



the LOOKOUT

Voice of the **NATIONAL BOATING FEDERATION**
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Johnnie Owen, Editor

President's Report: Fall 2007

We are celebrating more than 41 years of motivated volunteers representing over 2 million recreational boaters in State and Federal Capitols.

- We have a website with many links to information from our boating partners.
- We have the capacity to send electronic E-lets on current issues to all who are interested, along with our Regular Member Associations.
- Our publication, the LOOKOUT, is published every other month with complimentary copies to all members of Congress.
- We have a successful information booth that we display at the annual conferences of NASBLA, USPS and USCGAuxiliary.
- We are active participants on panels including the USCG Small Vessel Security Summit; the National Harbor Safety Meetings; and the NBSAC Strategic Planning Panel.
- We share information with our European Boating Association partners through our Director of International Affairs, Bob David, who keeps us fully informed of recreational boating issues abroad.
- We present awards to the USCGAuxiliary Flotillas and the US Power Squadrons for their excellence in public boating education.
- We entered into our first MOU with NASBLA in September of this year.
- Our Legislative Director, Earl Waesche, represents all of us at meetings of ALAB, GMDSS, LORAN, NOAA, NMMA, to mention a few. Earl's dedication has earned him the respect of all those he comes in contact with.

The heart of the NBF spirit is present in this meeting. I thank you for your endless hours of volunteerism and continued support of the NBF mission.



President Marlene Barrington, awarding 2007 Excellence in Boater Education to Commodore Allen Brown, Jr., District Commodore, 7th District (left) and Commodore Jesse Harrup, Jr., Directorate Commodore – Recreational Boating Safety (right) at the annual meeting of the U.S.C.G. in Portland, OR.



Executive Committee Member Everette Tucker and NASBLA President Jeff Johnson signing Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] between The National Boating Federation [NBF] and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators [NASBLA] at the recent NASBLA meeting.

Following the NBF meeting

On October 6, 2007 in Irving, Texas, President Marlene Barrington informed National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Rosenker [recently reappointed by President Bush to another term as Chairman of NTSB] as follows:

Greetings from the Executive Committee of the National Boating Federation. Our fall meeting was hosted by the Sea Scouts at the Boy Scouts of America Museum in Dallas, TX on October 6th.

We will be meeting next week with some NTSB members at the Boating Safety Coalition in Washington and would like to go on record that the National Boating Federation is opposed to boat operator licensing. Recreational boating is a voluntary, leisure activity, chosen by some who appreciate the outdoors and enjoy navigating our waterways in their boats. Licensing serves no real purpose; embroils us in state bureaucracy; and provides it with an additional revenue source at our expense. There is no evidence shown that licensing reduces fatalities on our waterways. Alabama is not a good example since it had poor statistics before licensing and has no Mandatory Boater Education (MBE).

We are very supportive of MBE and are pleased that more and more states are adopting some form of that education. We have been very proactive in direct testimony in many state legislatures offering bills to require MBE. When encountering other boatmen, we want them to know the rules of the road.

Clearly, in the interest of safety and to ensure a pleasant boating experience, mandatory boating education is more effective and the preferred alternative to boat operator licensing.

European Boating Association [EBA] Meeting

Graz, Austria 12-13 October 2007

Attendance was 35, with sixteen countries represented. A major subject of discussion was Italy's proposed changes to the COLREGS, submitted to the International Maritime Organization [IMO], which would give commercial vessels priority over all "pleasure craft", under all circumstances, and adds a new definition of "pleasure craft". The International Sailing Federation, EBA and others strongly oppose this proposal on the grounds that it adds significant, unneeded complexity. Discussion of this issue at the NBF meeting the previous weekend resulted in a decision to notify the Coast Guard that NBF opposes this change.

For the full version of the proposed change in COLREGS, please contact

Robert P. David, NBF Delegate to EBA.

