



STATE OF WASHINGTON

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

November 2008

**Item #5: Improving Coordination of State Services to Recreational Boaters**

**Prepared By:** Jim Eychaner, Senior Policy Specialist

**Presented By:** Jim Eychaner, Senior Policy Specialist

**Approved by the Director:**

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**Proposed Action: Briefing**

**Summary**

At its January 2008 board meeting, the Board authorized the expenditure of \$10,000 to hire a facilitator to bring the various state agencies with boating programs together to identify areas for improved service delivery. Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff will review the report "Improving Coordination of State Services to Recreational Boaters" submitted by the facilitator from Ross and Associates.

**Background**

On January 15, 2008, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (Board) accepted an independent assessment of Washington State boaters' needs by contractor Responsive Management. The report is called the *Washington Boater Needs Assessment*.

One finding of the report was that:

"... there are multiple entities administering various aspects of boating programs and services, and there is a *perception* of some fragmentation of services. Certainly, the study found that the coordination among the agencies involved was seen as a problem among many boating stakeholders—both agency personnel and boating service providers."



The report went on to suggest that:

“...greater levels of coordination and communication are necessary among the entities providing boating services and programs in Washington—perhaps a multi-agency administrative body.”

At the same meeting, the Board approved funds from the Boating Activities Account for the RCO to contract with a facilitator to help state agencies develop recommendations that would improve the coordination of their boating and boating-related programs. The agencies to be involved: RCO, State Parks, the Department of Natural Resources, and Fish and Wildlife.

RCO staff used an open competitive process to find a qualified contractor to develop an independent set of recommendations. The contractor, Ross and Associates, managed a process that included the state agencies as well as leaders of the recreational boating community. The process resulted in the attached report.

## **Analysis**

The report from Ross and Associates (“Ross report”) recommends ten actions for improving agency activities related to recreational boating services and programs. The recommendations, which are listed below, are based on suggestions provided by agency staff and leaders of the boating community.

1. Establish an agency boating committee. The Ross report recommends that agencies assign staff to attend quarterly coordinating meetings. Staff would cooperate on projects (e.g., web site information) and share information.
2. Create snapshots of the budgets for recreational boating programs and share across agencies and with boating groups. Boating groups have asked for this basic information on the use of “boater” money in state government.
3. Create a statewide GIS map layer showing public boating facilities. Several agencies have different sets of data available. Collating the data should result in a layer that user can analyze for service areas and other characteristics.
4. Establish a cross-agency web portal for boaters. The “Boater Needs Study” conducted by Responsive Management found that boaters want improved information on the Internet.
5. Work with the recreational boating community to establish a regular conference on recreational boating services. RCO’s participation in a state trails conference is a model for this activity.

6. Establish an advisory task force on model standards for the design and construction of overwater structures and to assess state boating infrastructure. Several agencies are in the early stages of negotiating best construction practices to protect water quality. Determining model standards can help avoid conflicts with permitting agencies. Model standards also can help agencies assess the condition of their facilities.
7. Establish additional shared Washington Conservation Corps crews for maintenance at boating access sites. WDFW in particular believes that additional crews would be of great value to the boating public through site maintenance.
8. Coordinate information for potential grantees. State Parks and RCO both provide grant funds that support boating activities. The agencies see the need to coordinate the delivery of information.
9. Ensure that Clean Vessel Account (CVA) grant funds can be used to support construction, operation, and maintenance of upland facilities. CVA grants focus on pump-out units, but most of the motor boat fleet does not use pump-outs.
10. Better integrate WDFW enforcement efforts with the state enforcement program. WDFW is not currently eligible for boater safety grants through State Parks.

Due to our long support from and association with recreational boating, RCO staff volunteered to facilitate five of the recommendations (1, 3, 4, 5, and 6).

### **Next Steps**

RCO staff will be holding a meeting in mid-November with the agencies and interested stakeholders to begin discussions about prioritization, availability of funding and implementation of these recommendations.

