

Boating Grant Programs Plan



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I. Introduction

Boating in Washington State

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

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

Purpose of the Boating Plan

The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Funding Board uses the Boating Grant Programs Plan to inform and guide its grant funding and decision-making. This plan includes non-motorized and motorized recreational boating in Washington State. It explores participation rates and other relevant data. The plan also includes information on the economic contribution of recreational boating to the state's economy.

Purpose	Guide the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's grant funding for boating facilities and provide boating program services.
Goal	Align grant funding with recreational boating interests and needs.
Objective	Fund boating facilities to support statewide trends and reflect local priorities.

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

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted this plan in April 2015 during a public meeting under the authority granted in Revised Code of Washington 42.56.040 of the Public Records Act. The resolution adopting this Plan is in Appendix B.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board is a governor-appointed board composed of five citizens and the directors (or designees) of three state agencies – Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, and Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

Mission of the Board

Provide leadership and funding to help our partners protect and enhance Washington's natural and recreational resources for current and future generations.

Services Provided by the Board

Statewide strategic investments through policy development, grant funding, technical assistance, coordination, and advocacy.

Values of the Board

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

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

These grant programs are:

Facilities for motorboats:

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (motorboats up to 10 horsepower only)

Boating Facilities Program

Boating Infrastructure Grant program (motorboats 26 feet or more in length only)

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Recreational Trails Program

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Outdoor Recreation Account categories:

- Local Parks, State Parks, and State Lands Development and Renovation

Facilities for non-motorized boats:

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicles Activities

Recreational Trails Program

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Outdoor Recreation Account categories:

- Local Parks, State Parks, State Lands Development and Renovation, Trails, and Water Access

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

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

Recreation and Conservation Office

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

Vision of the RCO

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

Mission of the RCO

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

Studies that Inform this Plan

In writing this plan, RCO relied on the following studies and data:

- [*Washington Boater Needs Assessment*](#), Responsive Management, 2007.
- [*Improving Coordination of State Services to Recreational Boaters*](#), Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Ltd., October 31, 2008.
- [*Activities Supporting Recreational Boating In Washington*](#), Report 10-12, State of Washington Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee, December 1, 2010.
- [*Outdoor Recreation in Washington, The 2013 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*](#) (SCORP), Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office, May 2013.
- [*Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State*](#), Earth Economics, January 2015.

Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation

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

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

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board works as directed by the Governor to advance these boating related recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

II. Accomplishments Since the Last Boating Plan in 2009

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

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

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

Type of Boater	Improve Existing Facilities	Build New Facilities
Motorboaters	Boat launch ramps	Boat launch ramps
Sail boaters	Mooring buoys or docks	Marinas
Paddlers	Restrooms at boat launch ramps	Boat launch ramps
Other Hand-Powered Boaters	Boat launch ramps	Mooring buoys or docks

For motorized boaters, boat launch ramps were the most important type of facility to improve or build. Since approving the 2009 plan, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board awarded grant funds to renovate 15 motorized boat launch ramps. Note that in 2012, the legislature reduced funding in the Boating Facilities Program, one of the motorized boating grant programs, by \$3.3 million. Because of this funding reduction, three new boat launch ramps were not funded.

The motorized boat launch facilities funded since 2009 are:

Renovated Motorized Boat Launches by Project Sponsor (15)

- Boating Facilities Program
 - Black Lake, Thurston County (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
 - Crow Butte, Benton County (Port of Benton)
 - Don Morse Park, Chelan County (City of Chelan)
 - Lacamas Lake, Clark County (City of Camas)
 - Lake Chelan, Chelan County (Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission)
 - Lake Samish, Whatcom County (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
 - Lake Sammamish, King County (Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission)
 - Langsdorf Landing, Clark County (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
 - Levee Street, Gray Harbor County (City of Hoquiam) – construction pending
 - Lighthouse Marine Park (Whatcom County)
 - Long Lake, Kitsap County (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)

¹ Responsive Management, *Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Compendium* (2007), 280, 292.

- Newman Lake, Spokane County (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
- Oneida, Wahkiakum County (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
- Salisbury Point (Kitsap County)
- Squalicum Harbor, Whatcom County (Port of Bellingham)

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

The non-motorized facilities funded since 2009 are:

Renovated Non-Motorized Boat Launches (1)

- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Water Access Category
 - Hathaway, Clark County (City of Washougal)

New Non-Motorized Boat Launches (7)

- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
 - Swadabs Shoreline, Skagit County (Swinomish Indian Tribal Community)
 - Port Angeles Waterfront, Clallam County (City of Port Angeles)
 - Islands Trailhead, Spokane County (Spokane Conservation District)
- Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicles Program
 - Similkameen River (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Water Access Category
 - Don Morse Park, Chelan County (City of Chelan)
 - Yakima River, Benton County (City of West Richland)
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program State Lands Development Category
 - Old Highway 10, Kittitas County (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)

New Boarding Float (1)

- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
 - Harper Pier, Kitsap County (Port of Bremerton)

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board also awarded grant funds for other facilities and activities beyond the top indicators shown in Table 1.

III. Data about Recreational Boating in Washington State

Notes about the Data Used in this Report

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

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

Planning Regions in The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan	
Region	Counties in the Region
The Islands	Island and San Juan Counties
Peninsulas	Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap, and Mason Counties
The Coast	Grays Harbor, Pacific, and Wahkiakum Counties
North Cascades	Chelan, Kittitas, Okanogan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties
Seattle-King	King County (including the City of Seattle)
Southwest	Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Lewis, Pierce, Skamania, and Thurston Counties
Northeast	Ferry, Pend Oreille, Spokane, and Stevens Counties
Columbia Plateau	Adams, Douglas, Grant, and Lincoln Counties
South Central	Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, and Yakima Counties
The Palouse	Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Whitman Counties

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

The SCORP defined motorized and non-motorized boating differently than RCO’s grant programs. In the SCORP, motorboats do not include sailboats or personal watercraft and non-motorized boats do not

include sailboats or whitewater rafts. These alternative definitions of motor and non-motorized boating are used below in the data section of this plan.

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

The data obtained from boaters in both surveys used in this plan represent all types of boats for all boaters 18 years or older.

Economic Contribution of Boating

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

Recreational boating makes up almost 11 percent of all expenditures for outdoor recreation in Washington State.² Trip-related expenditures are the total spent on boating, including equipment, travel and lodging, entrance fees, and food and beverages. Trip-related expenditures do not include expenses related to boat fuel or launch and moorage fees.

Table 2: Annual Expenditures for Recreational Boating in Washington State (2014 Dollars)³

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

² Earth Economics, *Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State* (2015) 69.

