

# A Strategic Plan for Ohio Boating

Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Watercraft

2004



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**T**he Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Watercraft is a customer-centered state agency that provides information and resources to Ohioans who want to participate in the boating experience. Boating provides an opportunity to spend recreational time with friends and family or to have personal time alone on the water. The boating experience removes participants from the distractions of hectic, everyday life. Recreational boating in Ohio enriches people's lives.

The ODNR Division of Watercraft is interested in promoting boating as Ohioans' choice for recreation as well as ensuring that such opportunities are safe and enjoyable. The goal of our strategic planning process is to determine what our boating customers' highest priority needs are and to determine how we can improve the programs and services we offer.

This strategic plan presents a common vision that enables the Division of Watercraft to provide programs and services that benefit Ohio's boaters. It provides the framework for agency decision-making, budgeting, and program evaluation.

This plan was produced in a concerted effort with participation from Ohio's boaters and is a follow-up to *The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Watercraft Strategic Plan for the Twenty-First Century* published in July of 1999. Input we received from the boating public, the Waterways Safety Council, employees of the Department, and various organizations was utilized to identify the issues contained in this strategic plan.

The Division is funded by a portion of the state motor fuel tax (currently seven-eighths of one percent), boating registrations and titling fees, fines, a grant from the U.S. Coast Guard Boat Safety Account, and other federal grants — all coming out of the pocket, in one way or another, of Ohio's recreational boaters.

"Wise use" is part of the Division's mission and responsible management of our fiscal resources is essential to fulfilling that mission, so identified issues were prioritized based on wise use of boater funds.

As requested by the boaters, the majority of the Division efforts, funding, and resources will be dedicated to implement these first four strategic issues:

- Develop new and maintain and upgrade existing boating access and facilities to enhance boating opportunities.
- Develop and implement a plan for waterways management to improve boater experiences.
- Increase and enhance boating education opportunities.
- Provide consistent, coordinated, and increased boating law enforcement/safety services.

[more...](#)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

The remaining issues will have teams assigned to address the objectives and strategies. However, the ability to fully fund and implement these strategies is based on available resources.

- Enhance revenue sources for the Division of Watercraft to fulfill service expectations of our customers.
- Improve and enhance the watercraft registration process.
- Get boating information to the people who need it.
- Improve water quality on boating waterways.
- Improve public boating areas through strategic dredging and/or debris removal.
- Research and enact uniform watercraft laws that promote safe and enjoyable recreational boating.
- Improve waterway markings for recreational boating.

The purpose of this plan is to create a viable strategy for the Division of Watercraft that will enable the agency to address issues important to the boating public. The Division is looking for innovative ways to enhance the recreational boating experience. We are proud to present *A Strategic Plan for Ohio Boating*.

The Division of Watercraft is extremely grateful for the input we have received. Without assistance from our constituents and customers — namely Ohio's boaters — it would have been impossible to complete this planning process. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Watercraft's *A Strategic Plan for Ohio Boating* is a plan for all Ohio boaters, encompassing the diverse boating interests of all our customers who share our desire to make boating a safer and more enjoyable activity for themselves and future generations.



## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

**P**rior to the late 1800s, most boating in Ohio was done out of necessity for transportation and commerce. The Ohio and Erie Canal, which became operative from Akron to Cleveland in 1827, provided Ohio with an economic boon as well as a link to needed resources. The Miami and Erie Canal, which comprised three canals (the Miami Canal running from Cincinnati to Dayton, the Miami Extension, and the Wabash and Erie Canal), was officially designated in 1849.

Boating as a recreational activity was popularized by sailing regattas held on Lake Erie in the late 1800s. The first international sailing regatta on the Great Lakes was held at Put-in-Bay in September 1871. The Inter-Lake Yachting Association (ILYA) was conceived in July 1884 at Put-in-Bay Harbor and was formally organized at a January 1885 meeting of the Cleveland Yachting Association and the Cleveland Canoe Club. Interest in regatta sailing races was so great that in 1900 carrier pigeons were dispatched from a boat at the finish line to fly the results to the *Sandusky Star*, the local evening newspaper.

For many Ohioans, Lake Erie weekends were not a recreational option, so inland Ohioans flocked to the rivers for recreational boating and fishing opportunities. Popular family vacation destinations were the Maumee, Miami, Muskingum, Tuscarawas, and Ohio rivers, which provided ample opportunity to spend on-the-water time with family and friends.

Production of the first Evinrude outboard motor in 1909 opened the doors to modern recreational boating. In the 1920s, the high cost of owning and operating powerboats relegated their recreational use to mostly wealthy individuals. The Depression of the 1930s tremendously slowed the growth of recreational boating, but following World War II, the demand for leisure time activities dramatically increased.

At that time, boat owners registered their boats locally, for a particular body of water — thus requiring multiple registrations for a single vessel if it was used in different bodies of water. Also after World War II, sailing enjoyed a resurgence, with competitive racing becoming very popular.



In response to the dramatic increase in the number of recreational boats following World War II, the 101<sup>st</sup> General Assembly created the Waterways Safety Fund in 1955 (Ohio Revised Code, Section 1545.75). The fund was originally administered by the Division of Shore Erosion and was established to provide monies for construction and improvement of public facilities for boating on the navigable waters within Ohio. The fund also enabled the state to obtain federal matching funds for the establishment of harbors of refuge.

[more...](#)

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

In 1958, the Federal Boating Act was passed in Congress. This Act enabled the United States Coast Guard to develop and administer a uniform numbering system for all of the states and allowed for a single statewide registration. A statewide registration replaced multiple, local registrations. The 103<sup>rd</sup> Ohio General Assembly passed Amended Substitute House Bill 928 in 1959, conforming Ohio law to the concepts and objectives of the Federal Boating Act and created the Division of Watercraft within the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The main functions of the Division, which became operative January 1, 1960, were to register boats and motors and to fund capital improvement projects such as launch ramps and marinas. Local political subdivisions and sister state agencies applied yearly for funds to build or improve boating facilities.

The enactment of House Bill 949 in 1960 made Ohio the first state in the nation to adopt a uniform system of buoy markers to designate controlled operation areas of waters used for recreational boating.

Ohio law established a Waterways Safety Commission consisting of four members who served without pay and acted in an advisory capacity to the Administrator of the Division of Watercraft. In 1963, legislation changed the Commission's name to the Waterways Safety Council, expanded the membership to five, and changed "Administrator" to "Chief" of the Division of Watercraft.

In 1963, the Division began providing assistance to political subdivisions, conservancy districts, and state agencies to establish and maintain local marine patrols.

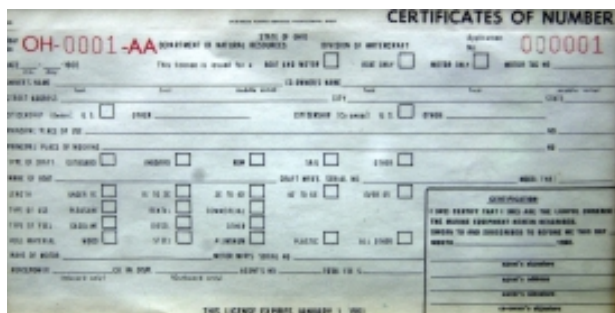
The issuance of Certificates of Titles and recording of liens (mortgages on watercraft and outboard motors) was initiated on January 1, 1964. With the enactment of Senate Bill 350 in 1971, boat and motor titling was transferred from the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and became the responsibility of the Division of Watercraft on December 21, 1971.

The increase of recreational boating and the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971 marked the beginning of the Division's education and enforcement program. The first training academy for Watercraft Officers was held at the Ohio State Highway Patrol Academy in 1972 and consisted of 16 officers. Six district offices were established throughout the state to serve the boating communities, enforce boating laws, and provide education programs.

In 1978, the Division pioneered the development of the first river rescue program in the United States and Canada. An ad hoc committee on fast water rescue composed of canoeists, emergency medical technicians, and park rangers was spearheaded by the Division to develop safe, simple, and practical rescue techniques. This program has received national and international awards and recognition.



## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)



In 1980, boat registrations were changed from a one-year to a three-year registration period, and a renewal-by-mail system was established which provided added convenience to boaters while also serving as a very cost-effective procedure. The Division also stopped licensing outboard motors separately, and fees were established by watercraft length classifications.

In 1983, legislation was enacted to enable the Division to award grants for boater safety education to political subdivisions (non-profit groups became eligible in 1990). Over \$2 million has thus far been awarded to community recreation departments, state universities, cities, counties, and townships. These grants make boating safety programs available at the local levels.

A volunteer program was established in 1983 to support the efforts of paid staff by expanding available services. Volunteers donate thousands of hours each year by teaching courses, assisting in training, supporting law enforcement, and representing the Division at special events and shows.

In 1985, the Division of Watercraft applied for and received a State Agency Grant from the Division of Recycling and Litter Prevention. With the funding, the Division of Watercraft implemented a comprehensive litter prevention, recycling, education/awareness, and waterway cleanup program. Major projects supported under this program include the Lake Erie Waterways Cleanup, the Little Miami River Cleanup, the Licking River Round-up, and the Ohio River Sweep.

In 1986, Ohio passed the "Implied Consent" statute requiring potentially intoxicated boat operators to submit to chemical tests when requested by law enforcement officers. Operating a watercraft while under the influence continues to be a major concern of the Division of Watercraft, as alcohol is involved in a high percentage of boating accidents. The original legislation prohibiting the operation of watercraft while under the influence (OUI) was enacted in 1970. With the passage of the revised legislation, the Division enhanced its ability to enforce OUI laws with the purchase of portable breath-testing equipment.

In 1988, the federal government passed legislation that required the U.S. Coast Guard to develop a Vessel Identification System (VIS) to share individual states' vessel information as well as information on federally documented vessels. With such a system, it was thought that the Coast Guard and state law enforcement officials could more effectively identify information on vessels in our nation's ports and waterways — the need for which has heightened since the September 11 terrorist attacks. The federal VIS program has not yet been fully implemented and participation remains voluntary for states.

In 1991, a study was conducted to document the basic structure, functions, activities, and related data of the Division of Watercraft's information system. In January 1992, 12 computers were connected to the ODNR computer user network, allowing the Division to share registration data and to better serve law enforcement and other needs.

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

In 1992, the Automated Titling Process System (ATPS) was initiated. All 88 counties were online by 1993. ATPS allows daily networking of all county titling offices with the Division of Watercraft.

In 1992, the Division of Watercraft began offering a standardized basic boating course. In 1993, volunteers, marine patrol officers, and staff were trained as instructors in what is now named the Ohio Boating Education Course. This course is approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators and is offered throughout the state. The course includes topics on safety equipment requirements, operational laws, navigation rules, trailering, and launching.

In 1993, the Splash Test Dummies™, a family of characters used to promote boating safety, were first featured at the Ohio State Fair. Created by the Public Information and Education Section, the Splash Test Dummies™ won the National Safe Boating Council's 1995 Idea Fair.

The two main characters, Splish™ and Splash™, continue to promote boating safety. They have been featured in coloring books for youth, public service announcements, posters, and the 1996 National Safety Council Youth Congress at Disney World in Orlando, Florida. Videos and public service announcements using these characters help boaters assess and reduce risks through risk management.



In 1996, Senate Bill 295 was introduced to address the changing trends in boat types and the increasing problems associated with these trends. Senate Bill 295 was passed and the changes became effective March 17, 1997. The law changed the minimum operator age to 16 for personal watercraft (e.g., Jet Ski, Waverunner, Sea Doo; generically referred to as PWC), prohibited persons under 12 years of age to operate a watercraft over ten horsepower unless a person 18 years or older is on board, and created new regulations for exhaust mufflers on boats (effective January 1, 2000). Several additional changes were made to existing laws to address PWC operation.

In 1996, the Division of Watercraft entered into memoranda of understanding with the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary and the United States Power Squadron to provide educational assistance with Ohio laws and safety requirements. These cooperative agreements greatly increased the Division's long-standing, professional and successful relationships with both of these outstanding volunteer boating safety organizations. The diversity and convenience of the course offerings provided by these agencies collectively allow all Ohio boaters an opportunity to receive boating safety information and training at minimal cost and in proximity to their homes.

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)



Ohioans witnessed the introduction and enactment of more boating legislation in 1998. House Bill 502, signed by Governor George Voinovich on June 25, established a graduated mandatory education requirement for individuals born on or after January 1, 1982, when operating powerboats over ten horsepower. The law requires the successful completion of a course approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators or passing a proficiency exam. The effective date for the law was January 1, 2000.

Senate Bill 187 was signed by the governor on December 18, 1998, and addressed a number of issues including operating requirements and prohibitions, operating vessels when under the influence of alcohol or drugs, temporary registration of watercraft, a process for dealing with unclaimed vessels and outboard motors, the sale of specified items, titling requirements for PWCs and other vessels, and insurance fraud. The major portions of the law went into effect March 18, 1999, with some parts becoming effective January 1, 2000.

In 1998, the Watercraft Information System (WIS) was implemented. WIS is the database system used by the Division to keep track of registration and titling records and the history of the records. Annual upgrades to the system were performed for renewal of registrations via the Internet and the capability of changing addresses electronically. In 2004, a planned upgrade will be completed that allows for the issuance of online registrations by Watercraft Registration Agents.