### **Attachments**

- A. DRAFT report *Improving Coordination of State Services to Recreational Boaters*, prepared by Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Ltd.



# ***Improving Coordination of State Services to Recreational Boaters***

**Prepared for the Washington State Recreation  
and Conservation Office**

October 31, 2008

*DRAFT*

*Prepared by Ross & Associates Environmental  
Consulting, Ltd.*

# ***Improving Coordination of State Services to Recreational Boaters***

## **Executive Summary**

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In the summer of 2008 the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) contracted for a neutral, third-party facilitator to conduct background interviews and research to understand the jurisdictional roles and responsibilities of the four main state agencies with responsibilities to provide services to recreational boaters and identify recommendations for improved agency coordination. In addition to RCO, these agencies are Washington State Parks (Parks), the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Nine interviews were carried out: four interviews with staff and leadership in state agencies with responsibilities to provide boating services, and five interviews with stakeholders. This resulted in ten specific recommendations to improve coordination of boating services.

1. Establish an Agency Boating Committee (ABC).
2. Create a snapshot of the budgets (money in and money out) for recreational boating programs and share across agencies and with boating groups.
3. Create a state-wide GIS map layer showing public boating facilities statewide.
4. Establish a cross-agency web portal for recreational boaters.
5. Work with the recreational boating community to establish a regular conference on recreational boating services.
6. Establish an advisory task force on model design and construction standards (or best practices) for overwater structures and assess state boating infrastructure.
7. Establish additional shared Washington Conservation Corps crews for maintenance at boating access sites.
8. Coordinate information for potential grantees.
9. Ensure Clean Vessel Account grant funding can be used to support construction, operation, and maintenance of upland facilities.
10. Better integrate WDFW enforcement efforts with the state enforcement program.
11. Reach out to stakeholders on boating safety law enforcement coordination.

## Background & Process Overview

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In the summer of 2008 the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) contracted for a neutral, third-party facilitator to conduct background interviews and research to understand the jurisdictional roles and responsibilities of the four main state agencies with responsibilities to provide services to recreational boaters and identify recommendations for improved agency coordination. In addition to RCO, these agencies are Washington State Parks (Parks), the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). The focus of this effort generally was on coordination of agencies with major responsibilities for grant processes, programs that provide boating access, and enforcement programs; for that reason the Washington Department of Licensing (which licenses boats) and the Washington Department of Ecology (which has responsibilities around pollution prevention education and outreach and spill response) were not included. The process was initiated as part of the follow up to a 2007 needs assessment survey of Washington State boaters sponsored by RCO in which many of the boating stakeholders interviewed, both agency personnel and boating service providers, expressed concern over a lack of coordination among the state agencies charged with providing recreational boating services.

The process involved review of both the 2007 needs assessment and a 2006 boaters survey sponsored by Parks and interviews with stakeholders and with staff and decision makers in state agencies that provide boating services. A list of potential opportunities to improve coordination was developed from the interview results, the list was discussed with state agency boating coordinators and management, and the recommendations were drawn from this list.

## Interview Process & Results

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Nine interviews were carried out: four interviews with staff and leadership in state agencies with responsibilities to provide boating services, and five interviews with stakeholders. A list of interviews can be found in Appendix 1.

Most interviews were carried out in person or by telephone in July and August 2008. A few interviews took place in September 2008. Interviews were approximately 2 hours in length and were guided by a standard set of interview questions. Interviewees were asked about their role(s), responsibilities, and involvement with the Washington recreational boating community, boating services, problems in services, and opportunities for improvement. The full set of interview questions can be found in Appendix 2.

In general, interviewees, particularly interviewees in state agencies, felt that provision of services to recreational boaters was working well and was improving. No major reorganizations of services or gaps in services were identified. At the same time, a number of challenges were identified, as described below.

