



2026 ANNUAL REPORT

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LEADING RECREATIONAL
BOATING SAFETY
NATIONWIDE

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2025-2026

EXECUTIVE BOARD



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Tennessee
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Board Member

NASBLA is governed by an Executive Board composed of a chair, vice chair, treasurer, four board members, and the CEO, who serves as an ex officio member. Each member is committed to advancing recreational boating safety and uses their term of service to further NASBLA's mission of promoting safe, enjoyable and secure boating.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



THOMAS E. GUESS, CRBP
Chief Executive Officer



On behalf of the Executive Board, our members, partners, and staff, I am pleased to present the 2026 NASBLA Annual Report. Each year brings a new opportunity to learn, grow and adapt to the changes and challenges of the world in which we operate.

This past year, we have worked diligently to advance the mission of our association through the development of a new strategic plan. This plan gives us a clearer mission, vision, and values, along with a way forward for the coming years. It will allow us to further strengthen our role as an advocate on behalf of our members and partners. Our strategic plan will also position us to be more effective and efficient in how we operate within today's ever-changing socio-economic climate, which extends beyond the recreational boating safety landscape and influences the work we do.

To this end, I have worked diligently with our Executive Board and staff to strengthen the financial stability of our association through budget reductions, staff restructuring, operational efficiencies, and the decision to place our NASBLA headquarters building on the market. The sale of our building will establish a much-needed reserve fund and a rainy-day fund. This cash reserve will better position us to face the changes and challenges of today's nonprofit environment and the ever-changing, uncertain grant funding landscape.

We produced some great products featured in this year's "Top Ten" list, and while I don't want to divert the spotlight from that list, I would like to highlight one of the important milestones from the list. The completion of the 2026-30 Strategic Plan. This plan will put NASBLA on a steady course and provide a clear vision and mission that will guide our organizational priorities in the years ahead. The strategic planning process took a comprehensive approach, involving members, the Executive Board and staff to develop a plan that charts our association's future and places greater emphasis on member advocacy as a core part of our mission.

Our committees have been working hard, and their efforts have resulted in several noteworthy accomplishments. The Vessel Identification, Registration and Titling (VIRT) Committee completed a revision of NASBLA's Model Procedure for Abandoned, Derelict, or At-Risk Recreational Vessels. The NASBLA Paddlesports Committee published the *Presenter's Guide to Paddlesport Safety – Kayak*. NASBLA published the ANSI/NASBLA K-12 PFD Education Standard, and the Engineering, Reporting & Analysis Committee (ERAC) is working diligently on the new BARD system overhaul. These are not all-inclusive but capture some of the outstanding work being done by our NASBLA committees.

In June, we hosted the NASBLA RBS Leadership Academy in Lexington, Kentucky, with 23 participants completing the program. Many graduates will receive their diplomas at this year's conference in Knoxville. As part of our leadership focus, the Certified Recreational Boating Professional (CRBP) Commission was reestablished, and its members are working diligently with staff to update the CRBP course, process, and study guides to ensure the program remains a respected leader in RBS professional credentialing.

I always love highlighting the great accomplishments and milestones achieved by our NASBLA staff. This year included the retirement of our longtime Executive Deputy Director, John Fetterman. Thank you, John, for your years of dedication to NASBLA and the BOAT Program. Courtney Livingston has assumed the role of National Director of the BOAT Program and is doing a wonderful job. We were fortunate to hire Phoebe Wallace as our Education Director. Under Phoebe's guidance, with the expert assistance of Virgil Chambers and his cohort of course reviewers, we eliminated the course approval backlog. Additionally, Phoebe has worked diligently to overhaul the course approval process and associated fee structure. Thank you, Phoebe and Virgil. We also experienced a change in our association accounting operations with the departure of Gladys Thompson. We will continue our financial operations through a contract accounting firm going forward. Finally, thank you to all our NASBLA staff, who work with passion and commitment to serve our association efficiently and effectively each day.

I extend my deepest gratitude to NASBLA's mission partners, strategic partner, equipment partner and outreach partner, as well as our generous conference sponsors, whose support and commitment have gone above and beyond this year. Your financial and program support makes our annual conference, member programs, and mission possible. Special thanks to our mission partners, Teledyne FLIR/Raymarine and SAFE Boats International, for their financial support of the BOAT Program and NASBLA; to strategic partner Kalkomey for its ongoing partnership and guidance in advancing online boating education; to equipment partner First Watch Gear for providing equipment and life jackets for the BOAT Program; and to Mustang Survival for providing life jackets to the RBS Leadership Academy students, as well as media and outreach support.



We also extend our sincere appreciation to our 2026 Annual Conference sponsors for their generous support. Thank you to our Presenting Sponsor, the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA); Platinum Sponsor and T-shirt Sponsor, Madisonville Marine, Inc.; Gold Sponsor, the BoatUS Foundation; Taste of Tennessee Sponsor, Sugarlands Distilling Company; Breakfast Sponsor, Monologix, Inc. / BoatTests101.com; Networking and Entertainment Sponsor, the Tennessee Wildlife Officers Association; and Boating Safety Award Sponsor, the National Safe Boating Council (NSBC). Your investment helps make our Annual Conference and member programs possible.

Finally, thank you to our exhibitors, vendors, and organizations that rented booth spaces at this year's conference. Your participation and expertise are invaluable. We also remain grateful for our strong partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard, particularly the Office of Boating Safety, the Office of Boat Forces, and the Office of Shore Forces, along with our many partners across government, industry, and the nonprofit community.