In 1999, a new exhaust muffler law for vessels set acceptable noise levels when on the water. Noise testing devices were purchased and training was conducted for division staff and marine patrol agencies.

In March of 1999, boaters were given the option of obtaining a temporary boat registration while waiting for title work to be completed. This means boaters can register and legally operate their boats sooner.

In 1999, the Division of Watercraft, Ohio Sea Grant, the Lake Erie Commission, the Boating Associations of Ohio, and the Lake Erie Marine Trades Association conducted a recreational boating economic impact study. The study revealed that Ohio's economy is much richer due to nearly \$1.4 billion spent each year by boaters and approximately 19,500 jobs exist in Ohio due to recreational boating.

In 1999, a Field Restructure Plan began implementation. Four regional field offices were created to better manage law enforcement and education services. The Alum Creek Watercraft field office was opened and officer satellite sites were established in New Philadelphia, Wapakoneta, and Chillicothe.

*more...*

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

In 2000, the U.S. Coast Guard agreed to lease their station in Ashtabula to the Division to use as an officer satellite site. This collaboration was the first of its kind in Ohio. Satellite sites were also established at Buckeye Lake and Newton Falls.

As a result of receiving an increase in its percentage of the state's motor fuel tax, and as a component to the Field Restructure Plan, an increase in law enforcement staff took place in 2000 with the hiring of 13 Watercraft officer cadets and 18 established term Watercraft officers. The established term officers are assigned to various waterways to assist with law enforcement and to provide needed assistance to boaters for ten-month terms.

A new Comprehensive Management System, which encompasses this strategic plan, an operational plan, and an evaluation component, was implemented in the Division in July of 2001. This system drives the budgeting and project management for the agency and assists managers in planning for and utilizing division resources for maximum customer service.



In 2001, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary to partner with them in the Vessel Safety Check program. If Ohio boaters pass a vessel safety inspection, they benefit by receiving a state-issued decal that is recognized nationally.

Substitute Senate Bill 59 was enacted in 2001 to enable boat dealers and owners to title watercraft in any Ohio county. The effective date was April 30, 2002.

Senate Bill 80, requiring markings for restricted areas on inland bodies of water, became effective October 26, 2001.

Senate Bill 150 was signed into law in 2002. This law gives owners of hand powered canoes, kayaks, rowboats, racing shells, rowing sculls and inflatable watercraft an option to exempt their boats from the traditional numbering system. The law also requires all watercraft in the state of Ohio to have a correct 12-character HIN at the time a registration or title is issued for boats that were built in 1973 or later and after a transfer of ownership for boats that were built before 1973.

In 2002, with authority from the U.S. Supreme Court, Ohio and Kentucky signed an agreement to mutually promote boating safety education and boating law enforcement on the portion of the Ohio River that divides these two states. This agreement represents an important partnership and mutual understanding with our neighboring state that will benefit boating interests along the Ohio River.

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

To enhance customer service, ten more State Watercraft Officers were hired to provide law enforcement throughout the state primarily on state park lakes. The Cincinnati Watercraft field office was moved to East Fork State Park in Clermont County in 2003. The Division also established a remote work site in Marietta in 2003.

House Bill 87 became effective July 1, 2003. This bill modified the offenses of the state law relating to boating while under the influence of alcohol by reducing the specified concentrations of alcohol that can be present in a person's blood, breath or urine from 0.10% to 0.08%.

The governor signed House Bill 50 on July 22, 2003. The law increases the penalties for hit-and-run offenders when the incident results in the death of a person. In addition, it establishes the offenses of aggravated vehicular homicide and aggravated vehicular assault for watercraft operators under the influence of alcohol or drugs if injury or death occurs during an incident. With this law, watercraft operators are held to the same penalties as motor vehicle operators who violate these laws.

As state boating laws change from year to year and as the Division of Watercraft continues to upgrade the programs and services it provides to the public, the Division will persist in its tradition of working hard to enhance the state's boating safety program. As the only state agency with marine capabilities and authority, the Division of Watercraft will continue to provide assistance to and foster partnerships with federal, state, and local authorities such as the U.S. Secret Service for the protection of the President, the Ohio State Highway Patrol for the protection of the Governor, sister state departments and divisions, county sheriffs' offices, and local political subdivisions. The Division will continue to grow our partnerships with boating organizations such as the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the U.S. Power Squadrons, our many boating education partners, and our corps of dedicated, statewide volunteers.



## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

**T**he Division of Watercraft is responsible for boating safety, education, and law enforcement that cover all waters of the state. This statewide area includes the near-shore area along 451 miles of the Ohio River, approximately half the entire surface area of Lake Erie, more than 200 inland lakes, and over 60,000 miles of inland streams, rivers, and other waterways.

The Division administers and enforces all laws regarding identification, numbering, titling, use, and operation of recreational boats on Ohio's waters. It conducts water safety education programs and develops boating facilities on major water areas of the state.

A staff of 130 full-time permanent, 14 part-time permanent, and 22 established term employees — for a total of 166 permanent employees — provide service in the form of law enforcement patrols, homeland security, emergency first response, registration and titling services, educational programs, professional training, boating access facility grants, vessel inspections, aids to navigation, and technical assistance.

<b>On-the-Water Patrols</b>	<b>Public Information Line</b>
<b>Vessel Safety Inspections</b>	<b>Watercraft Registrations</b>
<b>Investigations</b>	<b>Automated Titles</b>
<b>Search and Rescue</b>	<b>Watercraft Registration Agents</b>
<b>Grants for Boating Access</b>	<b>Ohio Boating Education Courses</b>
<b>Grants for Boating Safety Education</b>	<b>Boating Skills Courses</b>
<b>Grants for Buoys, Signs, and Other Aids to Navigation</b>	<b>Recreation Plans</b>
<b>Grants for Marine Patrols</b>	<b>Data Collection and Analysis</b>
<b>Grants for Marine Pump Out Stations</b>	<b>Waterway Cleanups</b>
<b>Marine Patrol Training</b>	<b>Publications</b>
<b>Equipment Loan Program</b>	<b>Promotional Items</b>
<b>Legislation/Rules</b>	<b>Displays</b>
<b>News Releases</b>	<b>Presentations</b>
<b>Media Interviews</b>	<b>School Programs</b>
<b>Public Safety Announcements</b>	<b>Conferences</b>
	<b>Web Site</b>



# MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

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## Mission



The Division of Watercraft shall provide the finest boating services, facilities, protection, and education for users of Ohio's waterways through the innovative and wise use of our resources.

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## Vision

A dedicated and skilled team of employees, volunteers, and partners empowered to respond to the needs and desires of the recreational boating public while providing an environment that ensures the highest quality boating experience for all who use Ohio's waterways.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

**W**e respect and value our external and internal customers, recognizing their diversity, knowledge, and needs.

- Practice highest ethical and professional standards.
- Provide timely, quality customer service.
- Encourage self-improvement and employee pride.
- Promote and implement teamwork and partnerships.



## **Develop new, and maintain and upgrade existing boating access and facilities to enhance boating opportunities.**

### **Background**

*Capital improvements (boating access and facilities) was one of the strategic issues in the 1999 plan; several objectives from that plan have been implemented.*

*The original plan established consistent funding amounts and efforts to market the program, both of which have been successful and consistent towards the development of access facilities for recreational boaters.*

*Various processes in the Cooperative Boating Facility Grant application process were improved to decrease the amount of time between implementing the grant and completing the project.*

*Relationships with political subdivisions and conservancy groups have been established to increase awareness of grant monies and processes.*

*A database of boating access facilities was developed and continually proves to be a useful tool in the management of grants and maintaining current facility information.*

*The positive results that past strategies have had on facility development, along with the public's continued interest in the issue, reinforce the Division's desire to continue to enhance the recreational boating experience in Ohio.*

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### **Objective 1: Maintain current funding levels for boating facility development.**

#### Strategies

1. Maintain the current minimum level of funding (with current economic resources) for boating access projects that can be committed each biennium. Funding will be used for new projects, replacement projects, and repair of existing facilities.
2. Develop a system for reinvesting boaters' dollars back into boating facilities.
3. Study feasibility of establishing a funding base for providing loans to communities to enhance existing or develop new boating facilities.

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### **Objective 2: Research and pursue additional funding for boating access and facilities.**

#### Strategies

1. Apply and compete for federal grants administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Boating Infrastructure Grant Program funds transient marina development, and the Clean Vessel Act Program funds the development of boat waste disposal facilities.
2. Encourage and assist local agencies and communities to compete for grants administered by Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Real Estate and Land Management (Natureworks and Land and Water Conservation Fund).

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### **Objective 3: Continue to improve the processes and procedures of the Cooperative Boating Facility Grant program.**

#### Strategies

1. Continue to encourage local grant recipients to begin consultant selection as early as possible. Pre-selection of a consultant does not require expenditures.

*more on this issue...*

## Develop new, and maintain and upgrade existing boating access and facilities to enhance boating opportunities.

2. Continue to encourage local grant recipients to complete the design and approval process prior to submitting the grant application, thereby reducing the overall timeline of the grant project.
3. Continue to encourage local grant recipients to use their local matching dollars to pay for the design work.
4. Highlight project completion target dates. Setting a target date from the date of the contract execution helps local agencies understand the importance of completing construction.
5. Continue "orientation meetings" where grant recipients come to Columbus to attend a half-day session on grant/project implementation.
6. Develop an internal project evaluation report to be written upon completion of each project, to establish successful project implementation and completion criteria.

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### Objective 4: Update the comprehensive boating facilities database to identify existing boating access facilities according to location, condition and usage.

#### Strategies

1. Verify existing site information via mail, e-mail, telephone, site visits and/or any combination of these methods.
2. Update the records within the database both digitally and on hard-copy records.
3. Continue quality assurance and control to verify information accuracy.
4. Develop a publication for boaters containing information on facilities and usage.
5. Update and enhance the Division of Watercraft web site on boating access and facilities.
6. Analyze the information using Geographic Information System and traditional data analysis to develop maps, reports, and recommendations for "target improvement areas."

*more on this issue...*



## Develop new, and maintain and upgrade existing boating access and facilities to enhance boating opportunities.

### **Method of Measurement**

*Survey existing grant partners upon completion of projects to determine their satisfaction with the grant program in order to see how the Division can improve processes and services.*

*Measure and track additional funding for boater access and facilities in Ohio.*

*Increases in grant applications and subsequently successful grants will assist in determining the success of these strategies.*

*Evaluate the reinvestment amounts being returned to the Waterway Safety Fund and the positive impacts the reinvestment has on boating access and facilities.*

### **Resources**

- *Ohio Revised Code 1547.71 and 1547.72 (Act as the Refuge and Small Boat Harbor Agency)*
- *Cooperative Boating Facility Grant ([www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/grant/](http://www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/grant/))*
- *ODNR Division of Watercraft's Strategic Plan for the Twenty-First Century; Summer 1999*
- *Boating Infrastructure Grant Program ([www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/bigp/](http://www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/bigp/))*
- *Ohio's Public Boating Facilities Guide; 2001*

7. Continue to work with the divisions of Parks and Recreation and Wildlife. Facility lists should be developed and compared to the facilities database. New facilities should be identified in conjunction with other departmental efforts.
8. Outreach to local areas and specific regions and develop focus groups to assist in the identification of boating access and facility needs.
9. Complete an analysis of information and prepare a report identifying a five-year statewide capital improvements plan.

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### **Objective 5: Continue to increase awareness of resources available for access facilities and the process for applying for Cooperative Boating Facility Grants and Boating Infrastructure Grants.**

#### Strategies

1. Grow relationships with constituents. Continue to contact Conservancy Districts and other political subdivisions to determine if they have an association or central news forum. Schedule and attend their conferences and meetings.
2. Continue to send news releases to the Outdoor Writers Association for inclusion in various sports and fishing articles. Such articles can ask sportsmen for their comments and suggestions on their needs. Those areas can then be targeted to encourage the controlling agency to apply for funds.
3. Contact other boating interest groups such as yacht clubs, paddling clubs, sailing clubs, BASS clubs, and League of Ohio Sportsmen regarding boating access opportunities.
4. Continue to use the Department's brochure regarding grant opportunities to advertise Watercraft's program and funds available to local political subdivisions.
5. Continue to develop the Watercraft web page for facility grant information.





## **Develop and implement a plan for waterway management to improve boater experience.**

### **Background**

*Through public boating forums, the Division of Watercraft has identified a number of boating issues:*

- *Waterway congestion*
- *Availability of launch ramps and marina facilities*
- *Quality design of launch ramps and marina facilities*
- *Environmental issues*

*Also, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources produced the Strategic Plan for Recreation Opportunities late in 1998. Several strategies were established in this plan including, "ODNR will improve access to **water-based** recreation." The desired outcomes for this strategy were*

- *reduction of recreational user conflicts,*
- *appropriate levels of recreational use on land and waters,*
- *increased awareness of services and information regarding recreational waterway access,*
- *increased water-based recreational opportunities, and*
- *recreational waterway access improvement and development based on a current plan.*

*The Boating on Ohio Waterways (BOW) Plan was launched in an effort to further study these issues.*

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### **Objective 1: Encourage the development of high-quality transient tie-up facilities in high-priority areas on Ohio's Lake Erie coast and the Ohio River.**

#### Strategies

1. Promote boating infrastructure grant program in priority areas.
2. Publicize boater preferred marina features and amenities.