Lack of funding. Interviewees in general believed that there is not adequate funding for key services and programs, particularly operating and maintaining boating access areas and enforcement of boating safety requirements. Concerns about funding were, by far, the concerns raised most often by all interviewees.

The following specific opportunities to increase understanding of the statewide recreational boating funding picture and improve efficiency were described in the interviews.

- Identification of boating-related revenue and additional transparency about how the revenue is returned to boating services.
- Assessment of funding sources and spending.
- Coordination of agency budget priorities and requests.
- Ensure Washington State is applying aggressively for any available federal dollars.
- Identify and reduce any transaction costs associated with moving money between agencies.
- Consider shared Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) crews to provide maintenance across agency boating access sites statewide.
- Consider mechanisms such as land swap to transfer responsibility for access points between agencies or to local governments where appropriate.

In addition, interviews discussed the potential to increase the overall level of funding for recreational boating services; this was raised particularly by stakeholders outside state government who expressed the concern that moneys paid by boaters as taxes and use fees were not fully returned to services to the boating community.

Fragmentation of services/decentralized decision making. Some interviewees expressed concern that responsibilities for recreational boating services were spread too thinly across too many agencies and that this fragmentation could decrease efficiency, result in missed opportunities, and make it less likely that true priorities would be identified. Interviewees expressed this as “no one has their eye on the complete picture” or “no one is responsible for the big picture.” Some interviewees (particularly those from outside state government) favored consolidating recreational boating services into a separate agency or board. Other interviewees favored less dramatic measures to improve coordination such as a coordination board or body.

The following specific opportunities to increase coordination and collaboration were described in the interviews.

- Annual or semi-annual planning and priority-setting meetings for boating programs across state agencies.
- More explicit definition of roles through an MOA/MOU.
- A boating commission or oversight board and/or a dedicated boating agency.
- Increase transparency of agency roles and responsibilities to the recreational boating community.
- Reach out to environmental agencies to ensure consistent messaging and incorporation of environmental requirements/best practices in boating publications.

Enforcement programs. Interviewees expressed two types of concern about enforcement programs. First, state agency personnel were concerned about the status of the WDFW boating enforcement program. WDFW enforcement officers routinely make contact with boaters and carry out safety inspections and conduct other enforcement-related activities. WDFW is prohibited from receiving enforcement, education, training, and equipment funding from vessel registration fees because these fees can be allocated only to local boating programs. In addition, WDFW contacts with boaters are not currently being counted towards the State's total contacts, which could reduce the amount of Federal grant funding for which the State is eligible. Second, stakeholders from the law enforcement community in particular were interested in more of a role in the state enforcement program; they felt that additional state funding should be made available for local law enforcement programs (rather than state programs) and that, at a minimum, stable annual funding should be provided to support at least one full-time boating enforcement officer in each of the counties with major boating activities.

The following specific opportunities to increase coordination and collaboration were described in the interviews.

- Ensure contacts made by state agencies towards WA state totals.
- Provide additional transparency about how enforcement program money is allocated across local programs.
- Provide additional funding to local enforcement programs.

The grant process. There was some confusion among interviewees about what grants are available, and how those grants might work together. There also was some confusion about the extent to which grant funding could be made available for operation and maintenance of boating access facilities, particularly upland facilities such as restrooms. Among state agencies there were concerns both that preparation of grant applications and the grant process was too resource intensive (heard from agencies that receive grants) and that projects were not adequately planned or implemented, resulting in grant administration challenges (heard from agencies that make grants).

The following specific opportunities to increase coordination and collaboration were described in the interviews.

- Streamline review for grants to state agencies.
- Provide one-stop information for potential applicants to help them see which grant programs might be appropriate and how the grant programs work together.
- Coordinate grant application and review cycles across grant-making agencies.
- Develop model design standards for common types of facilities.

