a legislative mandate, Revised Code of Washington 79A.60.680. A new assessment in 2017 would provide an update on boater needs in advance of or in conjunction with the next State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

**Inventory Boating Facilities**

To further enhance the information in a boater needs assessment as well as in the Washington Water Cruiser, RCO should conduct an inventory of all public recreational boating facilities, motorized and non-motorized by 2017. A more robust inventory is directly responsive to a recommendation for RCO to create a statewide map of public boating facilities. Such an inventory may be accomplished in partnership with other state agencies, private organizations, and boaters. The inventory would include all public motorized and non-motorized boat launches, access sites, transient moorages, buoys, and supporting facilities such as restrooms, pump outs, parking lots, camping and fishing facilities, and laundry services. Either this inventory can be generated through crowd-sourcing in the Washington Water Cruiser Application (Strategy #1A) or as a separate inventory that is integrated into the application later.

**Explore Non-motorized Boating**

Paddle sport popularity is increasing, but there is sparse data available to understand this type of recreation. Non-motorized boaters do not need to obtain a Boater Safety Card nor are their vessels registered through the Department of Licensing. Therefore, it is difficult to estimate the number of non-motorized boats available. RCO will work with other state agencies, boating organizations, and recreation and maritime industries to collect information and data on non-motorized boating. In addition, RCO will incorporate additional non-motorized data collection in the boater needs assessment and the next State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

**Update the Boating Plan with SCORP**

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is the source of much of the data in this plan. RCO updates SCORP every five years to meet certain federal grant program requirements. The next SCORP is due in 2019. To streamline RCO’s planning efforts and better utilize the SCORP framework, the next Boating Grant Programs Plan will be produced in conjunction with the next SCORP in 2019.

**Support Water Trails**

Water trails are important trail systems that allow boaters to explore, find shelter, and rest. The State Trails Plan includes a recommendation to develop more water trails and encourage them in a designated statewide trail system. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board should work to connect the links between this Boating Plan and the State Trails Plan and work with other state agencies and local organizations to incorporate water trails into a state trails system.

**Address Climate Change**

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board should assess how to address climate change within its boating grant programs. For example, rising sea levels may affect projects proposed along the coast or Puget Sound. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board should develop mechanisms to engage

---

project sponsors and boaters in this discussion to ensure facilities constructed with grant funds can withstand changes over time due to climate change.

**Summary**

RCO administers seven grant programs that acquire land and develop boating facilities for motorized and non-motorized boating recreation. The agency has a large role to play in meeting boating facility needs in the state by funding grant projects that reflect the current uses and trends in boating. This plan will guide the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in prioritizing funding for boating projects. It may also be of interest to other organizations interested in boating and the funding of such facilities.

While there is good information in this plan on the types of recreational boating currently of interest to Washington residents, there is additional information that would be useful to shape future planning efforts and decisions at the state level. What follows is a list of future actions meant to enhance the level of information available to determine the most pressing needs for improving boating facilities in Washington State.
Appendix A – State Agency Boating Programs
The following state agencies administer their respective boating programs as assigned by the Governor or State Legislature.

Recreation and Conservation Office
Boating Activities Program
Boats.wa.gov Web Site
Washington Water Cruise
Washington State Invasive Species Council

Washington State Parks
State Parks, Boat Ramps, Marine Parks and Mooring Buoys
Mandatory Boater Education Law
Washington State Boater Education Card
Life Jacket Loaner Program
Marine Law Enforcement Education Program
Clean Vessel Program

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Water Access Sites, Boat Ramps, and State Wildlife Areas
Fishing and Shellfishing Regulations
Hydraulic Code Permits
Invasive Species Enforcement and Education

Washington Department of Natural Resources
Port Management Areas on State Aquatic Lands
Derelict Vessel Removal Program

Washington State Department of Licensing
Vessel Registration and Renewal

Local Law Enforcement
Boating Accidents Reports
Appendix B – Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution

PLACEHOLDER - Insert final resolution as adopted by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.
Appendix C – Definitions Used for Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Grant Programs

Boating – Unless otherwise noted, boating includes non-motorized and motorized recreational boating.

Non-motorized boating – Non-motorized boating includes sailing, canoeing, kayaking, rowboats, rafts, and stand up paddle boards.

Motorized boating – Motorized boating includes gas, diesel, and electric powered boats, excluding personal watercraft.

Personal watercraft – Personal watercraft are motorized recreational water vehicles normally ridden by straddling a seat.