³ Ibid.

How Many People Go Boating for Recreation?

Thirty-six percent, 2.4 million,⁴ of Washington residents participate in boating for recreational purposes (Figure 1).⁵ Washington's participation rate is slightly higher than the national participation rate of 33 percent reported by the National Marine Manufacturers Association.⁶

The most popular type of boating is motorboating,⁷ with nearly 1.7 million Washington residents, or around 25 percent of the state population participating. Eleven percent, or 740,000, of Washington residents use non-motorized boats;⁸ 5 percent, or 34,000, use personal watercraft; 4 percent, or 270,000, go sailing; and 3 percent, or 200,000, raft whitewater.

In the past 10 years, the relative rank of Washington resident participation in non-motorized boating increased while the relative rank of motorboating and personal watercraft use slightly decreased.⁹ There was no marked difference in the rank for sailing or whitewater rafting.

In terms of frequency, boaters, other than whitewater rafters, participate in boating an average of 15 days a year. Whitewater rafters participate in rafting an average of 6 days a year.¹⁰

While the overall participation rate for all boating recreation is 36 percent, participation rates vary by planning regions as described above (Figure 2).¹¹

⁴ Based on US Census data from 2010.

⁵ Recreation and Conservation Office, Outdoor Recreation in Washington State: The 2013 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), 161.

⁶ National Marine Manufacturers Association, Recreational Boating Industry Trends, December 2011.

⁷ In the 2013 SCORP, "motorboating" does not include use of personal watercraft.

⁸ In the 2013 SCORP, "non-motorized boating" does not include sailing or whitewater rafting. It also does not include other water-related activities such as surfboarding, wind surfing, water skiing, inner tubing or floating.

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

¹⁰ 2013 SCORP, 19.

¹¹ Responsive Management, Results of General Population Survey in Support of the Development of the Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, (2012).

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

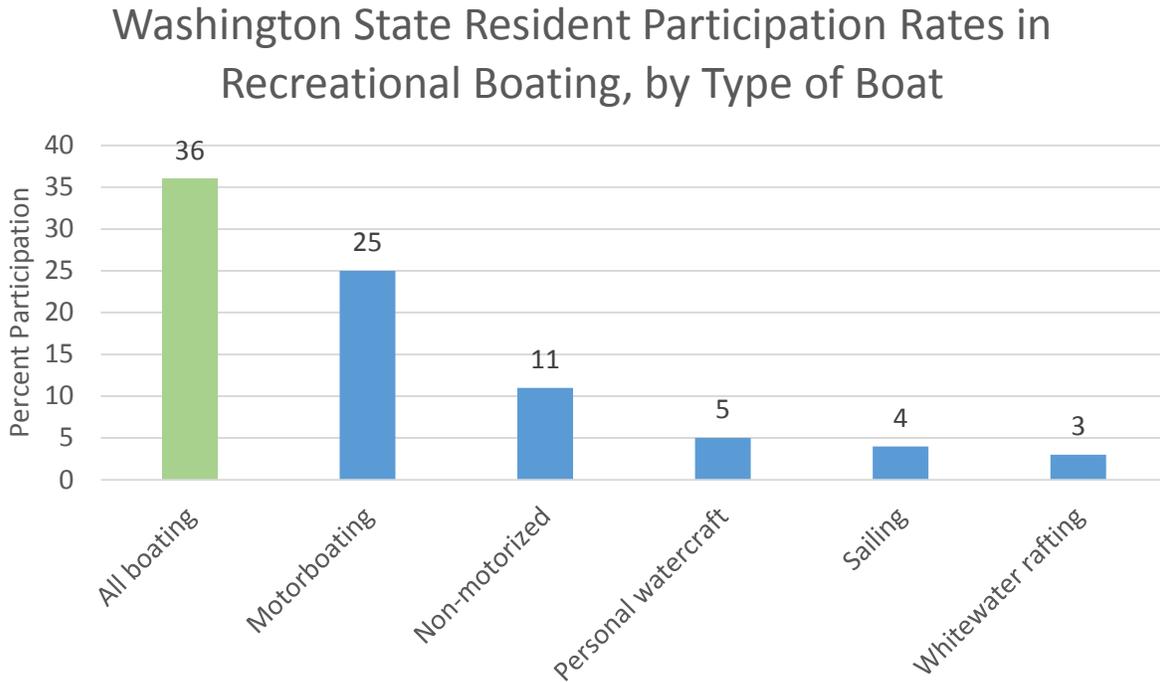
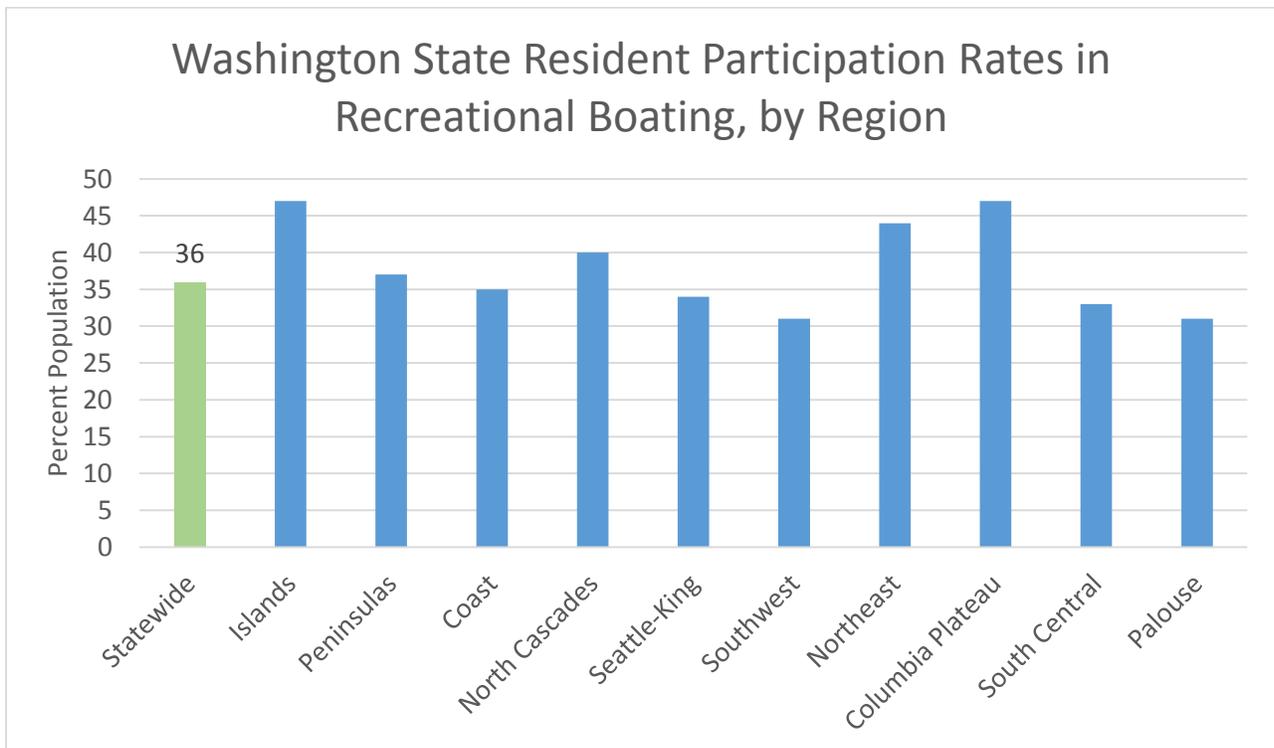