Difficulty accessing information. Both state agency and non-government interviewees were concerned that information about boating services, requirements, and access points can be difficult to find and is often "buried" in numerous individual state agency websites. Similarly there was concern about

coordination across state agencies on consistent messages to recreational boaters, and coordination and cross-agency “posting” in state publications that target the boating community.

The following specific opportunities to increase coordination and collaboration were described in the interviews.

- Cross links to and from agency websites.
- One-stop, easy-to-use web portal such as [www.boat.wa.gov](http://www.boat.wa.gov).
- Consistent key messages across agency publications and joint publications.

Advisory committees and accountability. Some interviewees were unsure of the roles of the various state advisory committees and questioned the need for so many committees. Other interviewees were concerned that the advisory committees do not have a decision making or oversight role and that, therefore, there is no mechanism to hold state agencies accountable to the boating community.

The following specific opportunities to increase coordination and collaboration were described in the interviews.

- Ensure the role and mission of each advisory committee is clear.
- Consider joint meetings of advisory committees annually or semi annually.
- Develop an oversight board or committee to govern state boating services.

Other opportunities. In addition to discussing the challenges associated with recreational boating services and opportunities for improvement, many interviewees discussed a more general set of opportunities related to recreational boating. In general, interviewees felt that Washington State was a major destination for boating-related tourism and that better outreach and advertizing and improved boater services could increase boating-tourism related revenue.

## Recommendations

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The first group of recommendations (numbers 1–7) applies to, RCO, Parks, DNR and WDFW. These recommendations deal with establishing an Agency Boating Committee (ABC) to coordinate recreational boating services and identify some specific, near-term coordination activities that the ABC might begin with. Recommendations 8 and 9 address some specific improvements to grant programs and apply to RCO and Parks. Recommendations 10 and 11 address the status of and funding for the WDFW enforcement program and applies to WDFW and Parks.

### **1. Establish an Agency Boating Committee (ABC).**

RCO, Parks, DNR, and WDFW should enter into an inter-agency agreement to establish and staff an Agency Boating Committee (ABC). The Washington Department of Licensing should be invited to join

this effort. The ABC should be staffed by state-agency boating coordinators. The initial focus of the ABC should be on:

- Facilities operation and maintenance
- Adequacy access opportunities
- Statewide boating services, including enforcement
- The ongoing web portal work
- Publications
- Opportunities to streamline grant processes between agencies and to coordinate grantee recruitment and training

The ABC should create an ongoing forum for looking at the “big picture” of state recreational boating services, and for coordination across state agencies. It also should create a venue for recreational boaters statewide to express any concerns addresses concerns related to services.

**Agency lead:** to initiate this effort, RCO has volunteered to serve as the facilitator agency for the ABC. As the facilitator agency, RCO will coordinate and document ABC activities. Serving as the facilitator agency does not make RCO a final decision maker for the committee; RCO will participate equally in decision making with the other agencies.

**Timing:** work to establish the ABC should begin immediately; the inter-agency agreement should be complete by December 2008. Following its establishment, the ABC should meet quarterly, with annual briefings with joint agency management to help set agendas and for the committee to give recommendations to agency decision makers. The first joint meeting with management should be targeted for early 2009.

## **2. Create a snapshot of the budgets (money in and money out) for recreational boating programs and share across agencies and with boating groups.**

Each agency should examine its recreational-boating budgets and describe funding amounts, sources of funds, and how money is spent. Parks has already begun this effort and may have an example they can share with other agencies. The results of this process should be shared at the ABC and evaluated by the group for opportunities to increase efficiency, better align agency priorities and programs, and gain synergies between agencies. Care should be taken to document both funding sources and amounts and expenditures to respond to the boating community’s concerns related to what boaters are getting for the money they pay into state taxes and fees and whether state agencies are “keeping” too much of the money or managing it inefficiently.

**Agency lead:** none; each agency is to carry out an individual effort.

**Timing:** This work should begin immediately and be complete by July 2009 so the results can be considered during preparation of 2010 Agency budget proposals.

