



Education & Outreach Committee Final Report

2024-2025 Committee Charges, Membership, and Next Cycle Recommendations

August 7, 2025

**Chair: Chelsea Hofmeier, Kansas Vice Chair:
Brian Rehwinkel, Florida**

NASBLA Education & Outreach Committee Charter

Education & Outreach Vision Statement

The Education and Outreach Committee will provide guidance, support, and expertise to advance boating safety and develop national education and outreach program recommendations.

Program recommendations will:

- *Advance the strategic plans of the National Recreational Boating Safety Program and NASBLA;*
- *Incorporate best practices and current research;*
- *Support the implementation of national standards for boating education;*
- *Identify effective innovations in education and outreach;*
- *Develop communication strategies using targeted marketing and educational tactics; and*
- *Connect the public, member organizations and stakeholders with the products of the committee and others.*

Education & Outreach Committee members are assembled into project teams, taking the lead on specific, assigned charges and monitoring activities.

This report provides a summary of committee deliverables and work products for the 2024 -2025 Committee year.

Ongoing Projects and Programs

The following projects fall outside the Committee Charge Team process but remain an integral part of the Committee work for 2024-2025:

1. Boating Education Advisory Panel (BEAP)

BEAP was formed in 1980 with the purpose of serving as a forum for statewide education coordinators to share ideas, support one another, and meet face-to-face once a year. In 2022, the NASBLA Executive Board re-imagined BEAP to meet the needs of current and future boating safety education.

BEAP is now a voluntary consensus body authorized by the NASBLA Executive Board. The panel's mission is to strengthen boating safety through professional development opportunities for recreational boating educators. BEAP administers events, credentialing programs, and training for boating educators.

Applications for panel membership are accepted year-round. The NASBLA Executive Board selects and announces members as terms expire or vacancies occur.

This year, BEAP planned and coordinated the second annual Education Seminar, which took place in Lexington, KY, on March 14 – 15, 2025. The Seminar was a one-and-a-half-day event for recreational boating safety education professionals. Attendees experienced hands-on learning about pyrotechnical vs electronic visual distress signals, life jackets, outreach & education activities, social media marketing, and more.

2. International Boating & Water Safety Summit (IBWSS)

The NASBLA committees are invited when necessary to assist with planning the International Boating and Water Safety Summit (IBWSS).

3. Boating Education Toolkit

Continue updating the living documents: NASBLA Boating Education Coordinator Quick Reference Guide, Outreach Activities, and Product Resource lists. Continue to work with NASBLA staff to update the webpage so states and other boating education partners can access the materials. E&O and Paddlesports Chairs and Vice Chairs, along with NASBLA staff, continue facilitating the Water Cooler meetings with new topics and/or guest speakers every month.

4. Seal of Safe Boating Practices

The Chair of the Committee will identify three individuals and one alternate as the review team for projects submitted as needed.

5. NASBLA Test Questions

The committee will continue to gather test questions to add to the test question pool when needed. This Committee cycle, the Charge met nearly every week to create and approve a pool of test questions.

6. Knowledge Management

The Committee will continue to work with NASBLA staff to update and make recommendations for the upkeep and improvement of NASBLA's Dashboards and website.

2024 - 2025 Education & Outreach Committee Charges

E&O_2023_1: Boating Education Toolkit Charge Leader: Melissa Miranda (CA)

Charge: Continue updating the living documents: NASBLA Boating Education Coordinator Quick Reference Guide, Outreach Activities, and Product Resource lists. Continue working with NASBLA staff to update the webpage so states and other boating education partners can access the materials. E&O and Paddlesports Chairs and Vice Chairs, along with NASBLA staff, continue to facilitate the Water Cooler meetings, featuring new topics and/or guest speakers every month.

Accomplishments:

- The Charge Team met twice (2) during the 2024-2025 session.
- Ten (10) "Water Cooler" meetings took place. Topics of discussion included state education, agency outreach projects, boat shows, Boating Education Seminar planning, and other boating-related topics.

Recommendations:

- This Charge should continue during the 2025 - 2026 session as it is under the Ongoing Projects and Program section of this report.

EO_2025_2: Boating Education Student Assessment Question Bank: Charge Leader: Stephen Barr (ME)

Charge: The Committee will continue to gather test questions to add to the test question pool. The Charge team will review the existing student assessment questions and ensure they align with the ANSI / NASBLA Standards. The Charge Team will create a bank of questions containing a minimum of five times the number of questions prescribed for each category in the NASBLA Policy for Course Delivery Platforms and Student Assessments for a Boating Safety Education Course, Section 9, Assessment Standard-3 Question Weights. Once the new Boating Education Student Assessment Question Bank is established, the Charge Team will review it each year and submit a new version to offer the course providers a variety of questions as their courses come up for NASBLA review.

Accomplishments:

- Met thirty-one (31) times during the 2024-2025 session.
- As of August 4, 2025, finished writing questions for twenty-six (26) of the thirty-seven (37) question categories by meeting or exceeding the required number of questions for each category in the test pool. The Charge Team has written many draft questions and approved 249 questions to date.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that this Charge continue its work during the next committee cycle. The Charge Team has worked extremely hard to ensure that all the approved questions in the pool consistently follow the guidelines outlined in Section 9: Requirements for Student Assessments in the NASBLA Policy for Course Delivery Platforms and Student Assessments for a Boating Safety Education Course.