Thank you for being part of NASBLA's mission and our RBS family. We look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Guess
Chief Executive Officer



MEET THE STAFF



Taylor Kirshe, CAE
Chief Operating Officer



Tom Hayward
Chief Financial Officer



Rick Barrera
Committee Staff



Angela Boone
Office Manager



Pam Dillon, CAE
Project Specialist



John Fetterman
Committee Staff



Deb Gona, Ph.D.
Research Consultant



Jenn Joyner
BOAT Program & Member
Services Specialist



**Courtney
Livingston, Ph.D.**
BOAT Program Director



Ron Sarver, CAE
Chief, Knowledge &
Learning Management



Garrison Toy
Communications &
Marketing Manager



Phoebe Wallace
Education Director

2025

FINANCIALS



2025 REVENUE BREAKDOWN

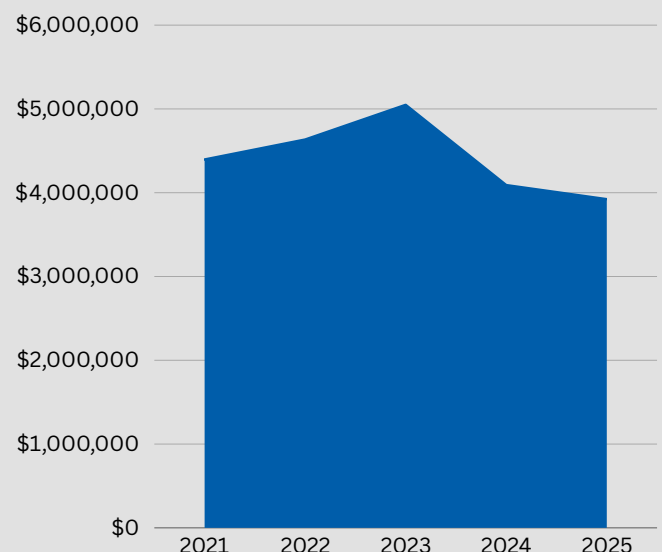
Training Programs	\$1,988,245	51%
Federal Grants	\$1,065,438	27%
Member Dues	\$324,000	8%
Rental Income	\$295,030	7%
Sponsor Income	\$105,000	3%
Association Management	\$80,277	2%
Other	\$64,833	2%
2025 Total	\$3,922,823	

(Audited financial statements and the 2025 990 tax filing are available on the NASBLA website on the ["About NASBLA"](#) page.)

2025 presented financial challenges, primarily due to a \$348,000 reduction in grant revenue from delayed federal grant funding, following a \$387,000 decrease in grant funding in 2023. Despite these challenges, overall revenue declined by only \$168,000 from 2024, driven by the BOAT Program's strong performance and flexible revenue model. Under the leadership of NASBLA's new CEO and Executive Board, cost-saving measures were implemented to strengthen the association's long-term financial position. One of the most significant decisions was to sell NASBLA's office building and transition to a smaller office in Lexington, Kentucky. Once completed, the sale is expected to strengthen NASBLA's financial position and help mitigate future federal grant funding uncertainty.

5-YEAR REVENUE

Year	Revenue
2025	\$3,922,823
2024	\$4,090,914
2023	\$5,048,888
2022	\$4,634,696
2021	\$4,396,537





1. 2026-2030 STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPED

NASBLA developed its 2026-2030 Strategic Plan, establishing a strategic roadmap to guide the association's priorities and initiatives over the next five years.

2. STREAMLINED THE NASBLA COURSE REVIEW PROCESS

After discovering a backlog of boating safety courses, NASBLA redesigned the application and review process to ensure thorough and timely course reviews.

3. RENEWED U.S. COAST GUARD MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA)

NASBLA renewed its MOA with the U.S. Coast Guard, reaffirming the partnership to advance recreational boating safety through collaboration and shared priorities.

4. LAUNCHED THE NATIONAL READINESS DATABASE

The BOAT Program launched the National Readiness Database, a credentialing platform that gives agencies visibility into personnel qualifications, strengthening readiness and safety.

5. MODEL PROCEDURE FOR ABANDONED, DERELICT, OR AT-RISK RECREATIONAL VESSELS

Members will vote on updates to NASBLA's Model Procedure for Abandoned, Derelict, or At-Risk Recreational Vessels, reflecting current challenges and best practices.

6. PUBLISHED PRESENTER'S GUIDE TO PADDLESport SAFETY – KAYAK

The NASBLA Paddlesports Committee published the *Presenter's Guide to Paddlesport Safety – Kayak*, providing standardized on-water skill check sheets and instructional videos.

7. PUBLISHED A NEW AMERICAN NATIONAL STANDARD

On April 23, 2026, NASBLA published the ANSI/NASBLA K-12 PFD Education Standard, promoting consistent K-12 education on personal flotation device (PFD) use.

8. BOAT PROGRAM & OPERATION DRY WATER STRENGTHEN BUI

The BOAT Program partnered with Operation Dry Water to deliver specialized BUI training before the three-day weekend, strengthening impaired boating enforcement nationwide.

9. WATERWAY MANAGEMENT RESOURCE LIBRARY LAUNCHED

The Waterways Management Task Force created a public resource library with nearly 100 references covering priority issues, including wakes, user conflicts and educational signage.

10. CONCLUDED ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

NASBLA concluded its management services with the States Organization for Boating Access, allowing greater focus on member priorities and the RBS Strategic Plan.



NASBLA'S BOAT PROGRAM

ADVANCING NATIONAL MARITIME READINESS

During FFY 2026, NASBLA's Boat Operations and Training (BOAT) Program continued its evolution from a nationally recognized training provider to a strategic partner in strengthening America's maritime operational readiness. Expanded U.S. Coast Guard partnerships, major curriculum modernization, new capability development, and the launch of the National Readiness Database advanced the program's mission of preparing maritime responders for an increasingly complex operational environment.

STRENGTHENING THE U.S. COAST GUARD PARTNERSHIP

The U.S. Coast Guard remains NASBLA's most significant strategic partner, and that relationship expanded considerably during FFY 2026. Beyond its longstanding work with the Office of Boat Forces, the BOAT Program strengthened partnerships with the Office of Shore Forces, Sector Commands, and Coast Guard Stations nationwide, expanding collaboration from curriculum coordination to operational capability development.