**3. Create a state-wide GIS map layer showing public boating facilities statewide.**

The agencies should work together to provide one integrated map of both overwater and upland public boating facilities. This effort should be coordinated through the ABC and build on existing maps, including the DNR's GIS layer of all overwater structures, RCO's lat-long data for motorboat access and moorage sites, and WDFW's access point mapping project. When the mapping is complete it should be widely publicized to ensure that boaters can easily find and use information on access points. It also should be used to support an ongoing evaluation and understanding of whether existing infrastructure provides adequate opportunities for access and, if there are gaps, what additional access points should be provided.

**Agency lead:** RCO has volunteered to serve as the facilitator organization for this effort.

**Timing:** work on the initial mapping should be complete by June 30, 2009.

**4. Establish a cross-agency web portal for recreational boaters.**

The agencies should continue and expand their ongoing work to develop a cross-agency web portal for boaters. The portal should provide "one-stop" shopping for information on boating services (including maps and information on access sites) and should be accessed through an easy to find URL such as [www.boat.wa.gov](http://www.boat.wa.gov). Coordination of this ongoing effort should be through the ABC.

**Agency lead:** RCO has volunteered to serve as the facilitator organization for this effort.

**Timing:** work should be complete by June 30, 2009.

**5. Work with the recreational boating community to establish a regular conference on recreational boating services.**

The agencies should work together to establish a coordinated presence at one of the major recreational boating conferences or boat shows, such as the Seattle Boat Show or the Boats Afloat. The focus of this effort should be on creating venue for agencies to jointly discuss their work with boaters and to receive feedback together. Over time the agencies should consider whether this effort should grow into a regular conference on recreational boating, modeled after the Washington State Trails Coalition conference.

**Agency lead:** RCO.

**Timing:** the target is the first joint presentation/public session/booth by 2010 at the Boat Show.

**6. Establish an advisory task force on model design and construction standards (or best practices) for overwater structures and assess state boating infrastructure.**

The agencies should work together to charter a stakeholder task force to establish guidance on best practices for design and construction of overwater structures associated with services to boaters. Guidelines should result in both better and more predictable environmental performance of overwater structures and time and money savings for grant applicants and agency projects by providing for some standardization of agency design efforts. At a minimum, the task force should include representatives from both the permitting and engineering parts of WDFW, Parks, Ecology, DNR, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Services, the Association of Public Ports, and the NW Marine Trade Association. The task force should address guidance both for the structures themselves and for permitting and endangered species act consultation requirements. It should build on existing efforts to establish such guidelines, including the WDFW and DNR Habitat Conservation Plan efforts.

In addition, the guidelines should serve to provide a clear standard for what constitutes a well-maintained and well-operated overwater boating access structures. Once best practices are developed, prepare an estimate of what it would cost to bring all state-owned boating-related infrastructures up to these standards. This will facilitate a conversation about whether additional investment in operation and maintenance of boating access points is needed by providing a clear benchmark and a cost estimate.

**Agency lead:** RCO has volunteered to serve as the facilitator organization for this effort.

**Timing:** the agencies should coordinate through the ABC to establish a timeline for this effort; it will be important to coordinate activities with the ongoing Habitat Conservation Plan efforts in WDFW and DNR.

**7. Establish additional shared Washington Conservation Corps crews for maintenance at boating access sites.**

DNR and WDFW share responsibility for WCC crews in multiple geographic working circles around the State (including Parks in the Skagit/Snohomish County working circle). These crews currently dedicate a portion of their time to providing maintenance services at boating access sites across the State for all three agencies. This provides an efficient way to conduct maintenance, because the crew can work on multiple sites in a geographic area even if the sites are controlled by different state agencies. (Typically department WCC crews are dedicated and can work only on that agency's sites or projects.) This project should be expanded with the goal of providing additional joint agency boating facility maintenance crews for both Eastern and Western Washington.