Figure 2: Washington State Resident Participation Rates in Recreational Boating, by Region



How Popular is Boating Compared to Other Types of Recreation?

Compared to other types of outdoor recreation, boating activities rank in the middle range in popularity among Washington residents (Table 3).¹²

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

Type of Boating Activity	Percent of Washington Residents Participating	Rank Compared to All Outdoor Recreation
Motorboating	25.8 percent	22 nd
Non-motorized boating	11.1 percent	29 th
Riding personal watercraft	5.2 percent	46 th
Sailing	3.5 percent	52 nd
Whitewater rafting	2.8 percent	56 th

Who Goes Boating?

Ownership

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

Gender

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

Ethnicity

Thirty-seven percent of Washington residents who identify themselves as white go boating, compared to 22 percent of people of color (Figure 4). This is the largest difference between white and people of

¹² 2013 SCORP, 48-49.

¹³ Responsive Management, *Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary* (2007), 5.

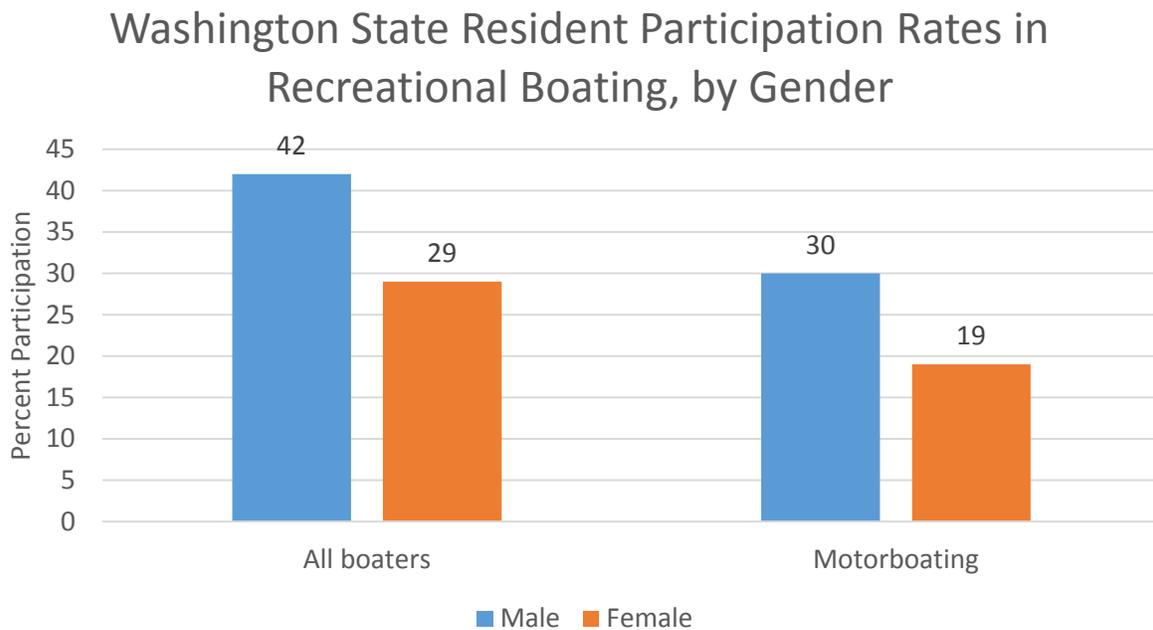
¹⁴ 2013 SCORP, 64; supplemented with additional data received from Responsive Management, 2014.

color participation rates of any outdoor recreation activity for which data was available. The majority of the difference is in motorboating and non-motorized boating. There is less of a difference in ethnicity for other types of boating such as sailing, riding personal watercraft, and whitewater rafting (less than 5 percentage points difference).¹⁵

Age

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

Figure 3: Washington State Resident Participation Rates in Recreational Boating, by Gender



¹⁵ 2013 SCORP, 66. According to the SCORP, people of color survey participants “included black/African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Native Americans, Asians, and other ethnicities.”

¹⁶ Data received from Responsive Management, 2014.

¹⁷ 2013 SCORP, 65. motorboating excludes personal watercraft.