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### **Objective 2: Encourage the development of high-quality launch ramps and upgrade of existing facilities in high-priority areas.**

#### Strategies

1. Promote appropriate grant programs in priority areas.
2. Publicize boater preferred launch ramp features and amenities.
3. Inventory "older" public launch ramps to identify problematic situations at these facilities, recommend improvements, and prioritize.
4. Encourage public agencies to make incremental improvements to facilities whenever possible, using boater-specified, prioritized preferences as a guide.

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### **Objective 3: Advocate for the provision of additional boating related recreational opportunities on inland lakes.**

#### Strategy

Identify ideal locations for additional boat swimming, boat camping, and courtesy day docks at lake attractions such as historic sites, beaches, and picnic areas.

*more on this issue...*

## Develop and implement a plan for waterway management to improve boater experience.

### Objective 4: Promote the development of water trails on Ohio rivers and streams.

#### Strategy

Participate in and support the efforts of the Discover Ohio Water Trails (DOWT) partnership workgroup.

### Objective 5: Use a proactive approach to reduce user conflict occasions on Ohio waterways.

#### Strategies

1. Improve boating knowledge using new techniques in addition to traditional means.
2. Promote horsepower modifications on a pilot project basis at selected lakes.
3. Continue to execute the rule making process for site specific rule proposals. Minimize the frequency of site specific rules and require proper documentation for all proposed rule changes.
4. Encourage boater courtesy.

#### Method of Measurement

*Survey boater opinion in 2007 using a survey closely based on the 2002 Survey of Boater Opinion (used for the Boating on Ohio Waterways Plan) to identify planning successes and new boating issues.*

*Evaluate success of waterway management programs and pilot projects on inland lakes.*

*Evaluate the number of new grant projects that help meet the need for launch ramps and transient facilities in priority areas.*

*Update the Boating on Ohio Waterways Plan in 2008.*

#### Resources

- Boating on Ohio Waterways Plan; ODNR Division of Watercraft; 2003
- [www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/watertrails/](http://www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/watertrails/)



## **Increase and enhance boating education opportunities.**

### **Background**

*In the 1996 strategic planning process, boater education was one of six key issues. Customer input identified a need to enhance boating safety by requiring that specific boaters obtain a minimum level of boating knowledge.*

*As a result, on June 25, 1998, Governor George Voinovich signed House Bill 502 which established a graduated mandatory education requirement for individuals born on or after January 1, 1982 when operating powerboats over 10 horsepower.*

*The law requires successfully completing a course approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) or passing a proficiency exam.*

*The effective date for the legislation was January 1, 2000.*

### **Objective 1: Continue the implementation process and administration process for Ohio's Boater Education Law.**

#### **Strategies**

1. Train, support and supply materials to agencies who rent powerboats over 10 horsepower.
2. Revise and update the Education Memorandums Of Understanding (MOUs) with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and the U.S. Power Squadrons. Implement the new MOUs.
3. Continue to publish and advertise all boating education courses and opportunities on the ODNR Division of Watercraft Web site.
4. Continue to update and support the NASBLA-approved certificate database so that all watercraft officers, selected staff and the Department of Natural Resources law enforcement personnel can conduct required searches.
5. Continue to implement the Ohio Boating Education Course (OBEC) offered by the ODNR Division of Watercraft. Update and revise materials as standards and laws change. Train, certify, and provide support materials to OBEC instructors.
6. Conduct instructor certification courses, re-certifications, and education partner meetings to update and communicate to all boating education instructors.
7. Coordinate with boating education partners and conduct NASBLA-approved courses as needed to ensure a minimum of two NASBLA-approved classes from the beginning of March through July and a minimum of one NASBLA-approved class from August through February in each field office area. This will help to ensure that State Watercraft Officers will meet their Education Performance Indicators.
8. Continue to offer on-line and home-study options for boaters to comply with the law.

*more on this issue...*

## Increase and enhance boating education opportunities.

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### **Objective 2: Continue to administer the Boating Safety Education Grant Program and award grants to enhance boating safety efforts of community agencies throughout Ohio.**

#### Strategies

1. Maintain current levels of funding of \$350,000 (with current economic resources) for the Boating Education Safety Grant Program. Provide funding to agencies that conduct boating education courses, skill development boating courses, boating education events, and specialized boating education campaigns.
2. Special consideration will be given to programs designed for students with learning disabilities and special needs.
3. The ODNR Watercraft Web site will continue to provide grant packets, applications, forms, et cetera.
4. Provide grant administrator and grant application workshops.
5. Conduct instructor development workshops and instructor certification courses. Provide updates and re-certification workshops when needed.
6. Monitor, track, audit, and provide assistance to grantees when needed.
7. Support technological advances that will allow for submissions of electronic grant applications, budget revisions and final grant reports.
8. Support the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) for their research and enactment of legislation that will allow the Division to accept electronic signatures.

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### **Objective 3: Support the work of the NASBLA education committee.**

#### Strategies

1. Support the development and vote for the approval of a national standardized 50-question test and the additional 10 specific state questions for NASBLA-approved courses. This is a major step towards the reciprocity issue between states.

*more on this issue...*



## Increase and enhance boating education opportunities.



2. Continue to review courses and state-specific requirements as required by the NASBLA Standards and Committee Chair. Provide input and criteria for the process of developing course reviewer training.
3. Support and vote for the approval of homeland security, carbon monoxide, and aquatic nuisance species standards. Update course information and provide training as required by the new standards.
4. Continue to update Ohio's Boating Education Course and provide support to our partners as dictated by the NASBLA Education Committee.

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### **Objective 4: Continue to promote boater education classes and enhance boater safety education messages.**

#### Strategies

1. Increase and enhance boating opportunity information on the ODNR Division of Watercraft Web site.
2. Encourage the Watercraft Public Information Officer to assist, support and provide resources (TV, radio, and public service announcements).
3. Assist boating education partners with their efforts.
4. Develop and provide signs, posters, and educational materials as the budget allows.
5. Promote boater education classes and enhanced messages through the State Watercraft Officers education performance indicators at boat shows, special events, boat clubs, youth organizations, marine dealers, and schools.

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### **Objective 5: Create an Education Partner Focus Group.**

#### Strategies

1. Continue to support the original work from the 2002-2003 focus group, which developed a marketing plan to increase participation in boater education courses and provided input on the revision of the boater education MOUs and ways to enhance our partnerships.

*more on this issue...*

## Increase and enhance boating education opportunities.

2. Monitor and implement the plans of the focus group.
3. Enhance partnerships with other boating education agencies.
4. Develop strategies to meet education issues, objectives, and goals.
5. Become a resource for other boating education agencies for events, projects, campaigns, classes, and assistance.

### *Methods of Measurement*

*A Boater Knowledge Survey was developed and implemented prior to the effective date of Ohio's mandatory boater education law. This survey was conducted during the 1999 boat show season to establish a baseline of boater knowledge. It was replicated in 2003 and will be utilized every three to five years to determine the effectiveness of boating education efforts in Ohio (see Appendix C).*

*Certification data are analyzed with data from law enforcement efforts, facility and navigational aid databases, and fatality statistics in an ongoing effort to determine the impact education has on boater safety. Statistics prove that an educated boater is involved in fewer accidents (see Appendix C).*

### *Resources*

- *Ohio Revised Code 1547.05, 1547.051, and 1547.052*
- *ODNR Division of Watercraft's Strategic Plan for the Twenty-First Century; Summer 1999*
- *The Education Focus Group Marketing Plan; Summer 2003*
- *Statistical Summary of the Reportable Boating Accidents in the State of Ohio for 2002*
- *Ohio Education Focus Group Report; June 2003*
- *Boater Knowledge Survey Report; Spring 2003*



# STRATEGIC ISSUE

## Provide consistent, coordinated and increased boating law enforcement/safety services.

### Background

*In the strategic planning process, customer input identified a need to increase law enforcement presence on Ohio's waterways. Increased law enforcement presence became one of the six key strategic issues of the Division's 1999 Strategic Plan.*

*As a result, a Field Restructure Plan was developed and implementation began in 1999.*

*Four regional field offices were created to better manage law enforcement and education services.*

*Officer satellite sites were established in New Philadelphia, Wapakoneta, Newton Falls, Buckeye Lake, Mohican, and Chillicothe.*

*Upon receiving an increase in percentage of the state's motor fuel tax in 2000, 13 Watercraft officer cadets and 18 established-term (ten-month) Watercraft officers were hired.*

*In 2003, ten additional ten-month-term Watercraft officers were hired to provide law enforcement services primarily on state park lakes, and an officer satellite site was established in Marietta.*

### Objective 1: Continue the implementation of the Field Restructure Plan as funding becomes available.

#### Strategies

1. Monitor, track and evaluate the field restructure plan and its ability to create increased law enforcement presence on the water.
2. Expand services current satellite sites to make them full-service Watercraft offices, open to the public to register boats, take education courses/testing, and receive law enforcement services Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### Objective 2: Administer the Marine Patrol Grant Program and award grants on the ability to provide maximum law enforcement presence on the water.

#### Strategies

1. Maintain current levels of funding of \$550,000 (with current economic resources) for marine patrol funding.
2. Develop an additional memorandum of understanding as part of the marine patrol contract to ensure maximum law enforcement presence on the water and consistent enforcement of boating laws.
3. Administer the Equipment Loan Program (purchasing and loaning patrol boats) to active Marine Patrol Grant recipients to increase law enforcement presence on the water.
4. Continue to provide grant packets, applications and forms on the ODNR Watercraft Web site.
5. Provide training for marine patrols and other law enforcement agencies to conduct boating law enforcement duties.
6. Monitor, track, audit, and provide technical assistance to grantees when needed.
7. Research and pursue additional funding sources for marine patrols.

*more on this issue...*

## Provide consistent, coordinated and increased boating law enforcement/safety services.

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### Objective 3: Partner with the U.S. Power Squadrons, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, and other law enforcement organizations to implement the Vessel Safety Check program.

#### Strategies

1. Continue our partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in the Vessel Safety check program. Update program and provide training as required.
2. Implement a program for the Marine Patrol grant recipients. Conduct required training.
3. Monitor, track, and evaluate the effectiveness of the Vessel Safety Check program as an education tool.

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### Objective 4: Provide training to Watercraft officers, marine patrols, and other law enforcement partners to ensure consistent enforcement of boating laws.

#### Strategies

1. Provide annual training for Watercraft officers, marine patrol officers, and other law enforcement officers.
2. Review and evaluate the boarding manual for its effectiveness of consistent boating law enforcement.
3. Conduct an annual marine patrol conference (on odd years will be conducted at Confluence). Include as part of this conference, various strategies and discussion to ensure the consistency of enforcement efforts and maximum presence on the water.
4. Identify those areas where statistics demonstrate a need for increased law enforcement presence.

---

### Objective 5: Continue to utilize Watercraft investigators to investigate fatalities, accidents, et cetera, to allow the Watercraft and marine patrol officers to continue their law enforcement presence duties.

*more on this issue...*



## Provide consistent, coordinated and increased boating law enforcement/safety services.

### **Methods of Measurement**

*Yearly statistics will provide an ongoing method to evaluate the degree of success of increased law enforcement presence on the water.*

*The customer satisfaction survey will provide input on coordination and consistency of law enforcement and safety services provided statewide.*



### **Resources**

- ODNR Division of Watercraft's Strategic Plan for the Twenty-First Century; *Summer 1999*
- Field Restructure Plan; *ODNR Division of Watercraft, 1999*
- *Ohio Revised Code 1547.67*
- *Memorandum of Understanding with U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary concerning the Vessel Safety Check program*

### Strategies

1. Investigators will conduct all fatal boating accident investigations.
2. Investigators will provide technical assistance to Watercraft and marine patrol officers for non-fatal boating accidents to enable the officers to continue their patrols.
3. Conduct stolen boat investigations and partner with other agencies to investigate boat thefts. This enables us to recover and return boats to their rightful owners.

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### **Objective 6: Continue providing law enforcement patrols connected with national and local security alerts.**

### Strategies

1. Participate in the Homeland Security Task Force.
2. Conduct law enforcement patrols associated with national and local security alerts.
3. Pursue homeland security grants in order to recover patrol costs and enhance the law enforcement equipment and supplies available for future preparedness of the Division and the Department.
4. Update the Emergency Preparedness plan to include the additional requirements of emergency response.
5. Pursue and host training to enable officers to conduct security patrols and safety services as required.
6. Pursue the signing of memorandums of understanding agreements with all of our surrounding states for homeland security and emergency response.



## Enhance revenue sources for the Division of Watercraft to fulfill service expectations of our customers.

**Objective:** Continue to search and apply for available grants for new funding sources by providing input and advice to ODNR senior staff in this pursuit.

