

New industry event for National Marina Day 10th anniversary



by Wendy Larimer

National Marina Day (NMD) has moved to June 12 in order to take advantage of the enthusiasm sparked by the kick-off of the boating season. It was also moved to coincide with other industry events that support boating and outdoor recreation. June 12 is National Get Outdoors Day, sponsored by the American Recreation Coalition and the final day of National Fishing and Boating Week, sponsored by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF). Earlier in the spring the National Safe Boating Council sponsors National Safe Boating Week, which kicks off this event filled month.

A new plan

Since all of these activities have the same general goal of getting people boating safely, it made sense to the sponsors of these various events that they should start working together.

RBFF has an existing Boating Task Force made up of representatives from the Association of Marina Industries (AMI), Marine Retailers Association of America (MRAA), the National Marine Manufacturer Association's Discover Boating program, BoatU.S., and the Bonnier Group, a media company that publishes many marine-related magazines. As this group met to discuss how RBFF could better engage the boating industry, the discussion turned to how these industry groups could all begin to work more closely to support each other's efforts. The hope is that this one event could gain more publicity and support than any individual association could accomplish alone.

Since NMD was the longest standing event and because marinas are a boating hub, the group chose to hold an all-industry event at several marinas participating in NMD.

What's in a name?

Naming this event became one of the biggest hurdles. While every group wants to have its name attached and get credit for its efforts, could "Discover Boating at NMD sponsored by Take Me Fishing" become a recognized brand? Would it roll off the tongue of participants? The answer was clearly no. RBFF stepped up and offered its marketing services, and a name was born: Boat.Fish.Live.

Ten marinas around the country will be selected to host Boat.Fish.Live. where there's enough access to land and water. They were also selected due to their proximity to high numbers of boat owners and boating activities, hoping to ensure a sizeable audience the first year out. The planning task force also wanted to make sure that the event covered all areas of the country. Holding events at only 10 different facilities might seem like a small audience, but organizers wanted the event to be high quality the first year, in the hope that more marinas and organizations would

want to participate in the future. Ten will serve as a trial number of marinas for the first year, and marinas that were not chosen can look to participate in future years.

At press time, nine of the 10 host marinas have been chosen: Bill Bird Marina in Miami Beach, Fla.; Colony Marine at Algonac Harbor Club in Algonac, Mich.; Grande Dunes Resort & Marina in Myrtle Beach, S.C.; Scotts Landing Marina in Grapevine, Texas; Callville Bay Resort & Marina in Las Vegas, Nev.; Aqualand Marina in Flowery Branch, Ga.; Anchorage Marina in Baltimore, Md.; Marina Bay at Boston Harbor in North Quincy, Mass.; and New Rochelle Municipal Marina in New Rochelle, N.Y. One other marina is still under consideration.

The Boating Task Force also agreed to open the door to boating associations and organizations that weren't necessarily involved with RBFF. Stepping up was the National Safe Boating Council's "Wear It" campaign, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, several dealers and manufacturers, and even ESPN.

Contributing sponsors for the event include: ValvTect Marine Fuels, Eaton Corp.—Marina Power and Lighting, BoatU.S., Premier Materials Technology Inc., and RBFF.

What to expect?

Each site will have representatives and/or activities from all the groups, along with its NMD celebration events. To date, each site may have the following: boat demos, fishing demos, "Take Me Fishing", "Wear It", and "Discover Boating" campaign materials and activities, a visit by BoatU.S. tow boats, free boat rides. Some of the events these facilities have already planned for NMD include fireworks, regattas, speedboat races, live music, raffles, contests, kids areas, and more.

And it isn't only about the activities. The event has promotional value as well. All the participating groups will be promoting Boat.Fish.Live to their own audiences. Everyone will tout the value of recreating on the water, from the beauty and tranquility of bobbing in a fishing boat to the thrill and fitness benefits of wakeboarding down a river.

Why do this at all? Every boating organization has the overall goal of getting more people out boating. More boaters mean more slip rentals and more sales and service opportunities. By combining the forces of many organizations, the scope will hopefully reach even farther. ⚓

Wendy Larimer is U.S. legislative coordinator for the Association of Marina Industries (AMI) and AMI National Marina Day coordinator. She can be reached at 202/350-9623 or via e-mail at wlarimer@lighthousecg.com.