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

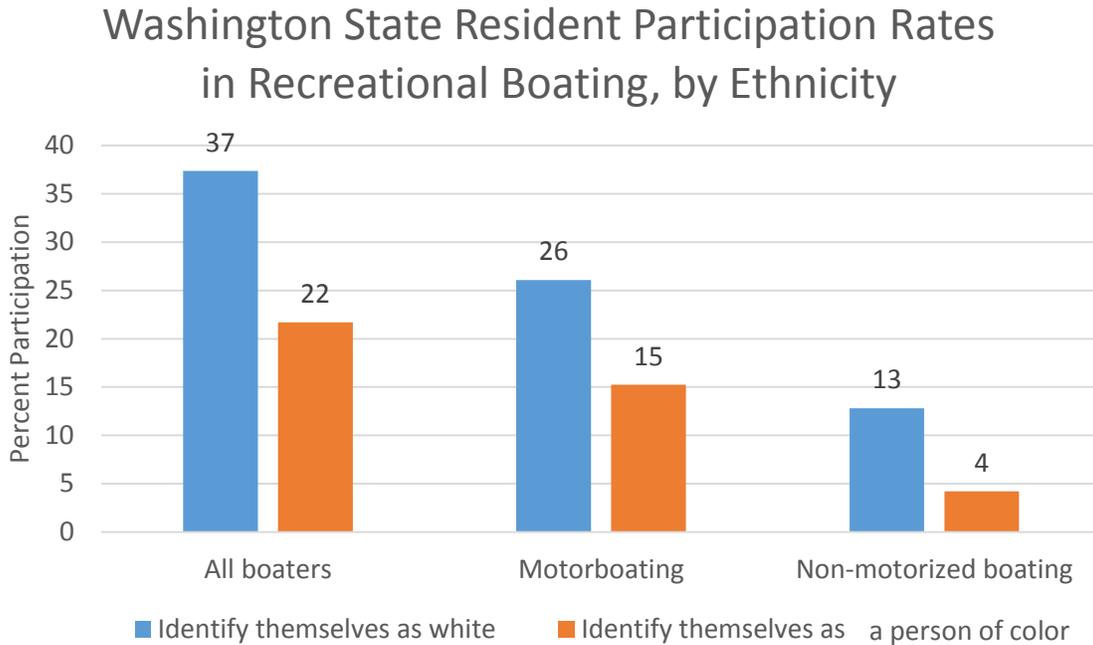
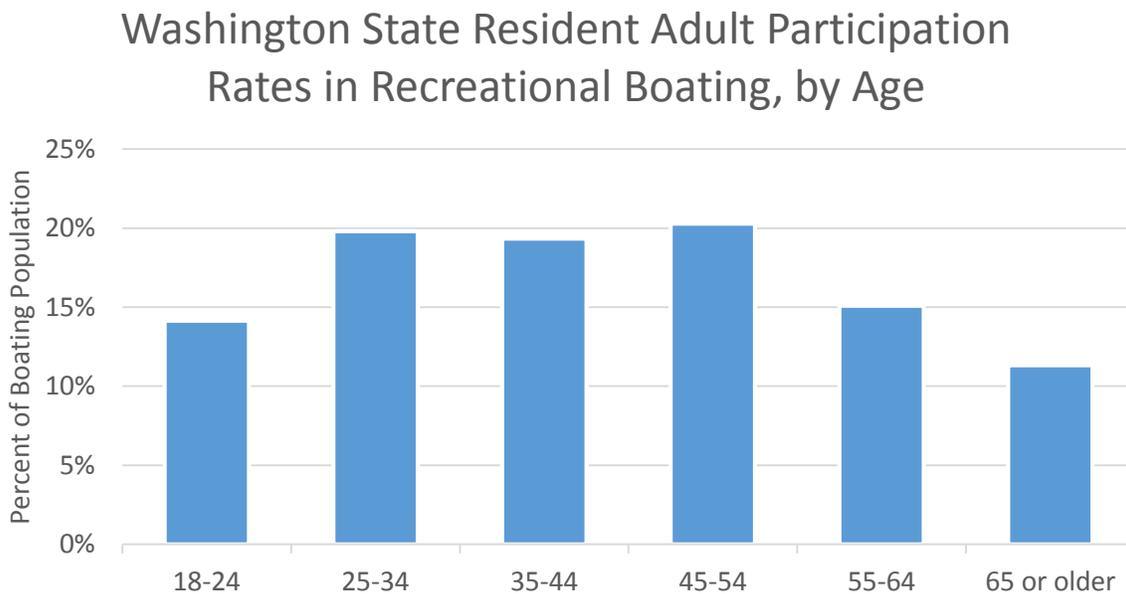


Figure 5: Washington State Resident Adult Participation Rates in Recreational Boating, by Age



Motivation

In the boater needs assessment, boaters said they boated for relaxation (49 percent), fishing (29 percent), to be with friends and family (26 percent), for general recreation (14 percent), and to be close to nature (11 percent).¹⁸

Where do People Go Boating?

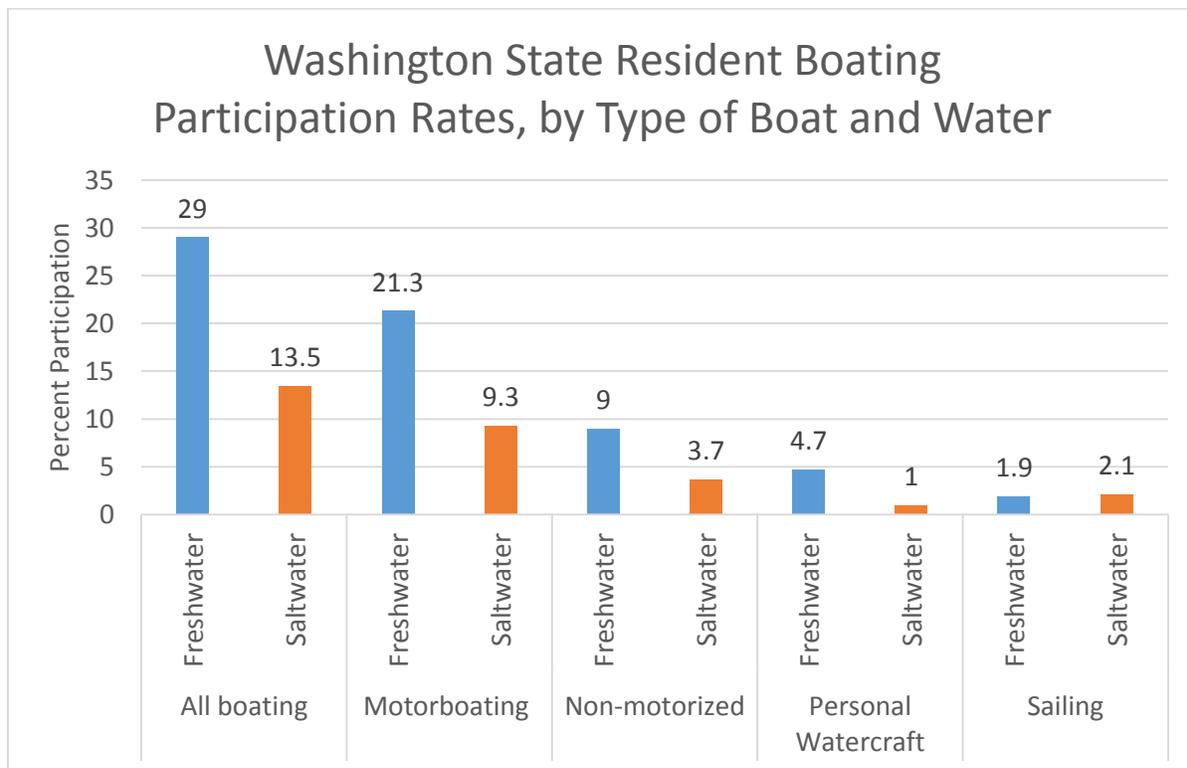
Fresh versus Saltwater

Overall, more than twice as many boaters in Washington State recreate in freshwater compared to saltwater (Figure 6).¹⁹ More than 6 percent boat in both freshwater and saltwater.²⁰

Body of Water

When measured by days boated in the past two years (2007 survey), most boating occurred in freshwater: Columbia River (12.7 percent), Lake Washington (8.7 percent), Lake Roosevelt (3.5 percent), and the Snake River (2.2 percent).²¹ However, as a specific destination, Puget Sound was the most popular body of water (25 percent of the days boated).