### Strategies

1. Pursue equitable return of the Motor Fuel Tax. The Waterways Safety Fund receives seven-eighths of one percent of the Motor Fuel Tax revenue. The Ohio Transportation Budget Bill provides for a 2¢/gallon increase to the current state gas tax rate, enhancing revenues by approximately \$1.3 million each year.
2. Homeland Security: The State of Ohio, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Division of Watercraft will continue to pursue numerous Federal homeland security grants in order to cover the costs already being incurred for law enforcement patrols connected with national and local security alerts and to enhance the law enforcement equipment and supplies available for the future preparedness of the Division and the Department.
3. Support the re-authorization of the Aquatic Resources (Wallop-Breaux) Trust Fund this federal fiscal year. Currently, the Division of Watercraft receives an annual Recreational Boating Safety grant through the U.S. Coast Guard from this fund, which is the Division's third largest revenue source. One of the issues on the boating safety agenda in the reauthorization process is for recreational boating to receive a larger, fairer share of the federal motorboat fuel tax receipts, which are paid by boaters.

### Methods of Measurement

Success will be measured by whether or not new revenue sources are obtained or existing sources are increased.

### Resources

- [www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/](http://www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/)
- Waterways Safety Council minutes
- [www.nasbla.org](http://www.nasbla.org)
- [www.wallop-breaux.org](http://www.wallop-breaux.org)



### Background

The Ohio Waterways Safety Fund (WSF) is a model user-pay/user-benefit program. It is the only source of revenue for the ODNR Division of Watercraft. Money in the fund comes from three sources: (1) boat titling and registration fees; (2) federal boating safety grants; and (3) the current allocation of 7/8 of 1% of Ohio's excise tax on motor fuel.

These revenue sources come exclusively from taxes on boating—there is no general revenue money deposited in the fund.

All Division programs for safe boating education, law enforcement, capital improvements, registration and titling, and administration are funded by the WSF.

Prior to 1999, the WSF was not receiving its fair share of the Ohio motor fuel tax because Ohio law had not been updated in nearly 40 years to reflect the growth of recreational boating. In 1999, the Ohio General Assembly increased the allocation from 1/2 to 3/4 of 1% of the motor fuel excise tax, which was an increase of approximately \$3 million per year.

In 2001, the Ohio General Assembly increased the allocation of the Ohio motor fuel tax to the WSF by 1/8th of 1% (approximately \$1.75 million additional per year). It was included in the biennial Transportation Budget Bill, House Bill 73, which was effective March 31, 2001, and brought the total allocation to 7/8th of 1%.

The bill includes a gas tax rate increase of 2¢/gallon for fiscal years 2004, 2005, and 2006 (only increases for 2004 and 2005 have been approved). House Bill 73 also allocated 1/8 of 1% of the motor fuel tax to the Wildlife Boater Angler Fund.

House Bill 94, the biennial Budget Bill, clarified that the Wildlife Boater Angler Fund was to be used for boat access construction, improvements, and maintenance on lakes where gasoline-powered vessels are operated.

## **Improve and enhance the watercraft registration process.**

### **Background**

*Since 1960, many enhancements have been made to the boat registration and titling functions in the Division of Watercraft. Registration renewals changed from a one-year to a three-year system, and the ability to renew by mail provided an added convenience to boat owners.*

*In 1998, a computerized database, Watercraft Information System (WIS), was implemented by the Division to process watercraft registrations and titles and to track historic records.*

*Annual upgrades to the system included customer renewal of registrations via the Internet and the capability of changing addresses electronically.*

*An upgrade planned for 2006 allows for the issuance of online registrations by Watercraft Registration Agents.*

### **Methods of Measurement**

*Utilize the Division's Customer Satisfaction Survey to monitor Ohio boaters' satisfaction level with the registration program and services.*

### **Resources**

- [www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/reg/](http://www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/reg/)

**Objective: Utilize new electronic and technological resources to strive for improved accuracy and more efficient and timely delivery of service to Ohio boaters.**

### **Strategies**

1. Provide on-line sale of watercraft registrations by registration agents via the Internet.
2. Continue to enhance the online renewal system.
3. Research the feasibility and cost effectiveness of a phone renewal system.
4. Continue to address the requirements of the 12-character Hull Identification Number (HIN) state law that became effective July 4, 2002, and also the federal 12-character HIN law that has been in effect since November of 1972.
5. Continue to educate, recruit, and train watercraft registration agents in the selling of watercraft registrations. Establish and maintain at least one Watercraft Registration Agent per county.
6. Adhere to U.S. Coast Guard and National Association of State Boating Law Administrators Vessel Identification System and homeland security guidelines and directives.



## Get boating information to the people who need it.

**Objective: Continue to update, research, and enhance the boating information and distribution methods by utilizing new electronic technology and marketing methodology.**

### Strategies

1. Implement the Division of Watercraft's Marketing Plan.
2. Continue current efforts to present an informational, useful, and accessible Internet web site. Provide timely updates and expand offerings to serve targeted user groups, generating interest and increasing the annual number of web sessions.
  - a. Provide information in an appropriate format for users (for example, printable handouts or slides in an electronic format for instructors, high quality and engaging photographic images for media, boating safety coloring and activity pages for children).
  - b. Strive to generate interest and keep content "fresh" and seasonally appropriate.
  - c. Improve accuracy and timeliness of information by planning and developing dynamic, database-driven web pages whenever feasible.
3. Continue to implement the publications dissemination plan by updating the *Boating on Ohio's Streams* brochure series. Create a database that focuses on the dissemination requirements instead of inventory needs. This new database can be utilized for better control, tracking, and planning needs.
4. Develop, create, and send the seasonal boating safety messages to alert boaters and others to hazards and safety concerns. Promote National Safe Boating Week and other special events, boat shows, boating festivals and the state fair.
5. Develop and promote boater human-interest stories such as "Saved by the Life Jacket," citizen awards, rescues and assists, and exceptional boaters.
6. Outreach and partner with local organizations and groups along with national organizations to distribute information to the people who need it.



### Background

*In the 1996 Strategic Planning Process, customer input identified a need to increase public opportunities for receiving quality boating information.*

*Surveys were conducted on what types of information boaters needed and wanted, web sessions were tracked, boater trends were researched, U.S. Coast Guard Infoline and e-mail statistics were tracked, and public meetings were held to compile a list of boaters' wants and needs.*

*The Division of Watercraft responded in a variety of ways: by hiring a Web site coordinator to increase and enhance the information on our Web site; by creating a toll-free number [1-877-4BOATER (Ohio only)] to answer boating information requests and report boating accidents; and redesigning The Ohio Boat Operator's Guide and Public Boating Facilities Guide.*

*A warehouse inventory and publications dissemination plan were developed to ensure that the information was going to the people who need it. The warehouse distributes boating materials and information daily.*

### Methods of Measurement

*The Customer Satisfaction Survey will be used to measure the success of these strategies. This survey is conducted every three years.*

### Resources

- [www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/](http://www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/)
- *Waterways Safety Council minutes*
- *Ohio Boat Operator's Guide*
- *Ohio's Public Boating Facilities*
- *Boating on Ohio's Streams*
- *ODNR Division of Watercraft's Strategic Plan for the Twenty-First Century; Summer 1999*
- *Division of Watercraft Integrated Marketing Communication Plan; 2003*

## Improve water quality on boating waterways.

### Background

Ohio's Coastal Plan and Inland Plan for Proper Disposal of Marine Sewage state specific goals as components of the Clean Vessel Act (CVA). Data gathered for the publication of Ohio's Public Boating Facilities, a public boating access facility guide available to the public since 1999, has been used to assess current waterway use patterns as well as the need for additional marine sewage disposal facilities along the Lake Erie coast and on inland waters.

The Division of Watercraft works in conjunction with the Division of Recycling and Litter Prevention to educate the public about litter in our waterways and to conduct cleanups. The Adopt-A-Waterway Program encourages community groups to be responsible for maintaining portions of waterways and removing litter. These efforts bring awareness of the problems of litter and teach methods for preventing waste from entering our waterways to ensure pleasurable boating for all of our waterway visitors.

### Methods of Measurement

The Customer Satisfaction Survey includes questions about pumpout units and the Adopt-A-Waterway Program.

Surveying the Waterways Sweep partners after each event can help establish a baseline for program success and partnership development.

Survey the public and sponsors of public events to determine the effectiveness of the Adopt-A-Waterway exhibit and presentation.

### Resources

- [www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/clean/](http://www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/clean/)

### Objective 1: Improve the effect recreational boating may have on the water quality on inland waters, Lake Erie and the Ohio River.

#### Strategies

1. Maintain a comprehensive database of existing facilities that operate pumpout/dump stations.
2. Continue to educate the public and the boating community on the existence, location, and use of pumpout stations and waste reception facilities and further educate them on the need for the proper disposal of marine waste generated on recreational vessels.
3. Continue an educational plan to improve marina operator knowledge about pumpouts/dump stations, marine sanitary waste issues, and the availability of Clean Vessel Act (CVA) funds to assist in the installation or replacement of facilities.
4. Support efforts to maintain and/or increase funding amounts for CVA development through the reauthorization of the Wallop-Breaux fund.

### Objective 2: Improve the Adopt-A-Waterway Program within the Division of Watercraft.

#### Strategies

1. Provide supplies to volunteer groups to facilitate the cleanup process.
2. Provide canoes to volunteer groups to facilitate in the access of waterways, and removal and transportation of litter during the cleanup events.
3. Display and promote the program at public events such as school day events, special interest shows, conferences, and other events.



## Improve public boating areas through strategic dredging and/or debris removal.

**Objective: Improve public boating areas through strategic dredging and debris removal.**

### Strategies

1. Continue to seek and explore new funding sources for future dredge projects. Lake Erie, inland lakes, and lock areas will need to be dredged to keep them usable during times of normal pool levels.
2. Establish new application review criteria for Recreational Harbor Evaluation Program projects. Focus on non-maintenance dredge projects and maximize the positive effect dredging projects can have for Ohio boaters.
3. Continue to educate Ohio's boaters on the issues surrounding watershed management and siltation challenges with respect to recreational boating.
4. Continue work with the Division of Parks and Recreation to investigate ways to be more efficient and effective when dredging and implementing dredging projects.
5. Develop a detailed database of all existing dredge projects statewide to track and analyze dredging efforts and the associated costs of dredging.
6. Work with other ODNR divisions and organizations such as the Division of Soil and Water towards the long-term efforts of minimizing sedimentation in Ohio's navigable waterways.

### Background

*The purpose of waterway improvement is to foster vessel safety and maintain the publicly owned waterways by removing accumulated sediment and other submerged debris that may be hazardous to navigation.*

*To address inland dredging, the Division of Watercraft and the Division of Parks and Recreation worked together to develop an objective plan for dredging state park lakes.*

*This plan is designed to address current needs as well as some long-range plans and includes criteria for dredging. The goal of this partnership is to ensure the commitment of being good stewards of the Waterways Safety Fund (WSF) through responsible removal of sedimentation.*

*If there are areas that may need to be dredged that do not benefit enough boaters to warrant the expenditure of WSF dollars, some of these projects may meet other needs and may be considered for funding through other sources.*

*In addition to inland dredging, the Division of Watercraft has established the Recreational Harbors Evaluation Program (RHEP). The purpose of this program is to establish a merit-based grant program to fund non-maintenance public dredging projects. The focus of this program is specifically for the waters of Lake Erie.*

### Methods of Measurement

*Continue to evaluate the effectiveness of inland and Lake Erie dredging projects.*

*Continue to evaluate dredging projects and the associated positive effects to recreational boating. Compare and analyze the information with respect to information collected by surveys, focus groups, field staff recommendations, and other sources regarding dredging in Ohio.*

### Resources

- [www.ohiodnr.com/news/may03/0528dredgegrant.htm](http://www.ohiodnr.com/news/may03/0528dredgegrant.htm)



## Research and enact uniform watercraft laws that promote safe and enjoyable recreational boating.

### **Background**

*Customer input identified a desire to clarify some laws and enact others that would enhance boating safety and enjoyment. The majority of Ohio's boaters have diverse opinions on the positive and negative effects of watercraft laws. They would like to see clarification on certain items and new regulations for certain vessels.*

### **Methods of Measurement**

*Public meetings and the triennial Customer Satisfaction Survey provide customer input on our success or failure to meet these goals.*

*Yearly statistics provide an ongoing method to evaluate the degree of success.*

*An agreement (MOU or MAA) between various entities to produce and initiate consistent enforcement will provide a method to partially evaluate the success of this strategy.*

### **Resources**

- [www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/laws/](http://www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/laws/)

**Objective: Work towards uniform boating laws throughout Ohio.**

### Strategies

1. Identify and review laws in those areas where new regulations would enhance boating safety and enjoyment.
2. Continue to hold public meetings to obtain boater's concerns and opinions.
3. Review boating accidents and law enforcement statistics to determine what, if any, current laws should be changed or new ones enacted to promote boating safety and enjoyment.
4. Review the results of the Customer Satisfaction Survey, public meetings and overall boater incidents to determine areas of need.
5. Identify geographical areas and then work in cooperation with local entities and adjoining states to produce Memorandums of Understanding or Mutual Aid Agreements. These agreements will initiate consistent enforcement of the laws and rules regulating recreational boating in areas of joint patrol and authority.



## Improve waterway markings for recreational boating.

**Objective: Improve the Division of Watercraft's Aids to Navigation Program.**

### Strategies

1. Establish the program as a merit-based grant opportunity with a published grant application deadline for all applications.
2. Establish new application review criteria for the navigational aid projects. Focus on maximizing the positive effects on Ohio's registered boaters and improving recreational boating experiences.
3. Continue to educate Ohio's boaters on the issues surrounding safe boating and proper navigation.
4. Develop a detailed database of all existing navigational aid projects statewide to track and analyze these resources.
5. Develop a plan to advertise and market the program to regional and local municipalities, recreational boating groups, and other clubs and associations active in recreational boating.
6. Maintain current funding levels of \$42,000 and research the feasibility and demand of additional funding for navigational aids.
7. Upon completion of a navigational aids database and data entry, develop an analysis and report of recommended navigational aid target areas.

