

Alaska Boating Safety Program

FY2009 Request: \$1,200,000
Reference No: 32553

AP/AL: Appropriation **Project Type:** Health and Safety
Category: Natural Resources
Location: Statewide **Contact:** Leta Simons
House District: Statewide (HD 1-40) **Contact Phone:** (907)465-2400
Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2008 - 06/30/2009

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

The Parks Division is responsible for administering a statewide boating safety program consistent with state law, secures federal acceptance of the State's boating safety program to qualify for federal funding and receive the full benefits available to the state; cooperates with local, state, and federal agencies, private and public organizations, and individuals to provide for a statewide boating safety education program that develops educational materials, supports statewide boating safety education and training programs for children and other high risk groups, trains, certifies, and supports boating safety instructors, supports a boating safety advisory council and provides for a uniform waterway marking system.

Funding:	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	Total
Fed Rcpts	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$6,000,000
VehRcpts	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$1,200,000
Total:	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	\$7,200,000

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-Going
100% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
Totals:	0	0

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:

SLA2007/CH30 \$ 1,200,000 75% Complete
 SLA2006/CH82 \$ 1,200,000 95%Complete
 SLA2005/CH3 \$ 1,000,000 Complete
 SLA2004/CH159 \$ 600,000 Complete
 SLA2003/CH82 \$ 600,000 Complete

Project Description/Justification:

A. Project Scope

Alaska became the last state to establish a state boating safety program when, in July 1998, the Office of Boating Safety was designated within the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. As a result, Alaska secured conditional program approval from the U.S. Coast Guard, and for the first time received a portion of the federal grant funding that, since 1987, had been made available to every state except Alaska. With the passage of the Alaska Boating Safety Act in May 2000, Alaska qualified to receive the state's full share of federal grant funds for boating safety programs.

The mission of the Alaska Boating Safety Program is to promote safety for persons and property in and connected with the use, operation, and equipment of boats on water of the state, and the uniformity of laws relating to boat safety. The Program's objectives are:

1. Cooperating with other state and federal agencies and organizations, provide a statewide boating program to reduce boating accidents and fatalities in Alaska.
2. Secure the benefits available to the state under 46 U.S.C. 13101 - 13110; and take the actions necessary to continue to qualify for federal grant funding under 46 U.S.C. 13102, and the U.S. Coast Guard / State of Alaska Memorandum of Understanding.
3. Provide a boating safety education program that increases public awareness and the knowledge, skills, and abilities of Alaska's boaters including the production of educational materials relevant to the needs of Alaska's boaters, support for statewide boating safety education programs for children and other high-risk groups, training, certification, and support of boating safety instructors, and evaluation, on an ongoing basis, of the effectiveness of educational programs.
4. Support the Alaska Boating Safety Advisory Council.
5. Provide for a uniform state waterway marking system.
6. Cooperate with other agencies to provide for boating accidents and casualties reporting, boat registration, boating safety patrol, and law enforcement training.
7. Promote the uniformity of laws relating to boating safety.

B. Approach

Because the Alaska Boating Safety Program is small compared to most other states, maintaining dynamic and productive partnerships is critical to the program's continued success. To that end, the program cooperates closely with the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, other state agencies, and boating organizations to provide programs and avoid duplication of effort. Alaska also maintains close relationships with the other states, and actively participates in regional and national boating organizations, to gain access to current research, identify and adopt the best practices of other state programs, maximize state resources, and to increase program quality, productivity, and effectiveness.

Some of the program's projects are accomplished through contracts with Alaskan non-profits and businesses, or agreements with other state agencies. Contracts for printing written publications, broadcasting boating safety messages, volunteer boating safety instructor training, research, surveys, and purchasing life jackets for the *Kid's Don't Float* program, all support private sector jobs and contribute to the state economy. Sales of boating safety equipment benefits Alaska businesses.

Project costs were estimated in consideration of prior year expenditures and the estimated maximum amount of funding Alaska could receive, subject to the ability to identify sufficient matching funds.

C. Program Evaluation

The multiple programs provided under this project preclude the use of a single evaluation methodology. Rather, several methods are used to measure progress in meeting objectives.

