

Nonprofit Organization Grants:

Coast Guard Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety
Recreational Boating Safety

Federal Grant Title:	National Non-Profit Organization Grant Program
Federal Agency:	United States Coast Guard
Funding Opportunity Number:	DHS-USCG-2020-001
Type of Funding:	Cooperative Agreement
CFDA Numbers:	97.012
CFDA Descriptions:	Boating Safety Financial Assistance

Grantee: Water Sports Foundation
Grant Number: 3320FAN112026
Grant Title: Increasing Awareness of Safe Boating Practices
Period of Performance: 1 year grant

Award Amount: \$300,000.00

Summary:

The objective of the Increasing Awareness of Safe Boating Practices campaign is to reduce boating casualties by informing the at-risk boating public with millions of safety message impressions about inherent risks associated with boating, persuading the public to adopt safer boating behaviors, and reminding them of these behaviors. The project includes a major focus on developing a positive culture shift towards safer boating behavior while building a safety culture for all boaters, including passengers, to most effectively reduce casualties. This project is an Outreach, Marketing, and Year-Round Safe Boating Campaign, accomplishing the tasks of;

1. Informing the boating public about the inherent risks associated with boating.
2. Persuading the boating public to adopt safe boating behaviors and to remind them of these behaviors.

This project will focus on the following areas; the need for Boater Education, the importance of Life Jacket Wear, understanding the dangers of changing Weather Conditions, the Consequences of Irresponsible Behavior on the Water, the importance of understanding Navigation Rules, the importance of using an Engine Cutoff Device, avoiding Boating Under the Influence and an increased awareness of new Life Jacket Labels.

This project will deliver more than 9.5 million boating safety impressions specifically designed for boaters.

<https://www.watersportsfoundation.com/>

The Water Sports Foundation, Inc.

A Non-Profit Division of the Water Sports Industry Association (WSIA)

A One Year Project for the
United States Coast Guard Office of Auxiliary & Boating Safety
FY2020 Boating Safety Non-Profit Grant Funds

Fiscal Year 2020 Supporting
The National Recreational Boating Safety
Strategic Plan 2017-2021
Area of Interest Item #2 – Outreach

INCREASING AWARENESS of SAFE BOATING PRACTICES

3320FAN112026 FINAL PROGRESS REPORT

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Increasing Awareness of Safe Boating Practices

3320FAN112026 Final Progress Report

On August 13, 2020, the Water Sports Foundation entered into a cooperative agreement with United States Coast Guard to manage a \$300,000 non-profit grant award titled [*Increasing Awareness of Safe Boating Practices*](#).

The objective of *Increasing Awareness of Safe Boating Practices* was to reduce boating casualties by informing the boating public with a minimum of 9.7 million safety message impressions about inherent risks associated with boating, persuading the public to adopt safer boating behaviors and reminding them of these behaviors. The outcome of this project was to create a boating public that is more informed and aware of the inherent risks associated with boating. A further outcome was to reduce casualties including property damages, injuries and deaths.

A media impression, or simply an impression as they are often called, refers to any interaction a person has with a message. The exact definition will vary depending on the medium, but for online marketing it is the number of people who encounter or scroll by an ad or content on websites, social media, electronic newsletters, video players and similar platforms.

The Water Sports Foundation contracted with the Bonnier Corp. and the Outdoor Sportsman Group, two of America's largest marine publishing companies that have each developed massive boater and prospective-boater dominant audiences of subscribers and followers to deliver highly targeted, consistent, zero-waste media impressions on a variety of boating safety topics.

Boating Safety media messages in the form of professionally written articles, social media posts, a variety of advertisements and custom-produced video PSAs were delivered to the audiences through electronic newsletters, websites, printed volumes and social media including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. All content was approved by the U.S. Coast Guard before publishing.