### Background

*Aids to navigation are the "road signs" of the waterways that safely guide boat operators. They identify dangerous, restricted and controlled areas by giving directions and information.*

*The Division of Watercraft has statutory authority to administer the aids to navigation program. Additionally, Ohio Revised Code 1547.08 authorizes the restricted and controlled areas of operation to be marked by a buoy or sign.*

*Through the Division of Watercraft's strategic planning process, boaters identified the need to improve waterway markings for recreational boating.*

### Methods of Measurement

*An increase in the current number of annual viable grant projects will help determine the success of marketing efforts.*

*As this topic is included in future satisfaction surveys, a baseline of satisfaction will be determined so future targets for providing navigational aids to the general recreational boating population can be established.*

### Resources

- Ohio Revised Code 1547.51, 1547.52, 1547.521, and 1547.08
- Title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)
- U.S. Aids to Navigation System; U.S. Coast Guard



**APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF THE ODNR DIVISION OF WATERCRAFT**

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# FUNDAMENTAL MISSION COMPONENTS / STATUTORY AUTHORITY

As provided in Section 1547.51 of the Ohio Revised Code, the Division of Watercraft was created within the Department of Natural Resources. The Division administers and enforces all laws relative to the identification, numbering, registration, titling, use, and operation of vessels operated on the waters in this state. Amended Substitute House Bill Number 928, enacted by the Ohio General Assembly in 1959, established the Division of Watercraft's authority and responsibility. The powers and duties of the Division are found in Chapters 1547 and 1548 of the Ohio Revised Code, and Chapter 1501:47 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

Based upon statute, the Division's duties, functions, and responsibilities are listed, grouped into five fundamental mission components:

## **I. Administer the Ohio Boating Safety Program**

As provided in Section 1547.52 of the Ohio Revised Code, the Chief of the Division of Watercraft has the authority to:

- a. Administer the Division of Watercraft;
- b. Adopt, amend, or rescind rules;
- c. Employ such clerical and technical help as considered necessary;
- d. Designate license agents;
- e. Administer the Ohio boating safety program and allocated federal funds and prepare and submit reports in such form as may be required by the "Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971," 85 Stat. 222, 46 U.S.C.A. 1475(A)(6), as amended;
- f. Sell boating safety items, artifacts and surplus boating equipment.

As provided in Section 1547.521 of the Ohio Revised Code, the Chief of the Division of Watercraft and State Watercraft Officers shall:

- a. Develop and conduct educational programs in vessel safety, sanitation, operation, and in other related subjects that the chief considers appropriate or necessary;
- b. Enforce Chapters 1547 and 1548 of the Ohio Revised Code and rules adopted under them; may enforce laws prohibiting the dumping of refuse, trash, or litter into the waters in this state; and enforce Chapters 2925 and 3719 of the Ohio Revised Code on all waters in the state;
- c. Have, on any lands owned, controlled, maintained, or administered by the Department of Natural Resources and on any waters in this state, the authority vested in peace officers under Section 2935.03 of the Ohio Revised Code;
- d. Have the authority to enforce, stop, board, and conduct a safety inspection of any vessel;
- e. Serve and execute any citation, summons, warrant, or other process issued with respect to any law they have the authority to enforce.

Under Section 1547.20 of the Ohio Revised Code, the Chief may issue permission for a race, regatta, or special event for powerboats.

[more...](#)

## FUNDAMENTAL MISSION COMPONENTS (CONTINUED)

### **II. Administer the Watercraft Registration and Titling Programs**

As provided in Section 1547.53 of the Ohio Revised Code, every watercraft operated in this state shall be numbered by this state (with exception).

As provided in Section 1547.54 of the Ohio Revised Code, all watercraft requiring registration shall comply with the registration system prescribed by the Chief.

As provided in Section 1548.02 of the Ohio Revised Code, the Chief of the Division of Watercraft shall file all title information received from the Clerk of Courts in the state.

### **III. Act as the Refuge and Small Boat Harbor Agency**

As provided in Section 1547.71 of the Ohio Revised Code, under the direction of the Chief, the Division of Watercraft shall act as the small boat harbor agency of the state.

As provided in Section 1547.72 of the Ohio Revised Code, the Division of Watercraft may construct, maintain, repair, and operate refuge harbors and projects for harboring, mooring, docking, launching, and storing of light draft vessels, and marine recreational facilities. The Division, with approval of the Director, may expend funds for the acquisition of land for these purposes.

### **IV. Administer Aids to Navigation on Certain Waters**

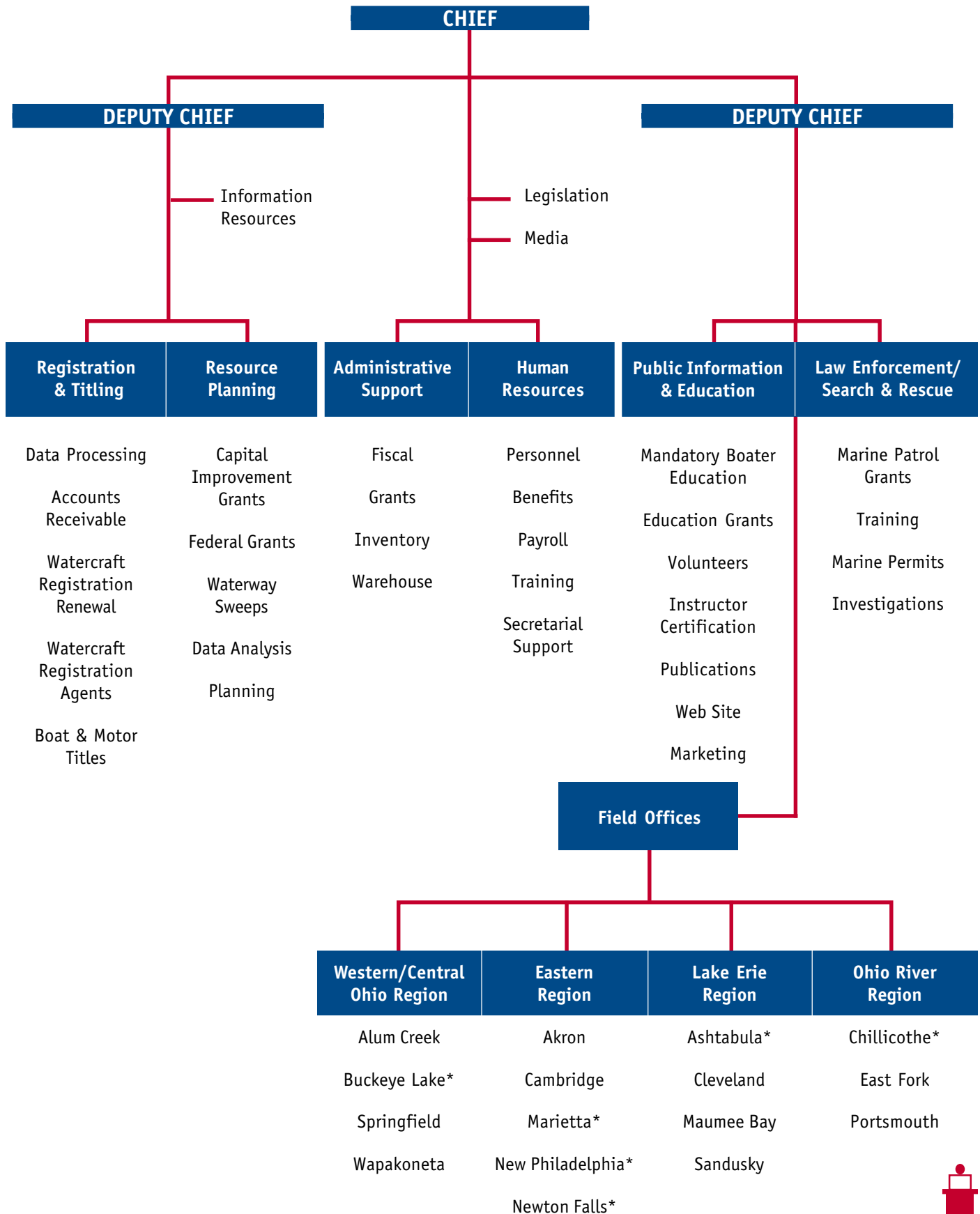
As provided in Section 1547.08 of the Ohio Revised Code, areas of restricted or controlled operation shall be marked by a buoy or sign. The Chief of the Division of Watercraft shall designate the colors and symbols used to mark designated areas.

### **V. Administer Litter and Sanitation program as it pertains to Watercraft**

As provided in Section 1547.49 of the Ohio Revised Code, no person shall litter, or allow litter to be thrown, dropped, discarded, or deposited upon any waters in this state, from a vessel.



# TABLE OF ORGANIZATION



\*Satellite site



## SECTION SUMMARIES

### **Administration**

The Administrative Section's primary responsibility is to administer the Division of Watercraft's strategic plan, legislative efforts, legal considerations, budget, program planning, and liaison functions to ensure best management practices and to provide oversight for day-to-day activities.

The Chief of the Division of Watercraft reports to the Director of the Department of Natural Resources through a Deputy Director and is accountable for all aspects of the operation of the Division in its provision of the following boating programs and services to the public: law enforcement, public information and education, registration and titling, aids to navigation, capital improvements (access), and administration. The Chief, along with two Deputy Chiefs, exercises line authority over all Division of Watercraft section managers and field managers. Further, the Chief also serves as the State Boating Law Administrator, the Administrator of the Waterways Safety Fund, and the primary liaison to all boating-related organizations.

### **Administrative Support**

The Administrative Support Section is responsible for providing expertise in all financial and budgetary matters affecting the Division. The responsibilities of this section include: payment of invoices, purchasing, auditing, controlling board requests, inventory, grants (both as grantee and grantor), leases, internal audit control procedures, shipping and receiving, bids, bid requests, fiscal training, and reporting. This section prepares, oversees, and coordinates the Division's operating and capital budgets, including central office and all field offices. Once prepared, the budgets are monitored by the Administrative Support Section to assure compliance.

### **Human Resources**

The Human Resources Section is responsible for advising the Chief and Deputy Chiefs on all personnel, payroll, labor relations, benefits (health, dental, vision), and clerical matters that affect the Division. In addition, this section also coordinates training and staff development. The Human Resources Section offers technical expertise and guidance on contract interpretation for both the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and the Fraternal Order of Police unions. Guidance is also given in procedures mandated by the Ohio Revised Code, the Ohio Administrative Code, and all state Department and Division policies and procedures.

Human Resources also offers technical expertise and guidance in finding training sources in a wide range of subjects, including but not limited to personal development, sexual harassment, ethics, career development, customer service, computer, ADA, and management development to all Division employees. Human Resources coordinates in-house training for common development themes among staff as well as for individualized training in specific areas. Human Resources is also responsible for filling the Quality Advisor role on the Division Guidance Committee. The Committee's mission is "to empower and guide employees

## SECTION SUMMARIES (CONTINUED)

with a structured quality process in order to improve the efficiency and accuracy of our work for both internal and external customers.”

### **Law Enforcement/Search and Rescue**

The Law Enforcement/Search and Rescue (LE/SAR) Section is responsible for providing informal law interpretation, professional training, investigations, planning, and support services to the boating public, Division personnel, law enforcement agencies, emergency medical services agencies, public safety agencies, and other divisions within the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The section is also responsible for the investigation of title and registration documents, stolen vessels, administering pre-employment background investigations, drafting language for laws and rules, recommending policies and procedures, and developing training and educational resources. In addition, the LE/SAR Section is in charge of coordinating water releases from various lakes in Ohio, and updating arrest records and boating accident databases.

The LE/SAR Section administers the Division’s Marine Patrol Grant and Equipment Loan programs. These programs provide financial assistance and personnel training to law enforcement agencies who are willing to assist the Division of Watercraft in our mission.

### **Public Information and Education**

The Public Information and Education (PI&E) Section implements Ohio’s mandatory boater education program and is responsible for public information, education, marketing, boating safety education grants, and volunteer programs. The section develops procedures and guidelines for field and central office personnel, and supports the statewide boating safety education efforts of the field offices and the Division’s education partners.

The mandatory education program oversees proficiency exams, rental exams, and the national approval of certified boater education courses and reviews these courses for approval. The PI&E Section fulfills agreements with major boating safety organizations by developing Ohio-specific support materials for courses approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA). The section is responsible for implementing the NASBLA-approved Ohio Boater Education Course (OBEC) on a statewide level that includes training, monitoring, and certifying of OBEC instructors.

Other responsibilities of the PI&E Section are disseminating information and marketing boating education, the boating experience, and the products and services of the Division of Watercraft. The overall marketing objective is to decrease the number of boating fatalities and accidents while increasing safe boating participation and enjoyment in Ohio. This coordination includes developing statewide age-appropriate boating safety education and information for youth, adolescents, and adults; supporting and training organizations providing a full range of advanced boating skill opportunities; getting boating information to the people who need it; developing printed publications; designing and managing the Division’s Web site; creating boat show displays; coordinating with the media; and creating, editing, proofing, and designing educational and marketing materials.