Drowning, boating fatality, and accident statistics, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary vessel safety check pass rates, observational personal flotation device (PFD) wear rate studies, statewide boater opinion surveys, law enforcement statistics, and boating course attendance, are all examples of ways used to capture information on boater attitudes, behaviors and to identify problem areas. For example, a statewide observational life jacket wear - rate study was conducted for the first time in 2001 to measure boater behaviors. In 2002, the first comprehensive statewide boater survey to assess boater awareness and attitudes was conducted. Both helped established important base - lines, and will be repeated every few years to measure effectiveness and to help identify any trends. In other examples, individual course and instructor evaluations and test scores, such as those conducted during boating safety classes, allow us to measure both the retention levels of students and the effectiveness of course curriculum. In addition, evaluations conducted by independent professionals are used to evaluate our instructor courses.

We expect this program will continue to produce positive results. Since the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971 (and the beginning of federal support of state boating programs), boating fatalities nationwide have decreased by 50% even though boat ownership more than doubled during the same period. The U.S. Coast Guard estimates over 27,000 lives

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have been saved since 1971. Similar reductions in Alaska's boating fatalities have been realized since 1998 when state efforts began. Alaska's boating fatality rate (per 100,000 boats) dropped from 144 in 1998, to 26.4 in 2006. In comparing the fatality totals of the two five - year periods within the previous 10 years, fatalities dropped 20% between the two periods. The highly regarded *Kid's Don't Float* program alone has been credited with 15 lives saved thus far. These statistics are one indication that Alaska's efforts have had a positive effect.

Why is this Project Needed Now?:

Drowning is the second only to highway fatalities as the leading cause of accidental death in Alaska, and many drowning deaths are attributable to non-commercial boating accidents. Alaska has historically had one of the highest non-commercial boating fatality rates (per 100,000 boats) in the nation. Alaska's accident data reveals:

- 91% involved boats under 26 feet in length
- 89% were adult males
- 73% were a capsized or fall overboard, into Alaska's cold water, and were unable to self rescue
- Most were not wearing life jackets
- Most had not taken a single boating safety course

Nearly all of these deaths involved operator controllable factors and could have been prevented.

Besides the tragic and needless loss of life, boating accidents cost money. Federal, state, and local agencies expend financial resources for every boating related search, rescue, emergency medical response, and body recovery. The devastation of losing a loved – one, is made even worse by the financial impact to surviving family members in medical expenses, lost income, and property.

Specific Spending Detail:

By legislative intent, 75% of the federal funds received for this project are to be used for boating specific public education programs. These include developing research – based and Alaska-relevant boating safety curriculum, writing text for publications such as the *Alaska Boater's Handbook* and posters, providing statewide boating safety instructor training and support, providing boating safety classes and presentations, purchasing life jackets for the *Kid's Don't Float* life jacket loaner board program, support for the U.S Coast Guard Auxiliary, developing, broadcasting, and publishing boating safety messages, and providing and supporting school programs including the *Kid's Don't Float Peer Educator Program*. While the program's emphasis is on education, some of these funds may also be used for training state law enforcement officers in marine law enforcement topics such as officer safety, boating while intoxicated, boat theft, and boat accident investigation.

LINE ITEM	DOLLAR AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION (text)
Personal Services	\$ 380,000	Natural Resource Manager, Park Ranger, Park Specialist and Administrative Assistant.
Travel	\$ 84,000	To attend meetings and to provide boating safety classes statewide.
Services	\$ 594,000	Contracts for educational purposes using state procurement procedures
Commodities	\$ 112,000	Life jackets for <i>Kids Don't Float</i> and other supplies needed for boating safety program.
Capital Outlay	\$ 30,000	Vehicle for the boating safety program.

State match in an amount equal to the federal grant fund received is required for the Boating Safety Program. Match is met by the \$200,000 provided from boat registrations and the rest is provided by recreational boating projects throughout the state.

Project Support:

United States Coast Guard, United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, Alaska Municipal League, Alaska Boating Association (ABA), Valdez Harbor Users Association, Seward Boat Owners Association, Whittier Boat Owners Association, Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association, Fairbanks Paddlers, Alaska Marine Dealer's Association, Outdoor Recreation and Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB), Alaska Safety Advisory Council (ASAC), Kenai River Special Management Area Citizen's Advisory Board, Alaska Boating Safety Advisory Council (ABSAC), Mat-Su State Parks Citizen's Advisory Board, Big Lake Community Council, Sitka State Parks Citizen's Advisory Board, Denali Safety Council, Alaska Department of Public Safety, Alaska Wildland Adventures, National Transportation Safety Board, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services - Community Health and EMS section, Western States Boating Administrator's Association, National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, National Safe Boating Council

Project Opposition:

None