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Senate Foreign Relations Committee Holds Hearing on Law of the Sea Treaty

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, chaired by Senator Joseph Biden (D-Del.) held a hearing on September 27 on U.S. ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Committee heard testimony from senior diplomatic and military officials in support of the treaty—the Bush Administration and a majority of the Senate are in favor of ratification, while a handful of opponents argue it would diminish U.S. sovereignty. NMMA is a strong supporter of the Law of the Sea Treaty, which would provide a comprehensive framework for managing the world’s oceans and enshrine longstanding customary international laws on oceans’ issues ranging from territorial rights to navigation and piracy issues. In excess of 150 nations have ratified the Law of the Sea, which took effect in 1994. Supporters in the U.S. include NMMA, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Bush Administration, the U.S. State Department, environmental organizations, oceans industries and mining groups, the oil and gas industry, and others. The Committee will hold an additional hearing later in the year to hear from opponents.

Coast Guard drops potential propeller guard regulation

Thursday, Washington, DC

The houseboats meandering across Lake Kaweah, New Melones and other popular waterways won’t need propeller guards after all, the United States Coast Guard said Thur.(10-18). Ending a 6-yr. regulatory battle, the Coast Guard without fanfare dropped its Dec.2001 proposal to require added protections against propeller injuries. Officials sided with boat builders, who contend mandatory propeller guards would cost too much and provide too little benefit.

“The Coast Guard believes its resources would be better directed toward regulatory projects that would have a greater impact on propeller injury avoidance,” the agency said in its entry in the Federal Register, where agencies propose rules and regulations. “The Coast Guard remains deeply concerned about propeller injuries, and is committed to reducing them,” the agency stated. “In doing so, though, the cost and effectiveness of alternative measures must be reasonably considered.” (Article from ‘Fresno Bee’)

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Mail this completed application and check payable to National Boating Federation to the above address.

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Bureau of Reclamation Moves to Stop Boating and Fishing Access to Lakes

Marine Retailers Association of America [MRAA) has issued comments in strong opposition to a recent rulemaking by the Bureau of Reclamation designed to return the shoreline of all Bureau-managed lakes and reservoirs to nature by pulling up existing docks and mooring facilities and constructing a chain-link fence around the lake 150 feet from the shoreline.

MRAA believes the proposed rulemaking is in conflict with the Bureau's own policy that states the Bureau must implement appropriate procedures for public involvement in a timely and effective manner for all Bureau decisions that may significantly affect the interest of the public. We understand the Bureau is already preventing access to homes and water bodies on select Bureau-managed lakes. One 80-year old couple on Cascade Lake returned home after a brief vacation to find access to their home denied by a chain-link fence. MRAA asked the Bureau to extend its rulemaking past the October 16 closure date to give many affected people time to learn about the decision and to react and respond to the Bureau.

Specifically, the Bureau has proposed a new agency rule on the use of Reclamation lands, facilities, and water bodies, which would prohibit cabins, residences, outbuildings, and associated landscaping, patios, decks, and porches; boat houses,

boat docks, moorings, and launch ramps, and floating structures, including moored vessels and business sites.

It is anticipated the scope of the rule will adversely impact recreational boaters and anglers, marinas, boat retailers, and service providers, as well as many ancillary support businesses like grocery stores, bait shops, gas stations, etc. The Bureau manages properties, lakes and reservoirs in many states, but mostly in the West.

The purpose of the rule would prohibit new boat access ramps and docks and would not re-new current leases when they expire. The idea is clearly to prevent water access.

At a time in our nation's history when American's are searching for ways to spend free time and discretionary dollars, boating and fishing activities are a natural form of recreation causing the need for increased water access. MRAA asked the Bureau to reconsider its rulemaking and look to other ways to resolve user conflicts than closure of its properties and lakes.

Comments to the Bureau of reclamation are due by October 16, 2007 and can be sent by email: LandUseRuleComments@do.usbr.gov. The rule itself can be accessed on the internet by going to www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html. You must enter "page 39530" and click the SEARCH button.