A significant milestone this year was the continued evolution of the partnership between the BOAT Program and U.S. Coast Guard Stations nationwide. Working closely with the Coast Guard-NASBLA Field Liaison, the program streamlined training delivery, clarified communication among Stations, NASBLA Program Managers, and subject matter experts, and improved operational coordination. By facilitating joint training under a single National Standard, the BOAT Program strengthens relationships at the deckplate before real-world responses. This creates repeatable opportunities for Coast Guard units and partner agencies to train together, improving interoperability across the nation's ports, waterways, and maritime critical infrastructure. The result is a more integrated, capable, and operationally ready maritime response enterprise.



SUPPORTING NATIONAL SPECIAL SECURITY EVENTS

The Tactical Operators Course (TOC) remained central to readiness efforts during a year marked by an unprecedented number of nationally significant events. In preparation for America 250, Sail250, and the 2026 FIFA World Cup, agencies trained to enforce complex security zones, support dignitary protection, safeguard critical assets, and respond to evolving maritime threats. TOC strengthened the tactical decision-making, vessel handling, operational planning, risk management, and coordinated response capabilities required to execute these missions safely and effectively. These efforts reinforced the value of standardized, operationally relevant training before events occur, when agencies can identify gaps and align procedures.



MODERNIZING THE NATIONAL STANDARD

NASBLA also undertook one of the most significant curriculum modernization efforts in BOAT Program history. The Tactical Operators Course received a comprehensive redesign in close coordination with active maritime law enforcement professionals to reflect current tactics, evolving threats, and field realities. Every lesson was evaluated for direct operational relevance. The Pursuit and STOP techniques course is nearing completion of a similar modernization focused on updated doctrine, operational decision-making, risk management, and practical scenarios that reflect conditions operators encounter in the field.

The Boat Operator Search and Rescue (BOSAR) course is also undergoing a comprehensive overhaul through collaboration among NASBLA, the U.S. Coast Guard, and operational subject matter experts nationwide. The revised curriculum will incorporate contemporary search and rescue doctrine, emerging technologies, evolving mission requirements, and the realities responders encounter during maritime SAR operations. Together, these efforts preserve the consistency and credibility of the National Standard while ensuring it remains responsive to the needs of the maritime community.

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE LEADERSHIP

To address a national capability gap, NASBLA is partnering with Coast Guard Headquarters, Coast Guard Sectors, and maritime responders to develop the Maritime Search and Rescue Incident Commander (MSAR-IC) course. While existing training prepares responders for tactical rescue operations, few standardized opportunities exist to develop the skills necessary to manage complex, multi-agency incidents from an operational command perspective.

MSAR-IC aims to prepare state, local, tribal, territorial, and federal personnel to serve as Incident Commanders within the Coast Guard's Search Mission Coordinator framework. The course will emphasize decision-making, incident action planning, resource coordination, risk management, and unified command, bridging the gap between tactical operations and incident-level leadership.

LAUNCHING THE NATIONAL READINESS DATABASE

Perhaps the most transformative achievement of FFY 2026 was the launch of the National Readiness Database (NRD). The NRD fundamentally changes how maritime agencies manage operational readiness by providing the nation's first centralized system for tracking individual qualifications, instructor credentials, training currency, and organizational capability across the BOAT Program.

For the first time, Coast Guard leadership, partner agencies, and program administrators can rapidly identify qualified personnel, monitor credential currency, and assess regional capabilities to develop a common operational picture of readiness.

Beyond serving as a records management system, the NRD provides the data necessary to support strategic planning, identify capability gaps, guide future training investments, and improve resource allocation nationwide. Agencies can now make informed decisions based on real-time readiness data rather than relying on decentralized records and manual tracking systems.

As the database continues to mature, it will become a foundational element in strengthening interoperability, improving workforce readiness, and supporting national maritime preparedness.

LOOKING FORWARD

FFY 2026 reflects a broader shift in the BOAT Program's mission and impact. Standardized training remains its foundation, but the program increasingly strengthens operational capability across the maritime response community. Through modernized curricula, expanded Coast Guard partnerships, new national capabilities, and the infrastructure to understand readiness, NASBLA continues to position the BOAT Program as a cornerstone of maritime preparedness. The work completed this year establishes a stronger foundation for continued collaboration and future capabilities driven by operational need. As maritime threats evolve and demands increase, the BOAT Program remains committed to ensuring America's responders are prepared for the challenges ahead.



COMMITTEE, PANEL & TASK FORCE REPORTS



EDUCATION & OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Chair: Chelsea Hofmeier, *Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks*

[Click here for the full report.](#)

The Education & Outreach Committee maintained productivity during the 2025-2026 committee year amidst a significant transition in staff support with the periodic vacancy of the Education Director position. Phoebe Wallace was selected as the new NASBLA Education Director and assumed the role in the middle of the committee year, March 2026. Two committee charges focused on refining and maintaining recently completed committee products including the Boating Education Toolkit and the Boating Education Student Assessment Question Bank. The Boating Education Student Assessment Question Bank charge team continued to meet biweekly for the first half of the committee year to continue developing exam questions. The Boating Education Toolkit charge team hosted ten monthly Water Cooler Meetings and has made strides brainstorming a boating educator specific communication and data sharing tool with the hopes of implementation in the next committee year. The committee also continued work on other charges including completing a survey on boating education opportunities for boat livery operators and hosting regular meetings of the charge team which featured livery operators as guest speakers. The committee hopes to focus the next year of work on ensuring all the finished committee products are readily accessible and usable and focus on some wholly new charges rather than renewing ongoing maintenance charges.