The campaign launched in early 2020 before the North American boating season and remained in effect until September. Full-page advertisements promoting life jacket wear were printed in the popular consumer magazines *Boating*, *WakeBoarding* and *Saltwater Sportsman*. Print ads were also published in the popular *Boat Buyer's Guide* magazines. A total of 13 full-page print ads produced 1.4 million media impressions. Digitally distributed issues of the magazines were viewed an additional 200,000 times.

The campaign included published stories in print and online called *I Learned About Boating from That* (ILAB), in which readers shared real-life boating accident and near-miss stories that were re-told as learning experiences. The articles were editorially produced to give the audience interesting stories from fellow boaters with safety messages cleverly woven within.

Similar digital advertisements were published on websites, optimized for mobile and desktop devices, including *Boating*, *BassFan*, *Cruising World*, *Florida Sportsman*, *Fly Fisherman*, *Game & Fish*, *In-Fisherman*, *Marlin*, *Sailing World*, *Saltwater Sportsman*, *Sport Fishing*, *WakeBoarding*, *WaterSki*, *World Fishing Network*, and *Yachting* netting an additional 2.6 million impressions.

Each publisher maintains a "boating safety website landing page" where evergreen content resides year round. Subscriber based electronic newsletters delivered via email containing safe boating content including advertisements, professionally written articles and custom produced video PSAs, that upon clicking, take the viewer to the respective publisher's boating safety website landing page to view more boating safety content. For example, the Bonnier Corp.

boating safety website page now includes more than 200 video PSAs and dozens of articles. The two publisher's boating safety landing pages generated 420,528 unique visits. Electronic newsletters produced an additional 7.4 million impressions.

Each publisher created regular Facebook, Instagram and Twitter social media posts, 144 total, promoting safe boating content such as life jacket wear, use of engine cutoff devices, avoiding impairment, understanding navigation rules of road, and the importance of boating safety education. Facebook and Instagram video ads produced 525,065 video views and the combined social media posts produced an additional 3.5 million impressions.

Four custom video PSAs were contracted for production, yet the Bonnier Corp. produced five, one as an in kind donation. They included topics such as how to properly [share congested waterways](#), the dangers of a [bass boat rounding a corner](#) too fast and potentially causing a collision, the value of using an [engine cutoff device](#), a safety message reminding boaters that waterways are [now more crowded than ever](#), and the [dangers of nighttime boating](#). The video PSAs were promoted on all of the Bonnier Corp. and Outdoor Sportsman Group channels producing 111,958 video views and an astounding 2,630 hours watched.

As an added value campaign promotion, the Bonnier Corp. included regular boating safety quizzes delivered as custom newsletters. The custom newsletters, which contain no other content, each included two recently produced video PSAs and the associated quiz questions were tied into information that was presented in the videos, prompting the viewer to watch the video first. The quizzes, completed 13,352 times, were each tied to an opportunity to win a \$250 gift card from a popular boating retailer. This promotion was provided to the campaign as additional in kind contribution and produced another 1.9 million impressions.

Every metric above shows an increase/improvement over previous year measurements making FY2020 a banner year for outreach. The project was completed on time and on budget.

Pursuant to project outcomes, this campaign uses sophisticated analytic tracking software to measure quantitative results producing 17.9 million media impressions, nearly twice the project's objective of 9.7 million, which substantially validates the outcome of a *more informed and aware* boating public.

Post campaign attitudes and behaviors survey data shows that the audience has an evidence-based, increased awareness and an improved adoption of safer boating and paddling practices. Property damage, injury and death data for the period is not yet available. The federally required single audit performed by Moss Krusick of Orlando, Florida, completed July 26, 2021, reported no findings.

Based on the evidenced based results presented above, the Water Sports Foundation concludes that the recreational boating public is more informed and aware of the inherent risks associated with boating and boating is a safer leisure time activity as a result of the efforts provided by the U.S. Coast Guard administered non-profit grant project *Increasing Awareness of Safe Boating Practices*. For more information contact the Water Sports Foundation at www.WaterSportsFoundation.com.