Figure 6: Washington State Resident Boating Participation Rates, by Type of Boat and Water



¹⁸ Responsive Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007), 10.

¹⁹ 2013 SCORP, 161.

²⁰ 2013 SCORP, 161. This total was calculated by aggregating the total participation rate of saltwater and freshwater boaters and subtracting the total participation rate of all boaters.

²¹ Responsive Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007), 8.

Location

A majority of boaters (62 percent) went boating where they lived in the previous 2 years. King County leads the way in the most days where boaters went boating (18.4 percent boated the most days there), followed by Pierce County (8.2 percent), Snohomish County (6.6 percent), Clark County (4.4 percent), and San Juan County (4.3 percent).²²

What Types of Facilities Do Boaters Use?

Twenty-three percent of Washington residents use a boat launch ramp and 8 percent use a marina.²³

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

What Size are Motorboats and Sailboats?

More than four times as many Washington residents motorboat in boats less than 26 feet in length compared to boats longer than that. For sailboats, the lengths are more evenly distributed (Figure 7).²⁶ Similarly, 96 percent of boats registered in 2012 were less than 26 feet in length.²⁷

What Other Activities Involve Boating?

Almost 19 percent of Washington residents fish from a private boat and 3 percent fish using a guide or charter boat.²⁸ Almost 5 percent of Washington residents camp with or in a boat.²⁹

Boaters said they did the following activities while boating: fishing (53 percent), sightseeing and fish and wildlife viewing (35 percent), water skiing (19 percent), relaxing or entertaining friends (17 percent), being with family and friends (17 percent), and water tubing (15 percent).

Are Boaters Satisfied with their Boating Experience?

There is a high level of satisfaction among boaters concerning the opportunities to go boating and the facilities available: 86 percent were highly satisfied or satisfied with the facilities for boating in Washington State and 90 percent were highly satisfied or satisfied with the opportunities for boating in Washington State.³⁰ A large majority of boaters (72 percent) indicated that access issues, such as crowding at boat launch ramps, had taken away from their boating satisfaction.

²² Responsive Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007), 7.

²³ 2013 SCORP, 161.

²⁴ Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007), 33.

²⁵ Responsive Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007), 34.

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

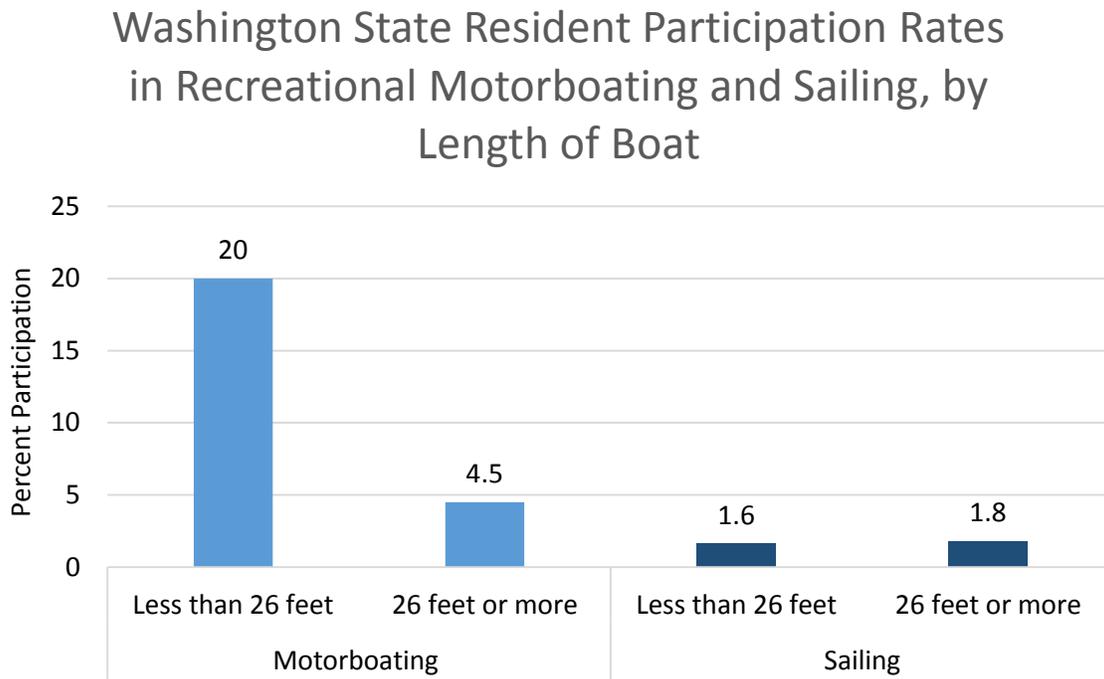
²⁷ Washington Department of Licensing and Washington Sea Grant Program

²⁸ 2013 SCORP, 160.

²⁹ 2013 SCORP, 163.

³⁰ Responsive Management, Results of General Population Survey in Support of the Development of the Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2012), xv. Results do not include whitewater rafters because the data was not available.

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



Who Else Wants to Go Boating?

Of the Washington residents that do not go boating, almost 6 percent said they would like to canoe or kayak and the same percentage of people said they would like to boat generally (Figure 8).³¹ These rank sixth and eighth, respectively, out of all of the outdoor recreation activities identified. More than 4 percent of Washington residents who already go boating desire to boat more (Figure 9).³²

³¹ 2013 SCORP, 72.

³² 2013 SCORP, 73.