NATIONAL BOATING STANDARDS PANEL

Chair: Jennifer Dadamo, *BoatUS Foundation*

The National Boating Standards Panel (BSP) reached a significant milestone in 2025-26 with the publication of ANSI/NASBLA 1200-2026, K-12 Personal Flotation Device (PFD) Education Standard. This new standard represents an important advancement in youth water safety education by establishing foundational PFD knowledge and water safety principles for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Throughout the year, the work group met regularly to refine educational objectives and best practices while completing the first draft of the accompanying technical report. The standard also provides a flexible framework for course development that can be adapted to various age groups, educational settings and program goals.

The Towed Water Sports Education Standard Work Group also made substantial progress toward developing a comprehensive national education standard. Meeting weekly throughout the year, the group developed a draft standard that will be released for public comment following the 2026 NASBLA Annual Conference. The proposed standard promotes safe and responsible participation in towed water sports by outlining essential knowledge, safety principles and operational best practices while addressing risk reduction, user conflict and environmental stewardship. In the coming year, the panel will complete the public review process and publish the standard, further strengthening boating safety education nationwide.

ENFORCEMENT & TRAINING COMMITTEE

Chair: Michael Schipritt, *Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management*

[Click here for the full report.](#)

The Enforcement and Training Committee continued advancing initiatives that strengthen boating law enforcement, officer training and operational readiness.

The California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways hosted the 2026 Operation Dry Water National Kickoff in Lake Havasu City, Arizona, with support from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the Nevada Department of Wildlife and the Mohave County Sheriff's Office. The July 3-5 heightened awareness and enforcement weekend included state, county, local and U.S. Coast Guard participation. National results will be released after all reports are finalized, with award recipients recognized at the 2026 NASBLA Annual Conference.

The Micro Learning Charge expanded NASBLA's YouTube training library with academy-based content from Pennsylvania supporting Inland Boat Operations and Marine Patrol Fundamentals. The library now features more than 27 instructional videos on small vessel operations and maintenance.

The Engine Cutoff Switch (ECOS) Charge added three states to the 2026 ECOS wear map and developed a legislative map highlighting state ECOS requirements. The Emerging Technology Charge Group evaluated three additions to the technology library. The redesigned 2026 National Training Survey received more than 340 responses, and the Port Security Grant Charge Group developed a resource to help agencies prepare competitive NASBLA training grant applications adaptable to other port security funding opportunities.

ENGINEERING, REPORTING & ANALYSIS COMMITTEE

Chair: Tamara Terry, *Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Watercraft*

[Click here for the full report.](#)

As in the 2025 committee cycle, ERAC's charge work in 2026 ran the gamut, carrying on activities as diverse as monitoring and commenting on federal notices for information collections to gathering, compiling, and analyzing data that can key in on more of the "why's" of recreational boating incidents. But while strong coordination between charge teams in the 2025 cycle brought ERAC closer to long-standing committee goals that included updating and reorganizing critical resources, 2026 was marked by enhanced national partnerships and participation in the commencement of two long-sought projects that will have significant impacts and benefits for the states' RBS programs.

At the onset of the 2026 cycle, ERAC was invited to participate in the earliest stages of the long overdue redesign of the system and contents of the Boating Accident Report Database (BARD)—offering feedback to the software developers' initial thinking, learning of potential features, and notably, being afforded an entrée to continue advancing the incorporation of reporting recommendations and documentation produced in collaboration with the states and provided to the Coast Guard over the last 15 years.

And after having provided significant input over the last few committee cycles to the development of the eagerly-anticipated 2026 National Recreational Boating Safety Survey (NRBSS), ERAC cheered the green light from OMB to the Coast Guard and survey partner NORC to proceed with its launch. Committee feedback morphed into promotion of the collection to help ensure valid, beneficial state-level estimates will be generated from the exposure survey component of the NRBSS.

FINANCE & GRANTS COMMITTEE

Chair: Al Johnson, *Vermont State Police Marine-Division*

[Click here for the full report.](#)

During the 2025-26 committee year, the Finance & Grants Committee focused on strengthening resources and support to help states navigate recreational boating safety (RBS) funding, reporting and compliance requirements.

In partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard, the committee devoted significant time to revising the Recreational Boating Safety State Guide and its associated Annual Performance Review and year-end reporting process. The revisions were informed by feedback gathered during the RBS Workshop, a nationwide survey, follow-up conference calls and working sessions with the Coast Guard. The committee's recommendations will be submitted to the Coast Guard for review and consideration. At the time of this report, the revision process remains ongoing.

The committee also developed two editable electronic rack cards highlighting RBS funding and state-specific program metrics. These customizable resources enable states to tailor information for presentations, websites and outreach using web links and QR codes.

Looking ahead, the committee will launch monthly virtual drop-in sessions to provide guidance on financial management and annual RBS grant reporting. The committee also established a training framework that includes future training topics, best practice resources and office hours to support states during the 2026-27 committee year. These initiatives reinforce the committee's commitment to improving grant administration, strengthening collaboration and supporting consistent national compliance while providing practical resources for states.

PADDLESPORTS COMMITTEE

Chair: Gwendolynn Flynn, *Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection*

[Click here for the full report.](#)

The NASBLA Paddlesports Committee advanced four national initiatives that strengthened industry partnerships, modernized safety outreach, expanded recognition programs and supported state-level educator implementation.

Charge 1, led by Jeff Moag (Water Sports Foundation), strengthened collaboration with the Paddlesports Trade Coalition by developing a retailer-ready safety resource hub featuring vetted microlearning videos, American Canoe Association materials, NASBLA resources and retail signage. This work positioned NASBLA as a collaborative partner and laid the groundwork for a future co-branded Paddler's Code of Conduct. Charge 2, led by Phil Hager (Maryland), expanded the microlearning library by prioritizing stand-up paddleboard (SUP) safety, developing new SUP content, refining PFD messaging and establishing the master video library on the NASBLA YouTube channel. Charge 3, led by Kosette Siebert (Alaska), strengthened the National Paddlesports Committee Honors program by refining eligibility, introducing third-party nominations, redesigning the application process, updating the logo and securing Executive Board approval for a three-year recognition cycle. Charge 4, led by Associate Member Virgil Chambers, finalized and nationally rolled out the *Presenter's Guide to Paddlesport Safety – Kayak* through a three-phase release, an April orientation webinar and early adoption in Virginia and Pennsylvania. The charge also established instructor qualification pathways and a usage-reporting framework.