*more...*

## SECTION SUMMARIES (CONTINUED)

Over \$2 million has thus far been awarded to community recreation departments, state universities, cities, counties, and townships through the Division's Boating Safety Education Grants administered by the section since the grant program's inception. Grants for boating safety programs are available to local communities and students with disabilities. Staff review, score and recommend funding for the grant applicants. Section personnel conduct administrative workshops and train boating instructors in canoeing, sailing, kayaking, paddlers river rescue, and personal watercraft operation. In addition, section staff monitor funded programs.

Volunteer program coordination provided by the P.I. and E. Section includes recruiting, interviewing, employing, training, and advising a corps of volunteers across the state that support the efforts of paid staff by expanding available services. Volunteer hours are documented. Volunteers donate thousands of hours each year by teaching Ohio Boating Education Course classes, canoeing, sailing, personal watercraft, and marine patrol training. Volunteers also work at the Ohio State Fair, boat shows, boating and fishing festivals, administer proficiency testing, and provide law enforcement support. The section organizes statewide volunteer recognition events, equips volunteers, and assists field offices with local volunteer programs.

### **Registration and Titling**

The Registration and Titling Section provides boat information to registered boaters, new boat owners, watercraft sales agents, law enforcement organizations, boat dealers, other states, and other agencies.

Registration functions include overseeing the sale of watercraft registrations statewide, mail renewals, Internet renewals, collection of revenue from registration sales, and coordination of registration agents who sell watercraft registrations. The registration area is also responsible for maintaining, entering, updating, correcting and auditing all records of registered boats that are stored in the Watercraft Information System (WIS).

Other registration services include issuing temporary registrations, issuing alternative registrations for hand powered vessels, processing registration fee exemptions for eligible veterans, coordinating homemade boat and historic watercraft registrations, issuing dealer and livery licenses, and recruitment and training of registration sales agents.

Titling functions include the correcting, updating and auditing of all watercraft and outboard titles that have been issued by the county title offices in WIS, notifying other states of transfers of watercraft, and the coordination and issuing of hull identification numbers and motor serial numbers. In addition, the section maintains the state of Ohio's repository and historic reference for all boat and outboard motor titles that have been issued. The titling area provides information and direction to the county title offices in the issuance of watercraft and outboard motor titles and titling information, and provides informal law interpretation to state agencies, law enforcement offices, other states, lending institutions, boat dealers, and the general public.

## SECTION SUMMARIES (CONTINUED)

### Resource Planning

The Resource Planning Section is responsible for administering the Cooperative Boating Facility Grant Program, which is the statewide allocation of capital improvements grants, planning and engineering for boating access facilities, Federal Grants Program, data analysis, the Aids to Navigation Program, and the Waterways Sweep Program.

Administering capital improvements grants includes coordinating grant applications from local political subdivisions and divisions with the Department through a competitive process to build boat access facilities throughout the state. Projects are primarily funded through the Division's Waterways Safety Fund. In addition, specific line items from the NatureWorks program for Lake Erie, Ohio River, and inland waterways help fund boat access facilities. Two new federal grant programs, the Clean Vessel Act (CVA) and the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG Program), are now available. The CVA program is designed to improve pump out and dump station facilities for the proper disposal of marine waste from recreational boats. The BIG Program is a new federal program, administered by participating states, established to construct transient moorage facilities for non-trailerable boats over 26 feet in length.

A planner, an engineer, and a navigational aids coordinator provide direction to the Division on big-picture issues and challenges as well as specific plans and actions. The staff engineer looks at the details of boating facility development and aids in the implementation of major boat access projects.

The Aids to Navigation Program coordinates requests from communities and agencies to provide buoys and signs to mark boating areas and hazards on the waters in this state towards the improvement of the overall recreational boating experience.

The Data Analysis Program is designed to collect, store, and analyze data to aid the Division in planning. This program also coordinates and assists in the development of an annual report detailing boating statistics, including the Boating Accident Reports that are required by the U.S. Coast Guard. The section coordinates the Division's involvement with the Department's Data Mining efforts that are being spearheaded by the Office of Information and Technology.

The Waterways Sweep Program is funded through a grant received from the Division of Recycling and Litter Prevention. The goal of the program is to promote litter-free waterways in Ohio. This program assists local groups in cleanup activities by providing trash bags, gloves, and loaning canoes. Tens of thousands of pounds of unbagged material from miles of waterways and shorelines is removed each year. The program also emphasizes awareness through education programs and printed materials, and provides supplies and technical support to Adopt-A-Waterway contract holders.



# FIELD SUMMARY



The Division of Watercraft maintains four regions across the state comprising nine field offices. Field offices are responsible for providing services to the public: registration, law enforcement, boating information, and boating education to boaters.

The field offices are responsible for patrolling all waterways and investigating accidents, fatalities, and other boating related complaints in their areas. They also coordinate education campaigns, work with other boating safety organizations, and offer classes taught by Watercraft officers and volunteers. They respond to boating-related search and rescue missions across the state of Ohio and other emergencies as dictated.

Each region has a manager and investigator; each field office has a supervisor. The regional manager oversees all field offices within his/her geographical region. Investigators investigate boating accidents and stolen property cases and research hull identification number discrepancies.

## West/Central Region

### Alum Creek

3305 S. Old State Road  
Delaware, Ohio 43015  
740-548-5490  
alumcreek.watercraft@dnr.state.oh.us

### Springfield

1976 Buck Creek Lane  
Springfield, Ohio 45502  
937-323-1582  
springfield.watercraft@dnr.state.oh.us

## Lake Erie Region

### Cleveland

8701 Lakeshore Blvd. NE  
Cleveland, Ohio 44108  
216-361-1212  
cleveland.watercraft@dnr.state.oh.us

### Maumee Bay

1400 State Park Road  
Oregon, Ohio 43618  
419-836-6003  
maumeebay.watercraft@dnr.state.oh.us

### Sandusky

1630 Sycamore Line  
Sandusky, Ohio 44870  
419-621-1402  
sandusky.watercraft@dnr.state.oh.us

## Eastern Region

### Akron

2756 South Arlington Road  
Akron, Ohio 44312  
330-644-2265  
akron.watercraft@dnr.state.oh.us

### Cambridge

1225 Woodlawn Avenue  
Cambridge, Ohio 43725  
740-439-4076  
cambridge.watercraft@dnr.state.oh.us

## Ohio River Region

### East Fork

3292 Ellick Road  
Bethel, OH 45106  
513-734-2730  
cincinnati.watercraft@dnr.state.oh.us

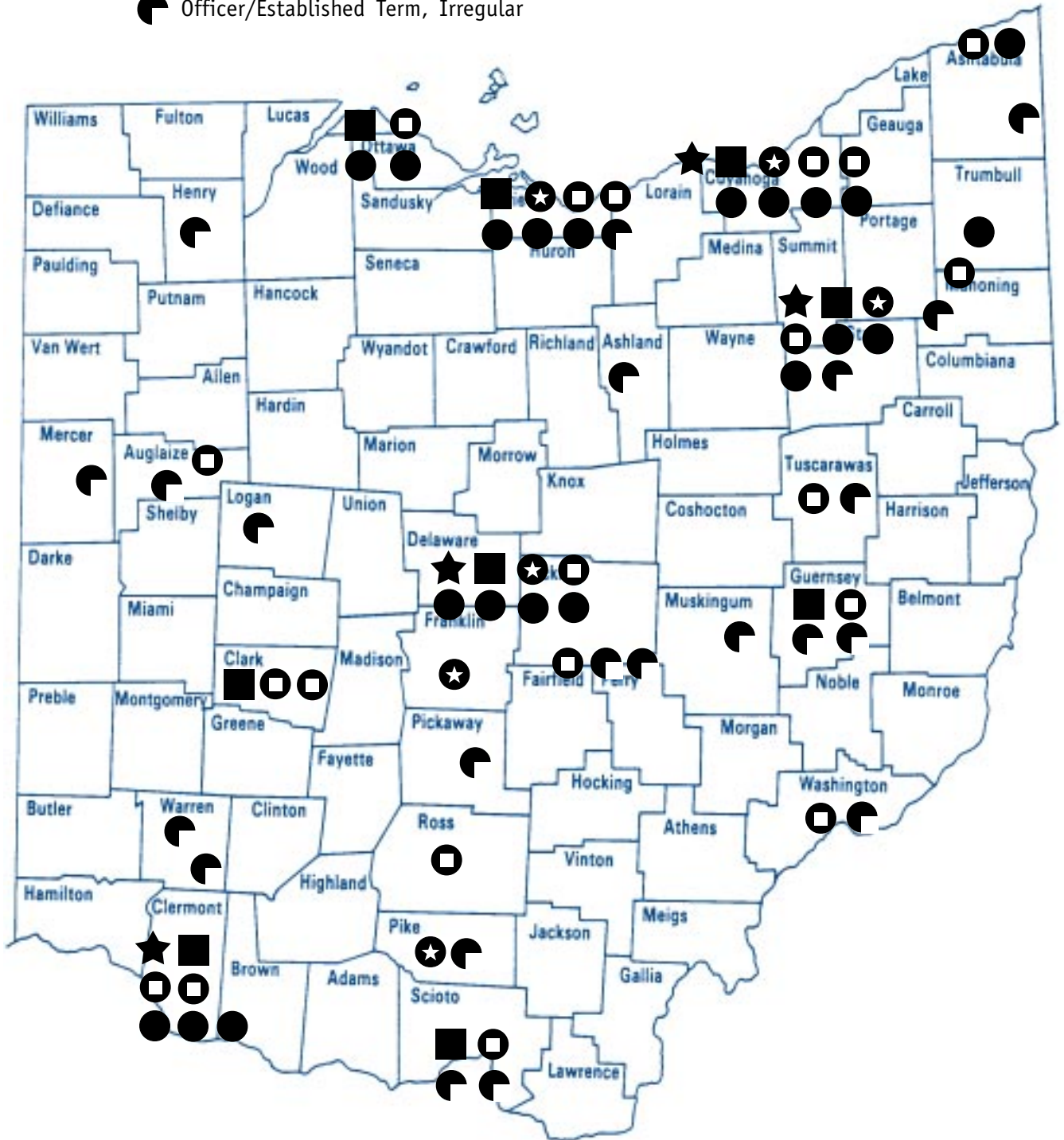
### Portsmouth

640 Second Street  
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662  
740-353-7668  
portsmouth.watercraft@dnr.state.oh.us



# 2003 FIELD STRUCTURE MAP

- ★ Regional Manager
- Area Supervisor
- ☆ Investigator
- ◻ Officer Specialist
- Officer
- ◐ Officer/Established Term, Irregular



## INCOME AND EXPENSES

The Division of Watercraft strives to do the best with available funding. Further discussions of the Division's funding can be found in the Strategic Priority Issues and Objectives portion of this report.

The Division of Watercraft is a user-funded division with three main sources of revenue: a percentage of the state motor fuel tax; watercraft registration and related fees; and a federal grant from the U.S. Coast Guard Boat Safety Account. All monies collected are deposited in a dedicated fund called the Waterways Safety Fund.

The largest contributor to the Division's income is derived from a percentage of the state fuel tax. This percentage is based on a formula from studies conducted in 1961-62 that determined what percentage of the fuel sold in Ohio was used by boats. This percentage is then applied to the fuel taxes that are collected in Ohio to determine the amount deposited into the Waterways Safety Fund. Prior to July 1, 1999, the Division received one-half of one percent (0.5%) of the fuel tax collected in Ohio. On July 1, 1999, the Division began to receive three-fourths of one percent (0.75%), and finally, on July 1, 2001, the percentage of the fuel tax went up to seven-eighths of one percent (.875%), where it remains today.

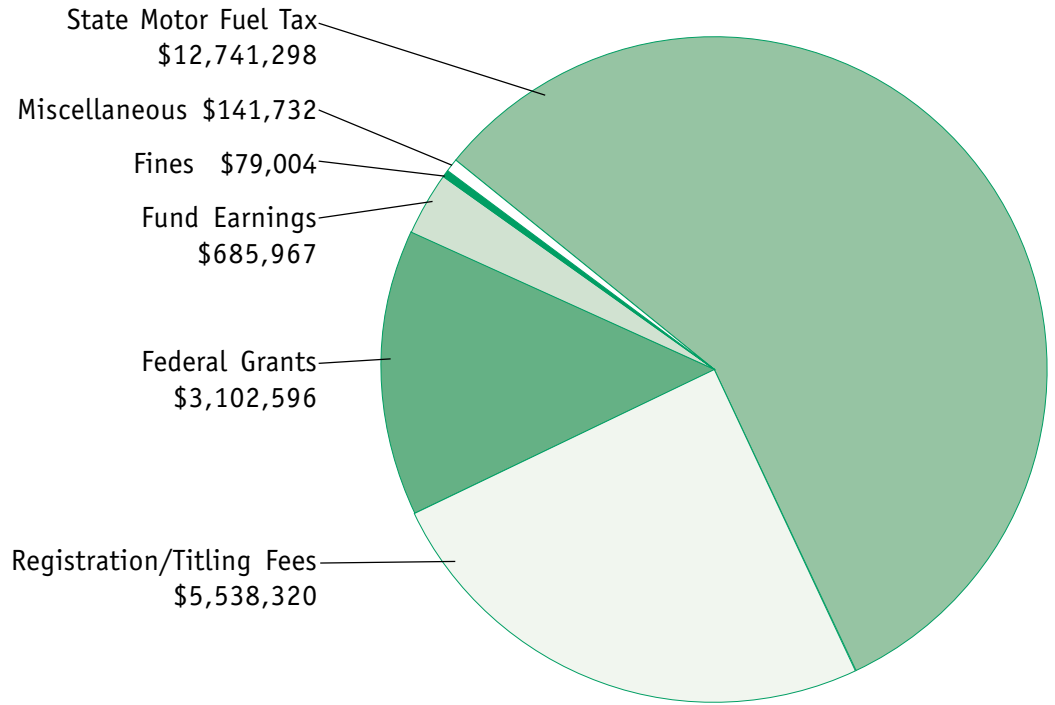
Registration and titling fees collected represent the second largest source of income to the Division. Over \$5 million is collected annually from the registration of boats.