**Agency lead:** the agencies should coordinate this effort through the ABC.

**Timing:** additional WCC crews should be established by January 2011.

**8. Coordinate information for potential grantees.**

RCO and Parks should continue and expand their efforts to coordinate the grant-making programs that serve recreational boaters. At a minimum, these include the grant programs focused on boating access infrastructure, the Boating Facilities Program, The Boating Infrastructure Grant Program, the Boating Activities Program and Clean Vessel Act grants. Coordination efforts should include providing “one-stop” information about potentially applicable programs and how programs are able to work together to provide a comprehensive funding package, cross-training of agency staff so they can refer potential grantees appropriately, and joint grant workshops for potential grantees.

**Agency lead:** expansion of an already ongoing effort by RCO and Parks.

**Timing:** complete in time for the 2010 grant cycle.

**9. Ensure Clean Vessel Account grant funding can be used to support construction, operation, and maintenance of upland facilities.**

Parks has embarked on an effort to ensure that Clean Vessel Account grant funding can be used as broadly as possible, including for operation and maintenance and for both overwater and upland facilities. It is important for Parks to continue this effort and for the other agencies to support it as needed, e.g., by providing letters of support if necessary.

**Agency lead:** Parks.

**Timing:** complete in time for the 2010 grant cycle.

**10. Better integrate WDFW enforcement efforts with the state enforcement program.**

WDFW officers have been trained in enforcement of boating safety laws and regulations and complete hundreds of written vessel safety inspections each year; however, because the WDFW enforcement program is not an “approved local safety program,” its inspections do not count towards the State’s total inspections reported to the USCG. This is important because the number of vessel safety inspections in part determines the level of Federal funding for which the State is eligible. Parks and WDFW are currently working on an MOU to remedy this situation. This effort should continue to ensure that all vessel safety inspections count towards the state’s totals, and should be expanded to evaluate opportunities to secure additional funding for WDFW’s boating-related enforcement activities.

**Agency lead:** joint effort by WDFW and Parks.

**Timing:** complete by January 2010.

### **11. Reach out to stakeholders on boating safety law enforcement coordination.**

Parks should work with state and local boating safety law enforcement program representatives, including WDFW, to identify specific ways to improve boating safety law enforcement coordination, boater/operator education and outreach, rules and regulations, performance standards and best practices. This may be done by leveraging an existing advisory committee, such as Parks' Boating Safety Advisory Council, or creating a subcommittee.

**Agency lead:** Parks.

**Timing:** complete by January 2010.

## **Agencies' Response to Draft Recommendations**

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Agency boating coordination staff and leadership reviewed draft recommendations and provided comments to help clarify current state programs and ensure accuracy. The recommendations contained in the final report are supported by state agency staff and decision makers, and the agencies intend to implement the recommendations as budgets allow. In particular, all the agencies have committed to participating in establishment and staffing of the ABC and, through the ABC, to supporting development and implementation of a coordinated agenda to improve services to recreational boaters.

## **Conclusion**

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Interviews did not reveal a strong sense that there were overwhelming problems with coordination of state agency boating services. At the same time, the agencies have already initiated a number of efforts to improve coordination and to increase the transparency and availability of information on services to recreational boaters, most notably the ongoing effort to establish a common web portal for boating information. The Agency Boating Committee, an effort supported by the agencies involved in this process, will create a valuable common forum for the agencies to share information with each other, receive and respond to information from boating stakeholders, and develop a coordinated agenda to implement the specific recommendations on coordination identified here and, over time, make further improvements to state recreational boating programs.