Figure 8: Percent of Washington Residents who would like to Participate in an Outdoor Recreation Activity

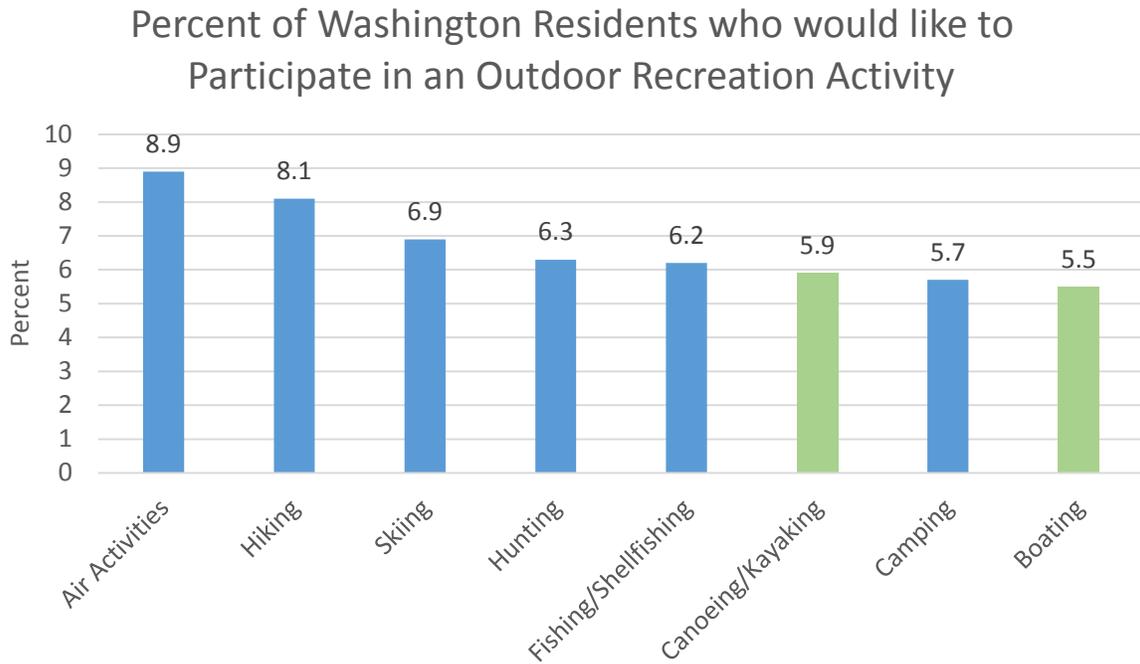
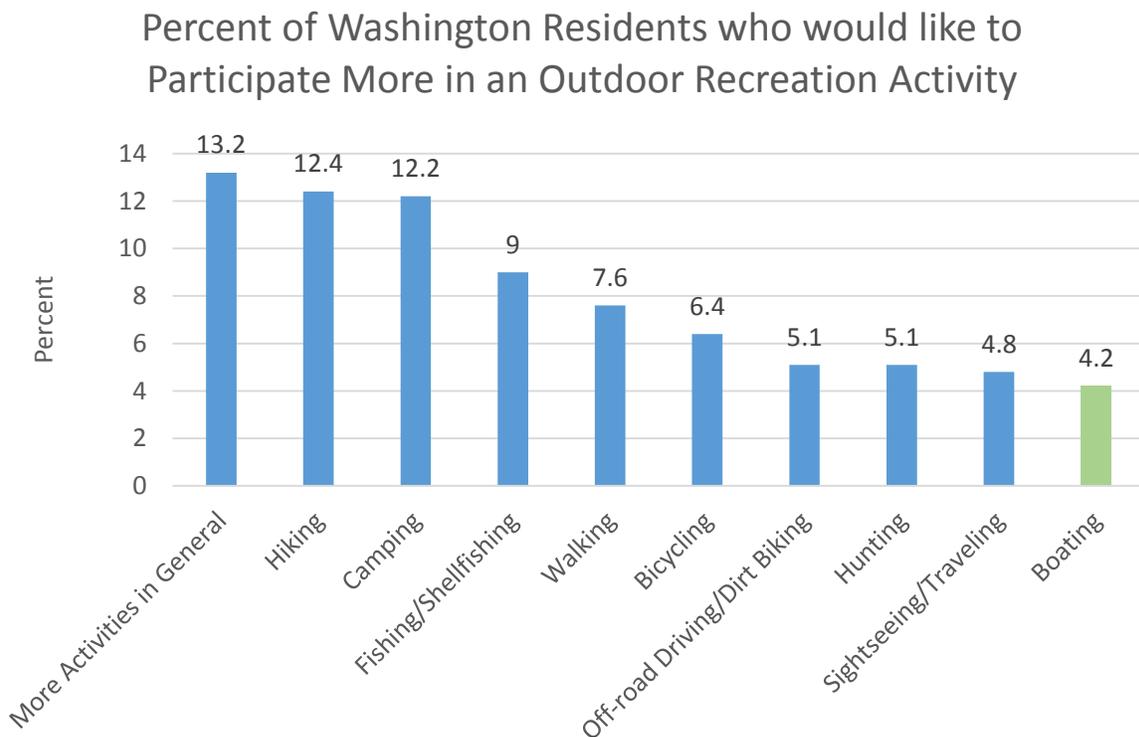


Figure 9: Percent of Washington Residents who would like to Participate More in an Outdoor Recreation Activity



Summary of Data and Findings

Highlights of the data and findings are:

- One out of three residents in Washington State boat during the year.
- Boating ranks in the middle range in popularity among Washington residents compared to other types of outdoor recreation.
- More people boat in freshwater than saltwater, and in boats less than 26 feet in length.
- More men boat than women, more white people boat than people of color, and most boaters are around the age of 46.
- During the past 10 years, non-motorized boating increased in popularity.
- Non-motorized boating does not have a significant difference between the gender and age of the participant.
- Boating is one of the most expensive types of outdoor recreation, particularly motorboating, which ranks second only to wildlife viewing for its economic contribution to the state.
- Overall, existing boaters are satisfied with the boating facilities and opportunities in Washington State.

IV. Actions to Support the Boating Grant Programs

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

Purpose	Guide the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board’s grant funding for boating facilities and providing boating program services.
Goal	Align grant funding with current recreational boating interests and needs.
Objective	Fund boating facilities to support statewide trends and reflect local priorities.

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

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

Strategy	Action
1 – Fund construction of boating facilities to address the most important boater needs and the most popular types of boating.	1A – Revise grant program evaluation criteria to give a priority to projects that address boater needs and boating participation rates.
2 – Define grant programs’ priorities to fund different types of boating facilities in different grant programs.	2A – Emphasize consistency with funding sources when determining boating grant programs’ priorities. 2B – Allow for compatible uses of boating facilities only if the use does not impair or displace the primary boating use of the grant program. 2C – Support facilities for transient public recreational boating uses.
3 – Support stewardship and retention of current boating infrastructure.	3A – Encourage projects that maximize the efficient use of existing boating sites and facilities. 3B – Encourage projects that use design standards and construction techniques that maximize the service life of the facility and minimize maintenance.
4 – Promote Infrastructure Projects and Construction practices that reduce environmental impacts.	4A – Give priority funding to projects that satisfy user needs in an environmentally responsible manner. 4B – Adopt the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board’s policy on sustainability in all its boating grant programs.