The federal U.S. Coast Guard Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Federal Financial Assistance Program grant is the third largest source of income and is received by the Division for maintaining a vessel numbering system, a cooperative agreement with the Coast Guard on joint responsibilities, law enforcement patrols, a boating access grant program, a boating safety education program, and a marine casualty reporting system. This program was established by the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971 to "encourage greater State participation and uniformity in boating safety efforts and particularly to permit the States to assume the greater share of boating safety education, assistance and enforcement." In 1984, as part of the Federal Deficit Reduction Act, the Aquatic Resources (Wallop-Breaux) Trust Fund was established to improve funding to the states for the RBS Program (administered by the U.S. Coast Guard) and the Sport Fish Restoration Program (administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). Legislation provided that funds for those programs would become two accounts under the single umbrella of the new Wallop-Breaux Trust Fund. Trust Fund receipts consist of federal excise taxes attributable to motorboat and small engine fuel use, sport fishing equipment, and import duties on fishing equipment, yachts, and pleasure craft. The Boat Safety Account is funded solely from motorboat fuel taxes (currently a fixed amount). The Sport Fish Restoration Account receives the remainder of the motorboat fuel tax transferred to the Trust Fund as well as all of the other Trust Fund receipts.

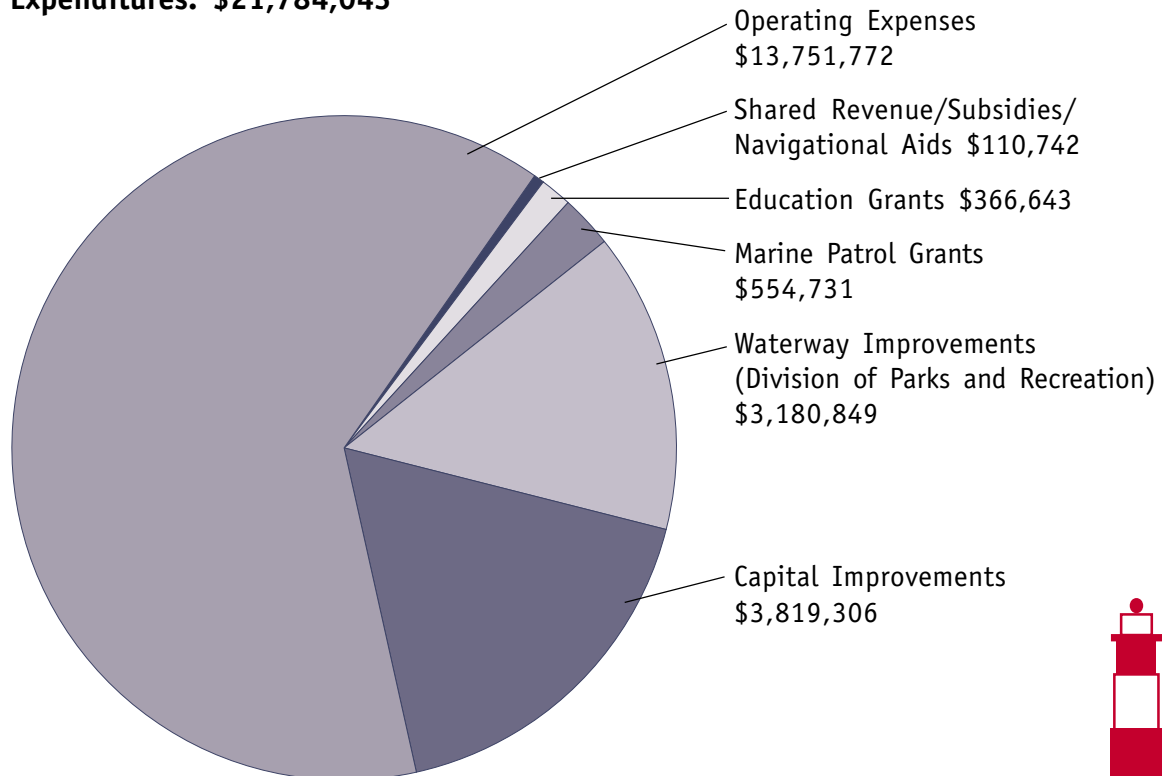
In addition to these three primary sources of income, the Division continues to pursue additional grant opportunities and the development of partnerships with sister divisions, other state and federal agencies, and local organizations to reduce project costs and increase operating efficiencies.

# FISCAL YEAR 2003 REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

## Revenues: \$22,288,917



## Expenditures: \$21,784,043



# APPENDIX B: STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

## CONTENTS

Strategic Plan Methodology .....	B-1 – B-2
Summary of Input.....	B-3 – B-5
Distribution / Communication .....	B-6
How Strategic Planning Fits With CMS .....	B-7

## STRATEGIC PLAN METHODOLOGY

Recreational boating has changed dramatically over the years. The increasing presence of new types of watercraft and the consistent increase in the number of registered boats has placed greater demands on the Division of Watercraft, on other agencies that provide boating services to the public, and on Ohio's boating facilities.

In order to be consistent with its commitment to better serve Ohio boaters, the Division of Watercraft began an effort to find out how these and many other changes have affected boaters and the overall recreational boating experience. The Division surveyed boaters on the needs and services they desire. Full consideration of these needs and expectations guided the development of long-term, measurable goals and objectives. The boating customers' needs -- and the Division's concern to meet these needs -- resulted in the development of a strategic plan.

The *Preliminary Report of the Division of Watercraft's Strategic Plan for the Twenty-First Century* was the first phase of a comprehensive approach to the management of recreational boating in Ohio and was published in the spring of 1997. The preliminary report detailed Division efforts to make the strategic plan truly representative of user groups. A series of 18 public meetings were conducted across the state of Ohio from May to September 1996. The purpose of these meetings was to identify concerns and emerging issues and trends. Each public meeting began with a general overview of the Division and its programs. The Division's Strategic Planning Model was introduced and explained. The remainder of the meeting was open for public comments, which were recorded. Written comment forms were also distributed at the meetings so that participants could send in comments at a later date or pass copies along to fellow boaters who could not attend the meetings. The comments and input received from the public were considered a key element in determining what issues the Division should address. Written input was also solicited from all Division of Watercraft employees and other divisions/offices within ODNR.

An additional source of data used for determining boating trends and opinions came from the "Watercraft Planning Studies." These studies represent a series of independent surveys over a period of years starting in 1984. Each survey asked a series of questions regarding boat types owned, location of boating activity, number of boating trips per year, and attitudes, opinions, or concerns. The surveys were sent to a random sampling of 2,500 registered boaters.

The Division sought further input from the Waterways Safety Council, a five-member advisory group from the boating public appointed by the Governor.

The input received from all of these sources was compiled, categorized by topic, evaluated and then reviewed by the Division's program and section managers. The managers identified a list of issues and 21 employees, representing management and staff throughout the Division, met to determine which of the issues were of greatest concern to the Division's customers. From this effort, six key issues were identified. Teams were established to define the meaning of, and to develop objectives for, each issue.

## STRATEGIC PLAN METHODOLOGY (CONTINUED)

The Division of Watercraft's next step in the strategic planning process was to create diverse teams that identified strategies to accomplish the objectives. The teams were created from a variety of groups, agencies, organizations, other ODNR division representatives, and individuals representing a broad spectrum of boating interests. Each team had a specific charter and mission to complete in a short period of time.

These teams worked diligently to accomplish their missions and submitted information to the Division of Watercraft for review and implementation. Strategic issue plans are in various stages of implementation, and some are now directly benefiting Ohio's boaters.

As with all successful processes, the Division has established schedules for periodic review of these issues and updates. This step ensures the best possible outcome for all of Ohio's boaters. With the publication of the initial report and the implementation of a number of strategic initiatives, the five-year strategic planning process cycle was set into motion.

This document represents the first review cycle of the Division's Strategic Plan. During 2001-2002, a series of ten public meetings were held in the following locations: Deer Creek State Park; Alum Creek; Springfield; Independence (Cleveland); Sandusky; New Philadelphia (Cambridge); Rootstown (Akron); Portsmouth; Cincinnati; and Maumee Bay. The meetings were held to further refine priority issues, establish new baselines, and confirm the Division's direction. As with previous efforts, the comments from public meetings were compiled with data received from customer satisfaction surveys as well as other data sources to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of priority issues.

In comparison to the 1996 series of public participation meetings, the 2001-2002 meeting format was modified. Instead of having a general participatory classroom-style meeting, issue tables were established with each one devoted to one of the six strategic issues with each one staffed by a Division of Watercraft employee, and when possible a program manager. A seventh table was set up for miscellaneous comments made by the public. Each meeting began with an introduction by the Division's respective area supervisor. The Division's local representative explained the purpose of the public meeting, the Division's mandate, and the history of the Division. The representative would record general comments from the audience on a flipchart. Following the general discussion, participants could go to one of seven specific, strategic issue breakout tables. The employee at each table would take down comments made by participants using a marker and flipchart.

Through a joint effort between the Division's Guidance Committee and the Executive Planning Group, compiled data from all sources was used to refine, prioritize, and develop strategies for the implementation of an updated Strategic Plan. The Division's Guidance Committee represents all levels of Division of Watercraft staff, including management, union, and non-union employees. The Executive Planning Group is a team of senior managers who lead the Division of Watercraft in its Comprehensive Management System, which includes budgeting, project management, monitoring, and evaluation as well as operational planning and strategic planning.

## SUMMARY OF INPUT

The input used to develop and refine the Division's strategic priorities was gathered through a series of ten public meetings held in late 2001 and early 2002, customer satisfaction surveys, and several focused boater studies. Comments were received from employees, the Waterways Safety Council, other ODNR divisions, state boating partners, and through a variety of other user comment venues. Thousands of comments were received, grouped into categories, and used to evaluate priorities. Several major issues were identified. Because of the overwhelming response, only summaries of the comments received are listed below.

### Facilities and Navigation:

- New Facilities
  - More facilities on the Ohio River and in southern Ohio
  - More facilities (primarily access sites) for canoes/kayaks
  - More facilities on Lake Erie
- Maintenance/Repair of Current Facilities — maintenance and repair issues on existing access sites focused primarily on water levels at the launch ramps and keeping these sites usable for launching
- Docks and Marinas — Improve the location and design of courtesy docks
- Amenities at Facilities
  - Litter Control
  - Restrooms
  - Parking
- Fees at Facilities — Make them fair, uniform (and preferably low cost or free)
- Information — Get information out to the boaters on where the facilities are and what they have available
- Middle Bass Island — “Make it a first-class facility” Many suggestions offered, including transient harbors, self-sustaining, and economically viable
- Paddling Interests — More paddling-specific facilities
- Safe Harbors — More available safe harbors/harbors of refuge
- Transient Harbors and Moorage — Additional transient harbors and moorage needed
- Recommendations were made to improve water quality through:
  - Waterway Sweeps
  - Additional Pumpout facilities
- Dredging — Within this general topic, most of the comments centered on dredging certain specific local boating areas and/or the fact that low water levels are a common concern.
- Buoys and Navigational Aids — The primary focus of the comments was on increased and improved placement and funding for placing navigational buoys. Some comments were also received in regard to providing additional boating Signage.
- Horsepower Issues — A majority of respondents wanted to see increased horsepower and/or a change to speed limits instead of horsepower limits

## SUMMARY OF INPUT (CONTINUED)

### User Conflicts

- Several persons noted user conflict issues in regards to personal watercraft and no-wake zones
- Comments were split approximately 50/50 on whether zoning could work as a resolution to user conflict issues

### Law Enforcement

- Overwhelming consensus was that the number of patrols should be increased
- Several comments indicated that there was a lack of clarity in regard to who should be contacted regarding boating incidents
- Marine Patrol Grant Program — The few brief comments received asked for earlier money distribution and more money to the Ohio River
- Law Enforcement Partnerships
- Vessel Safety Checks — General comments focused on the fact that vessel safety checks should be helpful and serve an educational function.
- Violations — Biggest areas needing enforcement are noise, personal watercraft, and wake zones
- Need to make watercraft laws more uniform within the state and with neighboring states