Collectively, these accomplishments reflect a productive year of strengthened partnerships, expanded safety resources and meaningful national impact.

VESSEL IDENTIFICATION, REGISTRATION & TITLING COMMITTEE

Chair: Michelle Johnston, *Utah State Tax Commission*

[Click here for the full report.](#)

The VIRT Committee continued advancing national initiatives to improve consistency and modernize vessel registration and titling programs. During the committee year, the group developed a PowerPoint training tool for frontline registration and titling professionals and reorganized the NASBLA VIRT webpage to improve access to committee resources.

The committee also completed a revised NASBLA Model Procedure for Abandoned, Derelict or At-Risk Recreational Vessels, which was approved by the NASBLA Executive Board in July 2026. Final adoption is scheduled for a membership vote at the NASBLA Annual Business Meeting on Sept. 16, 2026.

In collaboration with the U.S. Coast Guard, the committee continued revising the NASBLA Best Practice for Self-Imported Vessels, with a related breakout session planned for the 2026 NASBLA Annual Conference. In June 2026, Kentucky became the 39th state or territory to join the Vessel Identification System (VIS). The committee also worked with the International Association of Marine Investigators (IAMI) to develop a standardized Manufacturer's Statement of Origin (MSO) for outboard motors. The document is currently under review by the ABYC Technical Review Board, with approval anticipated in May 2027.

During the reporting period, the committee published two VIRT newsletters, contributed updates to the *BLA Brief* and remained focused on advancing nationwide uniformity and modernization.

WATERWAY MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE

Chair: Peter Francis, *Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection*

[Click here for the full report.](#)

The 2025-26 Waterway Management Task Force made significant progress toward developing a nationally accessible, peer-reviewed Waterway Management Resource Library to support states facing increasingly complex waterway management challenges. Posted in NASBLA Connect, the library is a searchable collection of nearly 100 curated resources covering wake impacts, commerce-recreation vessel conflicts, signage and public outreach.

Early in the committee year, members reaffirmed the Executive Board's directive to develop an electronic library of peer-reviewed resources addressing the waterway management issues of greatest importance to the states. Using results from the 2025 Waterway Management Survey, the task force identified three priority areas: wakes, commerce-recreation vessel conflicts, and signage and public outreach. Wake impacts emerged as the highest priority, with states reporting shoreline erosion, vessel instability, ecological disruption and increasing public concerns. The task force also incorporated input from towing industry representatives, who identified recreational boaters as having the greatest operational impact on towing operations across 32 states. Public outreach was recognized as the most effective mitigation strategy, prompting the inclusion of signage, brochures, social media content and industry resources.

To provide balanced, practical guidance, the library includes a disclaimer encouraging users to independently evaluate resources for their operational, legal and policy needs. The task force recommends continuing this work in 2026-27 to expand the library, maintain existing content and address evolving state needs.

FISCAL YEAR 2026

RBS GRANTS

As a result of the Fiscal Year 2026 National Nonprofit Organization Recreational Boating Safety Grant Program applications, NASBLA was awarded funding for six grant projects, detailed below. The time period for these grants is October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026.

BOATING INCIDENT INVESTIGATION AND GPS FORENSICS TRAINING

Through a one-year federal grant, NASBLA's BOAT Program continued strengthening the nation's boating incident investigation capabilities by expanding access to investigative training. During federal fiscal year (FFY) 2026, the grant supported four Level I Boating Incident Investigation courses, including two with GPS Forensics, and one Level II course with integrated GPS Forensics instruction.

The BOAT Program also continued modernizing its investigative curriculum through a new GPS Forensics eLearning module. Designed to provide foundational knowledge before in-person training, the module allows classroom courses to focus on advanced, hands-on exercises and the practical application of digital forensic techniques. The U.S. Coast Guard Office of Investigations remained an active partner, coordinating investigator participation to strengthen investigative consistency.

The grant also expanded the BOAT Program's national reach by bringing training to states that had not previously hosted Boating Incident Investigation courses, giving new agencies access to standardized instruction. NASBLA has submitted a proposal to continue the initiative, ensuring agencies nationwide remain equipped to conduct accurate, defensible investigations that improve boating safety and strengthen the nation's boating incident data.



BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE AWARENESS & ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGN: OPERATION DRY WATER

Operation Dry Water (ODW) is a year-round national campaign focused on reducing alcohol- and drug-related incidents and fatalities on the water. The initiative engages local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies in every U.S. state and territory.

The 2026 ODW heightened awareness and enforcement weekend took place July 3-5. Data from this year's campaign is currently being analyzed, and final results will be released following NASBLA's Annual Conference.

The 2026 ODW National Kickoff Event was held June 29 in Lake Havasu City, Arizona, and was followed by a public outreach event on June 30. Hosted in partnership with the California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Mohave County Sheriff's Office, and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), the events raised awareness about the dangers of boating under the influence and promoted safe boating practices nationwide.

BOATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE DETECTION & ENFORCEMENT TRAINING

Through a one-year federal grant, NASBLA's BOAT Program continued advancing impaired boating enforcement by expanding access to specialized Boating Under the Influence (BUI)/ Seated Battery of Standardized Field Sobriety Testing training. During FFY 2026, the grant funded three Train-the-Trainer courses, one Advanced BUI course and the annual instructor currency workshop, strengthening instructor capacity and expanding training in states with limited resources and higher impaired boating rates. The program also updated all BUI course manuals to reflect current legal standards, instructional best practices and field operations. A key milestone was the BOAT Program's first partnership with Operation Dry Water, delivering specialized BUI training immediately before the national enforcement campaign. This collaboration equipped officers with standardized enforcement techniques for the nation's largest coordinated impaired boating enforcement initiative. NASBLA has submitted additional grant funding to further expand the program and increase its presence at national impaired boating and traffic safety conferences.



