

Boating Tips

California Department of Boating and Waterways

I met Ray Tsuneyoshi, Director of the California Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW, Cal Boating), a few years back on

the foredeck of a trawler heading out of the Alameda Estuary. We were both participating in the annual Pacific Inter-Club Yacht Association (PICYA) "Wheelchair Regatta." This is where the yacht clubs of NorCal get together and provide a day on the Bay and BBQ for residents of



BY KEVIN O'LEARY

veterans' hospitals in NorCal.

We struck up a conversation about boating safety and education. I explained to him what I do at Pacific Powerboating and he gave me some insight as to what DBW does. So starting last year, I decided to dedicate a column each year to the subject of Cal Boating and what their challenges and accomplishments mean for us boaters.

What Is DBW?

The Department of Boating and Waterways is the state department responsible for statewide public access, safety and education, and consumer and environmental protection for recreational boating. It performs the following functions:

- Funds, plans and develops boating facilities on the state's waterways.
- Ensures safe boating by providing boating education, local law enforcement funding and training, and funding for removal of abandoned watercraft.
- Provides consumer protection by licensing yacht brokers, salespersons and for-hire boat operators.
- Educates the boating community on environmentally sound



Ray Tsuneyoshi, Director of the California Department of Boating and Waterways.

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boating practices.

- Controls non-native aquatic invasive plants in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.
- Operates an oceanography program at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.
- Funds beach erosion control and sand re-nourishment projects along California's coast.

How Is DBW Funded?

What makes this department special is that it receives no general fund monies. The Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund (HWRF) is the primary funding source. Boaters pay for the services that DBW administers. The HWRF is funded through:

- State fuel taxes paid by boaters when gas is purchased for boats.
- State registration fees paid by boaters for motorized recreational boats.
- Interest and principal repayment of DBW loans by public and private boating facility owners.
- Licensing fees paid by yacht and ship brokers and salespersons.

DBW Achievements

What are some of the DBW's achievements over the years? DBW provided a \$3.1 million loan for marina improvements to San Diego's Sun Harbor Marina. This loan aided the marina in obtaining the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Marina certificate in the world. The LEED cer-

tification process is a leading-edge system for designing, constructing and certifying the world's greenest buildings. By incorporating green principles throughout the entire project, Sun Harbor Marina created a prototype for marinas around the world.

Another crowning achievement for DBW is San Francisco's South Beach Harbor Marina. The marina is located at Pier 40 in San Francisco. The full-service marina features 700 slips with modern concrete docks, a 500-foot recre-



ational/commercial guest dock, the Pier 40 maritime Sailing Center and South Beach Park. Before this project began, the area was dilapidated and deteriorating. The DBW loan that was provided to South Beach Harbor not only cleaned up the waterfront, but also became a catalyst for redevelopment in the China Basin/South Beach neighborhood, including condominiums, restaurants, the Embarcadero renovations and the new San Francisco Giants ballpark.

One of DBW's greatest accomplishments in education was the establishment of a standard carbon monoxide warning decal now used by the boating industry nationwide. The Anthony Farr and Stacy Beckett Boating Safety Act was signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and became the first national law for carbon monoxide and boating. The new law bans "teak surfing" behind a vessel, requires placement of carbon monoxide warning decals on vessels, and has reduced the number of carbon monoxide fatalities associated with boating.

Challenges

So what challenges will recreational boating have in the coming year and how can DBW help out?

Even though the state of California is facing numerous challenges, such as budgetary shortfalls and a water shortage crisis, boaters are still boating. They continue taking advantage of California's beautiful coastal and inland waterways. They're just changing their habits by taking shorter and fewer trips or using non-motorized vessels.

According to the 2007 recreational boating statistical abstract, more than four million people participated in recreational boating. This sport added \$1.2 billion to the Gross State Product and had a direct impact on 24,200 jobs with a labor income of \$750 million. Recreational boating is definitely an important contributor to the state's economy.

Another challenge that DBW continues to deal with is abandoned vessels. Abandoned vessels are not only eyesores destroying the

beauty of the waterways, but also pose an environmental hazard. Last year, California Assemblymember Ted Leiu introduced Assembly Bill 1950, which would have authorized DBW to provide grants to local agencies for disposal of abandonment-risk vessels when they are voluntarily surrendered by their owners. It would have also increased the minimum fine for the abandonment of a vessel. The bill was vetoed.

Nevertheless, the department will continue being proactive in alleviating abandoned vessels in the state of California. This is done through its Abandoned Watercraft Abatement Fund program. The program provides \$500,000 annually to agencies throughout the state for the removal of abandoned and derelict recreational vessels or other submerged objects that pose a substantial hazard to navigation.

Overall, DBW will continue with its goals of reducing accidents, creating needed access to facilities for boaters and improving environmentally sound boating practices. Boaters are always welcome to view the DBW website www.dbw.ca.gov for information on boating in this great state of California.

Kevo's Tip:

The California Department of Boating and Waterways provides numerous services to the recreational boating public year in and year out. One of their strengths is that they are focused on our boating activities and venues exclusively. In my opinion this gives us boaters the best bang for the buck in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

Special thanks to Ms. Gloria Sandoval, DBW Public Information Officer (PIO), for her help in putting together this column.

As always, feedback is appreciated. I can be reached at 925/890-8428 or kevo@yachtsmanmagazine.com. ☞