# ***Appendix 1: List of Key Individuals Interviewed***

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## **Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)**

- Policy Lead: Kaleen Cottingham
- Program lead: Jim Eychaner

## **Washington State Parks**

- Policy Lead: Mike Sternback
- Program Leads: James Horan
- Other resources: Larry Fairleigh

## **Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)**

- Policy Lead: Jennifer Quan
- Program Lead: Stephen Sherlock
- Other resources: Chris Anderson, enforcement program

## **Department of Natural Resources (DNR)**

- Policy Lead: Rich Doenges
- Program Lead: Blain Reeves

## **Stakeholder Representatives**

- Michael Campbell, NW Marine Trade Association
- Eric Johnson, WA Public Ports Association
- Steve Greaves, citizen

## **Law Enforcement Representatives**

- Bill Cumming, San Juan County Sherriff
- Don Pierce, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs

## ***Appendix 2: Invitation Letter and Interview Questions***

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June 24, 2008

Judy Johnson  
State Parks and Recreation Commission  
PO Box 42650  
Olympia, WA 98504

Subject: Process to Improve Services to Recreational Boaters

Dear Ms. Johnson:

As you may know, the Recreation and Conservation Office hired a facilitator to conduct a process to improve the coordination of state boating programs. This follows up on a survey of recreational boaters in Washington. The survey identified a number of ways to improve services to recreational boaters. One suggestion was improving coordination among state agencies responsible for delivering recreational boating services.

In response to this survey, I am inviting you to participate in a process to identify and explore opportunities for better coordination and cooperation among our programs. We hope that the State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife will all participate with us to see if there are ways that we can work more effectively together to coordinate our various programs in providing recreational boating services.

One of the first steps for the facilitator is to interview staff and leadership in the agencies. These interviews will explore agency roles and responsibilities and identify agency needs, interests, priorities and goals for recreational boating programs. In addition to agency staff and leadership, representatives of recreational boaters, such as the Northwest Marine Trade Association, the Recreational Boating Association of Washington and the Washington Water Trails Association, will also be interviewed.

After the interviews, there will be a series of meetings in which we hope that the agencies can come to agreement on actions that will improve coordination and cooperation across recreational boating services and programs.

DRAFT

Interviews will be carried out by Elizabeth McManus and Roma Call from Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Ltd. Ross & Associates is a neutral third-party hired to support the process and has no stake in the outcome of these discussions. Although Ross & Associates is under contract to RCO, they work for the process and consider all parties equal clients.

Draft interview questions are attached. It's important to view the interview questions as a starting place for discussion – I've instructed Ross & Associates that the most important thing to accomplish in the interviews is to get a good understanding of agency interests, roles, and opportunities for improvement. Written answers to the interview questions are not requested.

I hope you will join me in this effort. If you have any questions, please contact me directly or Jim Eychaner of my staff at (360)902-3011 or [jim.eychaner@rco.wa.gov](mailto:jim.eychaner@rco.wa.gov). Someone from Ross & Associates will be contacting you or your staff shortly to introduce themselves and schedule an interview. If you would like to talk with Ross & Associates before that, please call Elizabeth McManus at (360) 570-0899 or [elizabeth.mcmanus@ross-assoc.com](mailto:elizabeth.mcmanus@ross-assoc.com).

Best Regards,

Kaleen Cottingham, Director  
Recreation and Conservation Office

## Agency Interviews

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### Improving Recreational Boating Programs and Services

#### *Interviews*

##### ***Interview Background***

In response to a customer survey, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is sponsoring a collaborative process for the RCO, the State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to identify and explore opportunities for better coordination and cooperation among their programs that serve recreational boaters. It is hoped that the process will result in consensus across the agencies on a set of actions that will improve coordination and cooperation and improve recreational boating services and programs.

One of the first steps in the process is a series of interviews with staff and leadership in the agencies. The purpose of the interviews is to explore agency roles and responsibilities and get a sense of agency needs, interests, priorities and goals for recreational boating programs. Results of interviews will be compiled to identify near-term opportunities, if any, for improvements in coordination and cooperation. In addition to agency staff and leadership, representatives of recreational boaters, such as the Northwest Marine Trade Association, the Recreational Boating Association of Washington and the Washington Water Trails Association, also will be interviewed.