NATIONAL BOATING EDUCATION STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

The National Boating Standards Panel (BSP) published ANSI/NASBLA 1200-2026 K-12 Personal Flotation Device (PFD) Education Standard on April 23, 2026. Led by Kelli Toth, the K-12 PFD group continued to meet regularly and completed the first draft of the accompanying technical report. This standard establishes entry-level knowledge for students in kindergarten through 12th grade on the importance of wearing PFDs and sets minimum requirements for course development, with flexibility for program- and age-specific adaptation. The Towed Water Sports Education Standard work group, led by Gwendolynn Flynn, met weekly and completed a draft that will go out for public comment following the 2026 NASBLA Annual Conference. This standard encompasses the knowledge, safety principles, and best practices needed to reduce risk, minimize conflicts, and address environmental concerns related to towed watersports.

STAGED BOATING COLLISIONS AND VIDEO DOCUMENTATION

Through a one-year federal grant, NASBLA's BOAT Program advanced the National Standard for boating incident investigation through one of the program's most innovative projects. During FFY 2026, the grant supported three full-scale staged vessel collisions in Nashville, Tennessee, bringing together subject matter experts from member states and industry partners to create realistic maritime collision scenarios under controlled conditions. As the first project of its kind, each collision incorporated G-force impact sensors, onboard and shore-based cameras, aerial drones, multiple GPS navigation systems and lifelike mannequins to capture comprehensive investigative data. The resulting dataset provides investigators with unprecedented insight into vessel dynamics, collision forces, GPS evidence and crash reconstruction.

As the ANSI standards developer for boating incident investigation, the BOAT Program is incorporating these validated collision scenarios into its Level II Boating Incident Investigation course, creating realistic, evidence-based case studies that strengthen the National Standard, improve investigative accuracy and support more defensible case development nationwide.



STANDARDIZING STATE RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY STATUTES AND REGULATIONS: NASBLA AND THE STATES

NASBLA brings together the states' recreational boating safety agencies to promote standardization and reciprocity — a critical function, as state programs are responsible for carrying out more than 95 percent of all recreational boating safety expenditures nationwide.

This grant provides funding to help NASBLA develop and share model policies, standards, best practices and implementation guidance through its national policy committees, with a focus on boating incident reporting, boating under the influence, boater education and life jacket requirements. It also supports NASBLA's coordination of collaborative training and professional development opportunities, including the State RBS Workshop, the RBS Leadership Academy and the NASBLA Annual Conference.





NASBLA EVENTS

BOAT PROGRAM NATIONAL INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

The Boat Operations and Training (BOAT) Program welcomed more than 70 instructors, U.S. Coast Guard representatives, program managers and industry partners to Clearwater Beach, Florida, in December 2025 for its annual Instructor Development Workshop. The two-day event focused on strengthening instructional excellence, sharing best practices and reinforcing the National Standard for maritime training.

Sessions emphasized technical proficiency and effective adult learning, covering learner engagement, classroom leadership, boating incident analysis, instructional methodology and practical strategies for preparing students for real-world maritime operations.

Operational partnerships remained a central focus. U.S. Coast Guard leadership discussed the importance of maintaining a single National Standard for maritime training to strengthen interoperability among federal, state, local, tribal and territorial agencies. Industry partners, including Teledyne FLIR and SAFE Boats International, highlighted emerging technologies, while instructors received curriculum updates reflecting current doctrine and evolving operational requirements.

A highlight of the workshop was the presentation of the 2025 NASBLA BOAT Program Instructor of the Year Award to Dave Guthrie. Selected through a peer nomination process, Guthrie was recognized for his instructional excellence, mentorship and leadership in advancing maritime training. He received a gear bag with premium safety equipment provided by the BOAT Program's longtime equipment sponsor, First Watch.

The Instructor Development Workshop remains a key investment in maintaining instructional quality nationwide by bringing instructors together to strengthen partnerships, share best practices and deliver consistent, high-quality maritime training.



STATE RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY (RBS) WORKSHOP

The 2026 NASBLA State Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Workshop was held March 10-11, 2026, in Lexington, Kentucky. The annual two-day event brought together state boating authorities and national partners to discuss current and emerging issues impacting recreational boating safety programs across the country.



The workshop provided educational sessions, collaborative discussions and peer-to-peer exchanges focused on strengthening state boating safety programs. Participants shared ideas, explored common challenges and discussed strategies to advance recreational boating safety efforts at the state and national levels.

This year's agenda featured updates on the modernization of the Boating Accident Report Database (BARD), state program strengths and challenges, NASBLA's Strategic Plan and future priorities, and the growing impacts of wake boats.

The State RBS Workshop continued to serve as an important forum for boating authorities to exchange knowledge, strengthen professional relationships and collaborate on shared challenges.



POLICY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The six NASBLA policy committees met March 12, 2026, in Lexington, Kentucky, following the NASBLA State Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Workshop. The annual meetings provided members an opportunity to collaborate and discuss initiatives supporting recreational boating safety programs.

The committees — Education & Outreach, Enforcement & Training, Engineering, Reporting & Analysis (ERAC), Finance & Grants, Paddlesports, and Vessel Identification, Registration & Titling (VIRT) — reviewed ongoing initiatives, provided updates on current charges and projects and identified priorities for the upcoming committee year to advance NASBLA's mission.

The committee meetings served as a valuable forum for sharing knowledge, aligning efforts across programs and strengthening support for state boating authorities.



RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY (RBS) LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

NASBLA hosted its 16th annual Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Leadership Academy May 31 through June 4, 2026, in Lexington, Kentucky. Twenty-three participants attended the weeklong program designed to develop future leaders within the recreational boating safety community.

Participants engaged with representatives from NASBLA, the U.S. Coast Guard and other subject matter experts on topics including the National Recreational Boating Safety State Grant Program, the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, boating safety education, partnerships and NASBLA member resources.

The Leadership Academy provided opportunities for shared learning, discussions and peer networking while preparing participants for leadership roles within their states, NASBLA and the national RBS community. The 2026 class will be formally recognized during the NASBLA Business Meeting at the Annual Conference on Sept. 16 in Knoxville, Tennessee.

OPERATION DRY WATER

To launch the 2026 Operation Dry Water (ODW) campaign, California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways partnered with NASBLA, the U.S. Coast Guard, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Mohave County Sheriff's Office and Mothers Against Drunk Driving to host the National Kickoff Event in Lake Havasu City, Arizona.

The kickoff included a press conference on June 29 at the London Bridge Resort Conference Room and a public outreach event on June 30 at London Bridge Beach.

Operation Dry Water's nationwide heightened awareness and enforcement weekend took place July 3-5, 2026. The annual campaign brings together law enforcement agencies and boating safety advocates across the country to educate boaters and reduce impaired boating incidents through outreach and enforcement efforts.

2026 campaign results will be published following the NASBLA Annual Conference.



OPERATION DRY WATER

2025 AWARDS

OPERATION DRY WATER OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Game Warden Cpl. Ryan Locke of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division was named the 2025 Operation Dry Water Officer of the Year. During the 72-hour Operation Dry Water weekend, Locke led a multiagency enforcement effort on Lake Lanier that resulted in hundreds of vessel checks, numerous citations and arrests. He personally accounted for more than 60% of his region's and 35% of Georgia's boating under the influence (BUI) arrests. Beyond Operation Dry Water, Locke continued advancing boating safety through enforcement and public education efforts across the state.



REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARDS: SOUTHERN & WESTERN REGIONS

The 2025 Southern Region Law Enforcement Award was presented to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) District 21. During the three-day Operation Dry Water weekend, officers devoted more than 630 patrol hours across 11 counties and five major lakes, resulting in 2,348 vessel checks, 265 citations and warnings, and eight boating under the influence (BUI) arrests.



The 2025 Western Region Law Enforcement Award was presented to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department Marine Enforcement Unit. During the three-day Operation Dry Water weekend, officers conducted 120 enforcement stops, contacted more than 1,000 boaters and made eight BUI arrests on the Colorado River and Lake Havasu.



MEDIA AWARD

The 2025 Operation Dry Water Media Award was presented to the Spotsylvania County Sheriff's Office. Deputy Briann Lussier accepted the award, recognizing the agency's commitment to boating safety education and outreach. Through social media, radio partnerships and community engagement efforts, the Sheriff's Office promoted boating under the influence (BUI) prevention and safe boating leading up to the Fourth of July weekend, during which Spotsylvania County reported no boating incidents, fatalities or drownings.





NASBLA

2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE & BUSINESS MEETING

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources hosted NASBLA's 66th Annual Conference in Des Moines, Iowa, Sept. 16-18, 2025. The conference kicked off Tuesday, Sept. 16, with opening ceremonies and the chair's reception. General and breakout sessions began Wednesday, Sept. 17, focusing on program administration, law enforcement, education and outreach, training, and other emerging issues in recreational boating safety. The annual NASBLA Awards Banquet also recognized educators, law enforcement officers, and individuals whose leadership and service have advanced recreational boating safety.

The NASBLA Annual Business Meeting took place Wednesday, Sept. 17, and included policy committee reports, recognition of Leadership Academy graduates, election of Executive Board members, and other Association business. Chris Jones was elected NASBLA chair for 2025-26. Matt Majors was elected vice chair, and Danny Rodriguez was elected treasurer. Stacey Brown, Joe McCullough, Jason Russo, and David Trader were elected to the Executive Board.

Representatives from 51 states and territories attended the 2025 NASBLA Annual Conference. The event brought together local, state and federal recreational boating safety professionals, industry leaders and nonprofit organizations to exchange ideas, address emerging challenges and strengthen partnerships that support safer recreational boating nationwide.



2025 NATIONAL AWARDS

To advance its mission, NASBLA relies on the dedication, expertise and partnership of countless individuals and organizations. In recognition of their outstanding contributions to recreational boating safety, NASBLA annually honors exceptional individuals and groups through its awards program during the Annual Conference. These awards celebrate excellence, leadership and service across the recreational boating safety community.

JOHN M. JOHNSON LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The John M. Johnson Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes individuals who have devoted their careers to advancing recreational boating safety and whose contributions have made a significant and lasting impact on the boating community.

The 2025 John M. Johnson Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to **Pamela J. Doty** of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in recognition of her more than 30 years of service and leadership in water safety. Throughout her career, Pamela championed national boating and water safety initiatives, expanded public education efforts for boaters of all ages, and helped shape programs and partnerships that continue to save lives. Her unwavering dedication has made America's waterways safer and strengthened the nation's boating safety community.



Pamela J. Doty

CHAIR'S AWARD

The NASBLA Chair's Award recognizes individuals selected by the outgoing chair for their outstanding contributions to recreational boating safety and the association during their term.

NASBLA Chair Joe McCullough presented the 2025 Chair's Award to **Angela Boone**, NASBLA's office manager, for her exceptional dedication and service to NASBLA. Working tirelessly behind the scenes, Angela played a vital role in supporting the organization's operations, events and members. Her professionalism, attention to detail and unwavering commitment made her an invaluable part of the NASBLA team.