Strategy	Action
	4C – Support actions related to invasive species prevention and control in the Invasive Species Council’s Strategic Plan.
5 – Provide accurate and timely information to boaters.	5A – Maintain and improve the Washington Water Cruiser. 5B – Maintain the boat.wa.gov Web site. 5C – Participate in the Washington Boaters Alliance. 5D – Participate in education and training seminars.
6 – Work cooperatively with other state agencies to improve boating programs and services.	6A – Coordinate and participate in the Agency Boating Committee. 6B – Work with other State Agencies to Address Control and Tenure Requirements. 6C – Participate in Other State Agency Boating Committees.

Strategy 1 - Fund Construction of Boating Facilities to Address the Most Important Boater Needs and the Most Popular Types of Boating.

Action 1A - Revise grant program evaluation criteria to give a priority to projects that address boater needs and boating participation rates.

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

Strategy 2 - Define Grant Programs’ Priorities to Fund Different Types of Boating Facilities in Different Grant Programs.

Action 2A – Emphasize consistency with grant funding sources when determining boating programs’ priorities.

Each grant program will strive to fund boating facility projects that are consistent with the source of funds that support the program. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board accomplishes this objective by adopting policies to guide the funding priorities in each grant program. The board will

revisit grant program eligibility and priorities on a biennial basis to ensure this consistency. The board will also consider revising grant program priorities to reduce redundancy in funding opportunities. For example, the board could consider giving funding preference to water trails in the Water Access category of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. The board will make clear when specific elements are not eligible in specific funding sources. A summary of each grant program’s priorities for the boating community are in Table 5.

Table 5: Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Boating Grant Programs and Types of Boats Served

Grant Program	Types of Boats Served
Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account	Motorized up to 10 horsepower and non-motorized boats ³³
Boating Facilities Program	Motorized boats ³⁴
Boating Infrastructure Grant	Motorized boats 26 feet or more in length ³⁵
Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicles Activities - Nonhighway Road Category	Non-motorized boats at sites accessed via a nonhighway road ³⁶
Recreational Trails Program	Motorized and non-motorized boats using water trails in a backcountry experience ³⁷
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program - Water Access and Trails Category	Non-motorized boats ³⁸
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – Local Parks, State Lands Development and Renovation, and State Parks Categories	Motorized and non-motorized boats ³⁹
Land and Water Conservation Fund	Motorized and non-motorized boats ⁴⁰

³³ *Manual 21: Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account Grant Program* (March 1, 2014).

³⁴ *Manual 9: Boating Facilities Program* (March 1, 2014).

³⁵ Code of Federal Regulations Section 86.11

³⁶ *Manual 14: Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicles Activities Program* (May 1, 2014)

³⁷ *Manual 16: Recreational Trails Program* (May 1, 2014)

³⁸ *Manual 10a: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – Outdoor Recreation Account* (March 1, 2014)

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ *Manual 15: Land and Water Conservation Fund* (March 1, 2014)

Action 2B – Allow for compatible uses of boating facilities only if the use does not impair or displace the primary boating use of the grant program.

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

Allowing compatible uses of publicly funded boating facilities to conserve government budget and resources while protecting the facilities' primary uses. The board will adopt policies that allow for compatible use of boating sites and require pro-rating costs to ensure consistency with Action 2A. The board will also consider adding a preference in the evaluation criteria to on the importance of active site management in order to avoid user conflicts when sites have multiple uses.

Action 3C – Support facilities for transient public recreational boating uses.

Facilities supported by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants must be available for the “transient” use by the general boating public. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board defines transient use as a maximum of 14 consecutive days of moorage.⁴¹

Strategy 3 - Support Stewardship and Retention of Current Boating Infrastructure

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

Boating grant programs should focus on maximizing the efficient use of the existing facilities rather than the acquisition of land for and construction of new facilities. Use of existing sites avoids time-consuming and costly land acquisition. Renovation can extend facility service life and reduce need for costly maintenance and repairs. To the extent practicable, the board will consider a preference for projects that includes public-private partnerships in site construction and management. This action is consistent with recommendations in the boater needs assessment that prioritized funding to maintain existing boating facilities rather than build new ones.⁴²

Action 3B – Encourage projects that use design standards and construction techniques that maximize the service life of the facility and minimize maintenance.

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

⁴¹ The United States Fish and Wildlife Service defines transient moorage as ten days or less for the Boating Infrastructure Grant program.

⁴² Responsive Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007), 33.

Strategy 4 - Promote Infrastructure Projects and Construction Practices that Reduce Environmental Impacts

Action 4A – Satisfy user needs in an environmentally responsible manner.

In making funding available to facility providers, RCO recognizes its responsibility as a partner in the stewardship of the natural environment. To this end, RCO will work cooperatively with regulatory and permitting agencies to address environmental issues at the grant program level. For example, RCO will work with the Department of Natural Resources as a propriety steward of state-owned aquatic lands to ensure applications are consistent with that agency's management directives and its *Aquatic Lands Habitat Conservation Plan*, if adopted. RCO also will work with Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission to coordinate needs for funding boating pump out facilities. RCO's grant sponsors must ensure funded projects meet regulatory and permit requirements. This objective is in response to a recommendation to consider environmental issues when administering boating programs.⁴³

Action 4B – Apply the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's policy on sustainability in all its boating grant programs.

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

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

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will consider adding an evaluation criterion on sustainability to the Boating Facilities Program and Boating Infrastructure Grants program. The evaluation criteria for the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account grant program already addresses sustainability. Specific efforts toward sustainability include improving water quality by upgrading restrooms, providing education signage about oil spill prevention from recreational boats, rewarding participation in the Clean Marina program, and implementing best management practices as described in the state's *Aquatic Habitat Guidelines*.

Action 4C – Support actions related to invasive species prevention and control in the Invasive Species Council's Strategic Plan.

The Washington State Invasive Species Council provides coordination for combating harmful invasive species throughout the state and preventing the introduction of others that may be potentially harmful.

⁴³ Responsive Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007), 41.

The council will adopt a new strategic plan in 2015. RCO will work with the council to incorporate specific strategies that prevent the spread of invasive species at boating facilities in RCO's grant programs. RCO also will recommend policy changes to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in response to the new strategic plan, as appropriate. This objective is in response to a recommendation to consider environmental issues when administering boating programs.⁴⁴

Strategy 5 - Provide Accurate and Timely Information to Boaters.

Action 5A – Maintain and improve the Washington Water Cruiser.

In 2013, RCO launched the Washington Water Cruiser to provide the recreational boating community with a resource to locate boating facilities and services. This application, available on a Web site and through a mobile application, was in direct response to a recommendation to create a digital map of public boating facilities statewide.⁴⁵ RCO will seek partners and sponsors to assist with storage costs, maintenance of the application and updating the data during the next 3 years.