### Public Information and Boater Education

- Boater Course Curriculum — Several comments in regard to creating a more diverse curriculum and including more information on courtesy and “rules of the road” as well as trailer and launching procedures
- Dealer Role in Promotion of Boating Education — Several comments suggested giving the dealers an incentive to offer free course coupons (for boating education courses)
- Boating Education Course Location — Several respondents indicated that boating safety education should be offered at the schools
- Fees for Courses — There was a pretty even split from respondents in regard to whether course fees should be increased or decreased.
- Educational Grant Program — A few comments in regard to grants, but those that were received asked that the money be made available earlier in the year

## SUMMARY OF INPUT (CONTINUED)

- Information Distribution
  - Diverse means should be used to get the word out on boating safety and education topics
  - Specific requests were made that the Division not go to a strictly web-based distribution of information
  - Suggestions were made that the Division partner with other boating organizations and groups to distribute information whenever and wherever possible
- Mandatory Education — Many comments were received on this topic, generally in favor of the system, but some asking for modifications to the current system
  - Extend the program to older boaters and/or base the requirement on boating knowledge rather than age
  - Require the boater to renew their mandatory education certification every so many years
- Educational Partnerships — Several comments were received asking that the Division make it easier for partners to assist the Division of Watercraft
- The primary information needs that are not being met include (in priority order):
  - Water release information
  - Boating facility/access information (primarily in the area of paddling)
  - Grant information

### Registration and Titling

- Increased access to registration services (more agents, 24/7 access via other means)
- Modify process for canoe/kayak display of decals
- Some complaints regarding the need to register canoes and kayaks

### Funding Sources

- Responses indicated support for revenue generation by the following means (in prioritized order):
  - Taxes (fuel and/or sales)
  - Wallop-Breaux
  - Registrations and User Fees
  - Citations

## DISTRIBUTION / COMMUNICATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

1. Every Waterways Safety Council member and member of management will receive a copy of the plan.
2. Every ODNR Division of Watercraft employee will receive a copy of the plan. Even the newest staff member will gain quick context, appreciation, and meaning from review of the strategic plan.
3. The ODNR Division of Watercraft's mission, vision, and values statements will be posted on the walls of the offices of the division. Each employee will receive a card with the statements.
4. Portions of the plan will be published in the division's *Splashfacts* newsletter and in advertising and marketing materials.
5. Waterways Safety Council members and employees will be trained on portions of the plan during orientations and meetings.
6. Portions of the plan will be included in policies and procedures of the division.
7. Copies of the plan will be distributed to major stakeholders including sponsors, trade associations, potential collaborators, vendors, and suppliers.

## HOW STRATEGIC PLANNING FITS WITH CMS (COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM)

In July of 2001, the Division of Watercraft implemented a Comprehensive Management System. This system is a series of linked databases that guide and define the daily activities of Watercraft employees. There are several components included in the system: an Operational Plan, Internal Accounting System, Time and Activity Reporting System, and Performance Reporting System.

The Operational Plan incorporates a series of projects for each organizational unit of the Division. Projects are developed based upon annually reviewed "Areas of Emphasis" and the strategic issues discussed in the body of this document. Each project defines activities associated with the achievement of Division goals, establishes a budget, and contains personnel projections for the fiscal year. It is this component of the Comprehensive Management System that ties every activity of Division employees to the Strategic Plan, Mission, and Vision.

The Internal Accounting System and Time and Activity Reporting System track expenditures and personnel against the original budgets submitted and approved as a part of the Operational Plan. At the end of each fiscal year, this information is compiled by the Performance Reporting System with analysis sections to be completed by each project manager, creating a continuous improvement process for the overall system and the operations of the Division.



# APPENDIX C: SUPPORTING DATA

## CONTENTS

<b>Boater Knowledge Survey .....</b>	<b>C-1</b>
<b>Statistical Education Baseline .....</b>	<b>C-2</b>
<b>Educated Boaters and Accident Statistics .....</b>	<b>C-3</b>

# BOATER KNOWLEDGE SURVEY RESULTS

A boater knowledge survey was developed and implemented by the Resource Planning Section and the Public Information and Education Section. This survey was conducted during the 1999 boat show season to establish a baseline of boater knowledge. It was replicated in 2003 and will be utilized every three to five years to determine the effectiveness of boating education efforts in Ohio. Below is the data collected.

## **Boater Education Knowledge Survey – Spring 1999**

- 9 indoor and sport shows (Jan. – March)
- Total of 1,670 surveys completed
- Average score was 35.6%
- Those who took a boating course averaged 45%
- Those who had NOT taken a boating course averaged 33%

## **Boater Education Knowledge Survey – Spring 2002**

- 10 indoor and sport shows (Jan. – March)
- Total of 1,180 surveys completed
- Average score was 38%
- Those who took a boating course averaged 46%
- Those who had NOT taken a boating course averaged 34%

# STATISTICAL EDUCATION BASELINE

<b>Education Certificates Issued</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>
<b>CLASSROOM</b>			
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary	681	677	1,053
U.S. Power Squadron	1,065	1,593	1,428
Watercraft OBEC Classes	3,256	1,741	1,336
Other OBEC classes	2,202	1,262	1,452
<b>HOME STUDY</b>	<b>1,703</b>	<b>973</b>	<b>1,083</b>
<b>INTERNET</b>			
Boat US	4,490	1,557	4,127
Boat Ed	382	1,256	1,721
<b>TOTALS</b>			
Certified	13,779	9,059	12,200
Born after 1/1/82	5,039	4,269	6,888

## EDUCATED BOATERS AND ACCIDENT STATISTICS

All of the data below is based on accidents reported from 1/1/2000 through 12/31/2002. Ohio law (Chapter 1547.59 of the Ohio Revised Code) states that a boating incident that results in death, an injury requiring medical treatment, or damage to property above \$500 must be reported to the Division of Watercraft.

### Education of Operators Involved in All Reported Accidents

Age	Took a Course	No Education	Unknown
Under 19	6	27	3
19 - 29	8	89	16
30-39	37	109	17
40- 49	37	67	16
50-59	39	49	9
60-69	17	13	5
70-above	6	9	2

### Education of Operators Involved in Accidents Resulting In Injury or Death

Age	Took a Course	No Education	Unknown
Under 19	3	12	3
19 - 29	6	46	8
30-39	12	39	7
40- 49	11	25	9
50-59	10	19	3
60-69	4	9	1
70-above	1	6	2

### Victims: Injuries vs. Fatalities

Age	Injury Victim	Fatal Victim
Under 19	45	8
19-29	81	9
30-39	47	14
40-49	36	9
50-59	21	12
60-69	9	6
70-above	3	6

### Who was the victim?

	Injured	Fatality
Operator	102	34
Passenger	111	28
Swimmer	4	4
Waterskier/Tuber	39	0

In summary, the Division of Watercraft recognizes that all boaters need some level of education. Statistics prove that an educated boater is involved in fewer accidents. The Division will continue to encourage all boaters to take a boating education course regardless of state mandates.

## APPENDIX D: LIST OF RESOURCES

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### Documents:

- ODNR Division of Watercraft Strategic Plan for the 21st Century, 1999
- ODNR Division of Watercraft Annual Reports
- Boating On Ohio Waterways Plan, 2003
- Ohio Boat Operator's Guide
- Ohio Public Boating Facility Guide
- Boating on Ohio's Streams brochure

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### Grants Administered:

- Boating Infrastructure Grant Program
- Boating Safety Education Grant
- Clean Vessel Act Grant
- Cooperative Boating Facility Grant
- Marine Patrol Grant
- Navigational Aids Program

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### Web Sites:

- [www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/](http://www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft/)
- [www.nasbla.org](http://www.nasbla.org)
- [www.wallop-breux.org](http://www.wallop-breux.org)
- [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org)

## APPENDIX E: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Division of Watercraft extends a heartfelt thanks to the following people who helped with the strategic planning process and the development of this strategic plan.

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### Waterways Safety Council

The Division of Watercraft's Waterways Safety Council consists of five members who are appointed by the Governor to act in an advisory capacity to the Chief of the Division of Watercraft. The Council represents industrial, educational and recreational aspects of boating. Members who provided input for this document:

J. Thomas Pascoe, Chair, Sandusky	Steven Ball, Columbus (former member)
John A. (Jack) Hern, Vice Chair, Lebanon	Norman A. Schultz, Westlake
Rodney M. Allen, Lexington	Ann Swain, Bolivar

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### Education Focus Group

Made up of Ohio members of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, U.S. Power Squadron, and the ODNR Division of Watercraft, this group was created in 2002 to strengthen partnerships between the three organizations, increase enrollment in boating education classes, revise the boating education Memorandums of Understanding, and improve the boating experience for all who boat in Ohio. The group developed strategies to increase enrollment in boating education courses with action steps that strengthened and validated the initial strategies developed for the Watercraft Integrated Marketing Communication Plan.

The focus group's ultimate marketing objective was to encourage safe boating participation and enjoyment by increasing the enrollment and completion of National Association of State Boating Law Administrators approved boating courses by 2,000 students annually to reach 14,000 students for the first year of the plan and 16,000 students for the second year of the plan.

The ODNR Division of Watercraft thanks the Education Focus Group participants for the validation, backing, and support of the Division's Integrated Marketing Communication Plan. Our collaboration of marketing tactics will maximize resources, build stronger partnerships, improve boating safety and ensure a more effective and integrated message for Ohioans.

Members:	Rodney Allen	Teri Hatcher	Warren McAdams
	Tom Briggs	Jack Hauck	William Parker
	Diane Catalano	Twila Hauck	Pablo Prieto
	Fred Eichenlaub	Robert Joyce	Dave Rickard
	Mark Geschke	John Lind	Alan Satterwhite
	David Gibson	Kathleen Lind	Gordon Scholz
	Anne Gilcher	Thomas Mallison	John Schreiber

## Acknowledgements (continued)

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### ODNR Division of Watercraft Employees

Various groups of employees were involved in the strategic planning process for the Division of Watercraft:

- The Executive Planning Group leads the Division of Watercraft in its Comprehensive Management System, which includes budgeting, project management, monitoring, and evaluation as well as operational planning and strategic planning. The group comprises the Chief, the two Deputy Chiefs, Section Managers, and the Division's four Regional Managers.
- The Guidance Committee represents all levels of Division of Watercraft staff, including management, union, and non-union employees. Employees are urged to present ideas and processes to the Guidance Committee for review and consideration.
- Public meetings required work from many employees in the comment-gathering phase of the strategic planning process.

Below is an alphabetical list of employees, past and present, who were involved in this version of the Division's strategic plan.

Ken Alvey, Chief; *Executive Planning Group, Guidance Committee, public meetings*

Joe Barile, Regional Manager (ret.); *Executive Planning Group, Guidance Committee, public meetings*

Rick Barrera, Section Manager; *Executive Planning Group, Guidance Committee, public meetings*

John Bird, Area Supervisor; *Guidance Committee, public meetings*

Dorothy Blevins; *public meetings*

Daisy Carter; *public meetings*

Rich Cates, Regional Manager; *Executive Planning Group, Guidance Committee, public meetings*

Pam Dillon, Past Deputy Chief; *Executive Planning Group, public meetings*

Denise Eubanks; *public meetings*

Mary Fitch; *public meetings*

Dan Fuller, Area Supervisor; *public meetings*

Nancy Gogle; *Guidance Committee*

Doug Golding; *public meetings*

Deb Green; *Executive Planning Group*

Gary Hale, Area Supervisor (ret.); *public meetings*

Steve Hathaway, Area Supervisor; *public meetings*

Sally Hess; *Guidance Committee*

Marilyn Hinderer, Area Supervisor; *public meetings*

## Acknowledgements (continued)

Jeff Hoedt, Past Chief; *Executive Planning Group, Guidance Committee, public meetings*

Mary Hughes; *Guidance Committee, public meetings*

Cathy Janosko; *public meetings*

John Johnston; *Guidance Committee*

Scott Jones; *Guidance Committee*

Judy Kempthorn; *public meetings*

Emily King, Section Manager; *Executive Planning Group, public meetings*

Kathy Kresak; *public meetings*

Pat Linden; *public meetings*

Rob Lucas; *Executive Planning Group, public meetings*

Duane Lucas, Regional Manager (ret.); *Executive Planning Group, public meetings*

Marva McCall; *Guidance Committee*

Rich McCullough; *Guidance Committee*

Bill McGarity, Deputy Chief; *Executive Planning Group, Guidance Committee*

Frank Meravy, Section Manager; *Executive Planning Group, public meetings*

Phil Miller, Section Manager; *Executive Planning Group, public meetings*

Karen Muench, Area Supervisor; *public meetings*

Jeff Nehls, Area Supervisor; *public meetings*

Michael Quinn, Deputy Chief; *Executive Planning Group, public meetings*

Mark Reed, Area Supervisor (ret.); *public meetings*

Roxane Roth; *public meetings*

Brenda Sams; *Guidance Committee, public meetings*

Larry Simonetti, Regional Manager; *Executive Planning Group, public meetings*

Brenda Smith; *public meetings*

Dona St. Clair; *Guidance Committee*

Bill Staiger, Area Supervisor; *public meetings*

LuAnn Thompson; *public meetings*

Teresa Waller; *Guidance Committee*

John Wargo, Area Supervisor (ret.); *public meetings*

Mike Westrick, Regional Manager; *public meetings*

**...Thank You!**