Angela Boone

BOATING SAFETY AWARD

The Boating Safety Award recognizes a state or local government individual, other than a boating law administrator, who has demonstrated outstanding performance and contributions to recreational boating safety.

The 2025 Boating Safety Awards were presented to **Officer Nicholas Apodaca** and **Officer Joseph Apodaca** of New Mexico State Parks. Both officers demonstrated exceptional dedication to boating safety through their service as NASBLA BOAT Program trainers, helping deliver critical marine law enforcement training across New Mexico. As instructors for Inland Boat Operation & Marine Patrol Fundamentals and Officer Water Survival courses, they played a key role in advancing officer preparedness and professional development. Officer Nicholas Apodaca also contributed significantly to boater education efforts throughout the state, helping educate and certify boaters and promote safer recreational boating practices. Their commitment to training, education and boating safety made a lasting impact on New Mexico's boating community.

NASBLA AWARD

The NASBLA Award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to the association or to the advancement of recreational boating safety at the national, state or local level.

The 2025 NASBLA Award was presented to **Todd Radabaugh** in recognition of his outstanding leadership and dedication to boating under the influence prevention and enforcement. As NASBLA's Boating Under the Influence Program Manager, Todd has strengthened national training programs, expanded law enforcement and prosecutor education, and played a key role in advancing impaired boating enforcement initiatives, including Operation Dry Water. His decades of service and commitment to boating safety have had a lasting impact on the recreational boating community nationwide.



L. DANIEL MAXIM AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Established in 2018, the L. Daniel Maxim Award for Distinguished Service recognizes individuals whose contributions advance recreational boating safety through research, data analysis and the application of scientific principles.

The 2025 L. Daniel Maxim Award was presented to **Susan Weber** of the U.S. Coast Guard Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety in recognition of her 17 years of dedicated service to improving recreational boating safety data and reporting. Through her leadership in national boating incident reporting initiatives, management of the Boating Accident Report Database, and longstanding collaboration with NASBLA and state boating programs, Susan has played a pivotal role in strengthening data quality, informing policy decisions and advancing boating safety nationwide.

WILLIAM B. GARNER LEADERSHIP AWARD

Established in honor of William B. Garner, the Garner Leadership Award recognizes state and federal government leaders whose outstanding efforts have advanced recreational boating safety policy and legislation.

The 2025 William B. Garner Leadership Award was presented to **Massachusetts State Representative Kathleen R. LaNatra** and **Massachusetts State Senator Susan L. Moran** for their leadership in advancing the Hanson-Milone Boater Safety Act. Signed into law in January 2025, the legislation established mandatory boater safety education requirements for motorboat and personal watercraft operators in Massachusetts and updated the state's boating safety equipment standards. Through their persistence, collaboration and commitment to public safety, Representative LaNatra and Senator Moran helped enact a landmark law that will improve boating safety and save lives for generations to come.

PAMELA S. DILLON BOATING EDUCATORS OF THE YEAR

The Pamela S. Dillon Boating Educator of the Year Award recognizes outstanding educators and volunteers who have made significant contributions to boating safety through education, outreach and community engagement. Renamed in 2019 in honor of longtime NASBLA Education and Standards Director Pamela S. Dillon, the award celebrates individuals who go above and beyond to promote safe boating practices.

The 2025 Northern Region Educator of the Year is **Natural Resources Officer Travis Ferguson** of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Watercraft. Throughout his 13-year career, he has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to boating safety education through classroom instruction, law enforcement training and community outreach efforts across Ohio.

Wildlife Officer Hunter Wisecarver of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency was named the 2025 Southern Region Educator of the Year. Through boating safety courses, public outreach programs and on-the-water education efforts, he has made a significant impact on boating safety throughout Tennessee while mentoring the next generation of officers and boaters.

The 2025 Western Region and National Boating Educator of the Year is **Annie Grenier** of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Office of Boating Safety. Since 2016, she has led innovative boating safety initiatives reaching thousands of Alaskans each year, including the Kids Don't Float program, cold-water paddling education and statewide partnerships that promote safe and responsible boating practices. Her leadership and dedication have strengthened boating safety education throughout Alaska and beyond.



Natural Resources
Officer Travis Ferguson



Wildlife Officer
Hunter Wisecarver



Annie Grenier

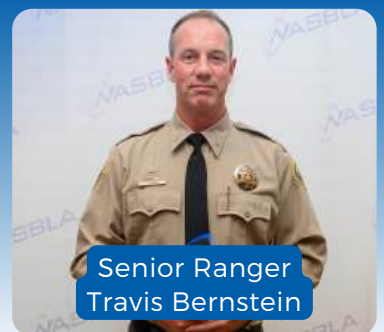
BUTCH POTTS BOATING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS OF THE YEAR

The Butch Potts Boating Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award, generously sponsored by SAFE Boats International, recognizes commissioned, certified and sworn law enforcement officers who have made outstanding contributions to recreational boating safety through enforcement, education, search and rescue, boating under the influence enforcement, outreach and community service. The award honors officers who demonstrate exceptional dedication to protecting the boating public and advancing recreational boating safety.

The 2025 Northern Region Officer of the Year is **Conservation Officer Nick Rocca** of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Through his leadership in officer training, year-round boating safety enforcement and public education, he has helped strengthen boating safety while mentoring the next generation of conservation officers.

Senior Trooper Jacob Manning of the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency Marine Patrol Division was named the 2025 Southern Region and National Officer of the Year. His outstanding record of boating safety enforcement, lifesaving rescues, boating under the influence enforcement and public outreach has made a lasting impact on boating safety throughout Alabama while setting a high standard for marine law enforcement nationwide.

The 2025 Western Region Officer of the Year is **Senior Ranger Travis Bernstein** of Larimer County Natural Resources. Through his leadership in boating safety training, rescue preparedness and officer development, he has strengthened marine patrol operations and enhanced public safety on Colorado's waterways.





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2026 Annual Report

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