After the interviews, there will be a series of facilitated meetings in which the agencies can work to agreement on actions to improve coordination and cooperation across recreational boating services and programs.

Interviews will be carried out by Elizabeth McManus and Roma Call from Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Ltd. Ross & Associates is a neutral third-party with no stake in the outcome of these discussions, hired to support the process. Although Ross & Associates is under contract to RCO, they work for the process and consider all parties equal clients. Interviews will take approximately 2 hours. The interview questions should be viewed as a starting place for a discussion – the most important thing in the interviews is to get a good understanding of agency interests and roles and opportunities for improvement. Written answers to the interview questions are not requested.

## Interview Discussion Questions

### Your Agency's Boating Services

1. What is your agency's role in providing recreational boating services? What are the most important boating services your agency provides?
2. What are the key strengths of your agency's boating services? What aspects of your agency's boating services need improvement?
3. Are there particular laws and/or regulations that define and/or constrain the services your agency provides?

### Boating Services of Other State Agencies

4. What is your understanding of the roles the other state agencies have in providing recreational boating services?
5. What recreational boating services of the other state agencies are working well and why? What boating services of the other state agencies need improvement?

### Coordination of Boating Services

6. Where is agency coordination to serve recreational boaters working well and why? What are the challenges to agency coordination and collaboration to provide recreational boating services? What would be the best way to overcome these challenges?
7. Do you see an overlap between the services your agency provides to Washington boaters and the services other agencies provide? If so, are there problems associated with the overlap in services or are the overlaps being managed effectively?
8. Has any internal realignment or restructuring within your agency had an impact on its ability to coordinate with other state agencies? Is any planned in the near future?
9. What opportunities do you see to improve agency coordination and collaboration around recreational boating services? What is the most important action agencies could take to improve coordination and collaboration?

### Funding

10. How has your agency managed funding for its boating services?
11. Is your agency's boating program considered financially stable? Does your agency have any funding constraints with regard to providing boating services?

### Other Comments

12. What additional services should your agency or other agencies provide to Washington boaters?
13. Other comments? Anything else we should know?

## Non Agency Interviews

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### **Improving Recreational Boating Programs and Services**

#### ***Interviews***

##### ***Interview Background***

In response to a customer survey, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is sponsoring a collaborative process for the RCO, the State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to identify and explore opportunities for better coordination and cooperation among their programs that serve recreational boaters. It is hoped that the process will result in consensus across the agencies on a set of actions that will improve coordination and cooperation and improve recreational boating services and programs.

One of the first steps in the process is a series of interviews with staff and leadership in the agencies that provide recreational boating services and with key representatives of recreational boaters, such as the Northwest Marine Trade Association, the Recreational Boating Association of Washington and the Washington Water Trails Association.

Interviews will be carried out by Elizabeth McManus and Roma Call from Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Ltd. Ross & Associates is a neutral third-party with no stake in the outcome of these discussions, hired to support the process. Although Ross & Associates is under contract to RCO, they work for the process and consider all parties equal clients. Interviews will take approximately 2 hours. The interview questions should be viewed as a starting place for a discussion – the most important thing in the interviews is to get a good understanding of agency interests and roles and opportunities for improvement. Written answers to the interview questions are not requested.

***Interview Discussion Questions***

1. What is your involvement in Washington's recreational boating community?
2. What recreational boating services are most important to you? Do you know which state agency (or agencies) provides these services?
3. Do you see any problems associated with recreational boating services? If yes, what problems do you see?
4. What is your perspective on why any problems are occurring? Do you have ideas about how problems should be addressed?
5. What is the single most needed improvement to recreational boating services in Washington? How should this improvement be put into place?
6. What additional services should be provided to Washington boaters? Who should provide these services?
7. Other comments? Anything else we should know?