Action 5B – Maintain the boat.wa.gov Web site.

In 2009, RCO launched the boat.wa.gov Web site to provide the recreational boating community with a centralized place to find boating related information such as boat registration, boating laws and education, fishing licenses, moorage and launch sites, weather, and tide information. RCO created the Web site in response to recommendations to increase communications with recreational boaters through a cross-agency Web portal.⁴⁶ RCO will continue to maintain this Web site for the next 5 years and regularly update information in coordination with other state agencies.

Action 5C – Participate in the Washington Boaters Alliance.

RCO will participate actively in the Washington Boaters Alliance as a non-voting member. The mission of the Washington Boating Alliance, an all-inclusive alliance of boating-related organizations, is to develop, advance, and implement consensus positions and proposals to enhance the recreational boating experience in Washington. RCO participates in the alliance to share information with the recreational boating community and learn about emerging issues and concerns from recreational boaters.

Action 5D – Participate in education and training seminars.

RCO will participate actively in educational and training seminars for the recreational boating community hosted by other organizations such as the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Washington Boater Alliance, and the Northwest Marine Trade Association. The focus of this effort is to foster communication between RCO and boaters and to receive feedback from a broad

⁴⁴ Responsive Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007).

⁴⁵ Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Improving Coordination of State Services to Recreational Boaters, (2008).

⁴⁶ Responsive Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007), 39, and Ross & Associates, 2008.

audience. This goal is in response to a recommendation to participate in regular conferences about recreational boating services.⁴⁷

Strategy 6 – Work Cooperatively with other State Agencies to Improve Boating Programs and Services.

Action 6A – Coordinate and participate in the Agency Boating Committee.

RCO will coordinate regular meetings of the Agency Boating Committee. In 2008, the state agencies created this committee in response to recommendations for better coordination.⁴⁸ The committee is comprised of staff members from Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Licensing, Department of Natural Resources, State Parks and Recreation Commission, and RCO. Agencies use this forum to coordinate boating programs, grant opportunities, and services targeted to the recreational boating community.

Action 6B – Work with other State Agencies to Address Control and Tenure Requirements

RCO will engage with other state agencies who own or management state lands to develop guidelines on control and tenure requirements for boating projects that occur on state lands. The board will consider whether control and tenure requirements need to be revised to meet grant program objectives, funding requirements, and other state proprietary needs.

Action 6C – Participate in Other State Agency Boating Committees

RCO will participate in other state boating committees as requested such as the Boating Program Advisory Council coordinated by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

V. Recommendations for the Future

Recommendations for the Future

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

Update the Boater Needs Assessment

To understand the boating population and the types of facilities they need, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board should prepare a boater needs assessment periodically, perhaps once every 5 years in conjunction with the SCORP survey. The needs assessment would assist the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board with identifying funding priorities for its grant programs. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board produced an initial assessment in 2007 in response to a legislative

⁴⁷ Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Improving Coordination of State Services to Recreational Boaters, (2008).

⁴⁸ Responsive Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007), 36, and Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Improving Coordination of State Services to Recreational Boaters, (2008).

mandate, Revised Code of Washington 79A.60.680.⁴⁹ A new assessment in 2017 would provide an update on boater needs in advance of or in conjunction with the next State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Specific data needs could include a needs assessment for boating groups by the length of the vessel, by specific water bodies, by fishing and other activities while boating, and the location of facilities in urban and rural locations. Data collected could also distinguish how many boaters participate in both motorized and non-motorized boating.

Inventory Boating Facilities

To further enhance the information in a boater needs assessment as well as in the Washington Water Cruiser, RCO should conduct an inventory of all public recreational boating facilities, motorized and non-motorized by 2017. A more robust inventory is responsive to a recommendation for RCO to create a statewide map of public boating facilities.⁵⁰ Such an inventory may be accomplished in partnership with other state agencies, private organizations, and boaters. The inventory would include all public motorized and non-motorized boat launches, access sites, transient moorages, buoys, and supporting facilities such as restrooms, pump outs, parking lots, camping and fishing facilities, and laundry services. Either this inventory can be generated through crowd sourcing in the Washington Water Cruiser Application (Strategy #1A) or as a separate inventory that is integrated into the application later.

Explore Non-motorized Boating

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

Update the Boating Plan with SCORP

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is the source of much of the data in this plan. RCO updates SCORP every 5 years to meet certain federal grant program requirements. The next SCORP is due in 2019. To streamline RCO's planning efforts and better utilize the SCORP framework, the next Boating Grant Programs Plan will be produced in conjunction with the next SCORP in 2019.

Support Water Trails

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

Address Climate Change

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

⁴⁹ Responsive Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007).

⁵⁰ Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Improving Coordination of State Services to Recreational Boaters, (2008).

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

Develop Boating Grant Program Measures

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board should develop specific program measures for its boating programs to track progress toward meeting the most important needs identified by boaters and service providers. Data collected with each grant project should have the ability to be cumulative to communicate the types of boating facilities funded across grant programs.

Appendix A – State Agency Boating Programs

The following state agencies administer their respective boating programs as assigned by the Governor or State Legislature.

Recreation and Conservation Office

- Boating Activities Program
- Boats.wa.gov Web Site
- Washington Water Cruise
- Washington State Invasive Species Council

Washington State Parks

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

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

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

Washington Department of Natural Resources

- Port Management Areas on State Aquatic Lands
- Derelict Vessel Removal Program

Washington State Department of Licensing

- Vessel Registration and Renewal

Local Law Enforcement

- Boating Accidents Reports

Appendix B – Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution #2015-03 Boating Grant Programs Plan 2016

WHEREAS, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) funds boating facilities projects through multiple grant programs; and

WHEREAS, the RCFB has been entrusted with public funds to help pay for water access projects serving citizens who wish to enjoy the use of boats of all types; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the state that the RCFB administer grant programs and funds on a foundation of good data based on sound research, systematic analysis, and public involvement; and

WHEREAS, the Boating Grant Programs Plan has been developed according to these principles; and

WHEREAS, approving the plan supports the board’s strategic plan to make strategic investments through policy development, grant funding, technical assistance, coordination, and advocacy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the board approves the Boating Grant Programs Plan for immediate use; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the director will review the plan after a five-year period and recommend to the board whether to revise or re-approve the plan.

Resolution moved by: Ted Willhite

Resolution seconded by: Mike Deller

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date: April 9, 2015

Appendix C – Definitions Used for Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Grant Programs

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

Non-motorized boats – Non-motorized boats includes all forms of paddle craft, sail only craft, and rowboats.

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