They strive to ensure that all the approved questions are uniform and provide a fair and quality assessment of the students' understanding of each question category. The Charge Team is excited about the progress they have made and looks forward to completing this Charge and putting the pool of questions into regular use.

EO_2023_3: Collaborative Boat Livery Boating Education Opportunities: Charge Leader: Donna Seymour / Revelle (MD)

This Charge focuses on understanding and improving safety in boat rental operations across the United States. The initiative recognizes that boat rental operations face unique challenges that require specialized solutions and collaborative approaches. To help understand the issues that states face regarding the livery industry, the Charge

Team developed and is in the process of distributing the survey.

From this research, the Team will recommend a practical approach to reducing the number of incidents related to the livery industry. The long-term vision is to establish NASBLA as a leader in boat rental safety reform, creating stronger relationships within the industry that will benefit both individual states and the broader boating community.

Accomplishments:

- Met nine (9) times during the 2024-2025 session.
- Consulted with NASBLA's Engineering, Reporting & Analysis Committee (ERAC).
- Completed a thirteen-question survey
- Is in the process of distributing the survey

Recommendations:

It is recommended that this Charge continue its work during the next committee cycle. During the 2025 – 2026 cycle, the Charge Team will be able to complete the distribution of the survey, analyze the results, and make recommendations about moving forward.

EO_2025_4: Boating Fun Index (BFI): Charge Leaders: Cody Gray (IN) and Andy Foos (OH)

The Boating Fun Index charge aims to create a simple, standardized rating system that weather forecasters and media can use to help boaters determine if conditions are safe for a day on the water. Similar to how the UV Index helps people decide on sun protection, the BFI would give recreational boaters—especially newcomers who may not know how to read weather conditions—an easy way to make smart go/no-go decisions before heading out. The index would factor in weather conditions, location-specific risks, and general boating safety concerns to provide a clear, user-friendly rating that anyone can understand.

The primary goal is to prevent boating accidents, particularly among inexperienced boaters who often overestimate their skills or fail to recognize dangerous conditions. By presenting safety information in a "fun-to-safety" scale format, the BFI makes crucial safety messages less intimidating and more accessible to the public. The long-term vision is to have this tool widely adopted by weather organizations, media outlets, and boating groups nationwide, creating a standardized approach to communicating boating safety that could significantly reduce incidents and improve real-time decision-making among recreational boaters.

Accomplishments:

- Met four (4) times during the 2024-2025 session.
- The Team developed a list of key environmental factors that should be considered when creating a BFI.
- The Team is at a point where they believe they need to consult weather experts.
- The Team has been able to make contact with a meteorologist at the National Weather Service and a local news organization. They are in the process of organizing meetings with these professionals.

Recommendations:

The Charge team sees the value and potential of BFI, and it is recommended that this Charge continue its work during the next committee cycle.

EO_2024_5: Standardized Inflatable Life Jacket Wear Education and Enforcement Best Practice: Charge Leaders: Peg Phillips (NSBC) and Brian Rehwinkel (FL)

This charge addresses the confusing patchwork of rules and enforcement practices surrounding inflatable life jackets across different states. Currently, boating educators and law enforcement officers often receive mixed messages about how inflatable personal flotation devices should be worn and when they meet

legal requirements, creating inconsistency that undermines public safety. The situation is becoming more urgent with the Coast Guard approval of Level 50 PFDs and the new rules regarding inflatable PFDs. These factors will add another layer of complexity to an already confusing landscape. Without clear, unified guidance, this could waste the best opportunity in decades to get more boaters actually to wear life jackets.

The Charge Team tackled this problem by surveying state agencies nationwide to understand current practices and challenges. From this research, the team was able to create a comprehensive formula that gives both educators, law enforcement, and the public clear, consistent PFD wearage guidelines.

The Charge Team's most notable achievement was developing the innovative "Ser CAPTAIN" formula for standardized inflatable life jacket wear education and enforcement. This is a logical, legally grounded approach that helps boating educators, law enforcement officers, and the public ensure proper personal flotation device use. The Life Jacket Association endorsed this initiative with a formal letter of support following the committee's presentation at their annual conference in May 2025.

Accomplishments:

- Met five (5) times during the 2024-2025 session.
- Developing the innovative "Ser CAPTAIN" formula for standardized inflatable life jacket wear education and enforcement.
- Introduced the formula to the Life Jacket Association during a presentation at the Association's annual conference in May 2025
- Received a letter supporting the use of the "Ser CAPTAIN" formula from the Life Jacket Association

Recommendations:

Although the development of a logical, legally grounded approach that helps boating educators, law enforcement officers, and the public ensure proper personal flotation devices are used correctly completes the task of this Charge. It is recommended that the Charge continue to promote its use and adoption by the boating education and law enforcement communities.

2025 Education & Outreach Committee Meetings

- The full Education & Outreach Committee met on three (3) occasions to discuss Charge Team products and other Committee matters. Two (2) of the meetings were virtual meetings, and one (1) was a full day of in-person meetings on March 13, 2025, in Lexington, Ky.
- The Boating Education Advisory Panel (BEAP) met thirteen (13) times during the 2024-2025 session. They organized the second annual Education Seminar, which took place in Lexington, KY, on March 14 - 15, 2025. The Seminar was a one-and-a-half-day event for recreational boating safety education professionals. Attendees experienced hands-on learning about pyrotechnical vs electronic visual distress signals, life jackets, outreach & education activities, social media marketing, and more.