

WISCONSIN BOATING



2015

ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Bureau of Law Enforcement
Pub-LE-314-2015

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WISCONSIN BOATING

ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT

PROGRAM SCOPE

The Bureau of Law Enforcement boating program has a wide range of duties and responsibilities which include:

- Accident Investigation, Reporting and Administration
- Enforcement
- Safety Education
- Operations and Training
- Public Outreach and Marketing
- Municipal Ordinance Review and Administration
- Waterway Marker Permitting and Administration

PROGRAM CONTACTS

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For more Wisconsin boating contacts, see the Recreational Safety Warden map at the end of this report.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Accident Investigation, Reporting and Administration

Conservation wardens and municipal water patrol officers have the responsibility to investigate reportable boating accidents. A "reportable" boat incident is any incident (regardless of the number of boats involved) that results in loss of life, injuries that require medical treatment beyond first aid, boat or property damage in excess of \$2,000, or complete loss of a boat.

DNR Number		F. Warden <input type="checkbox"/>		BOAT OPERATOR INCIDENT REPORT	
C.G. Number		W. Super <input type="checkbox"/> RSW <input type="checkbox"/>			
s.30.67 Wis Stats Form 4100-20 (Rev. 07/06)					
In completing this report, <u>DO NOT</u> fill in the shaded areas; these will be completed by the Department of Natural Resources.					
INCIDENT INFORMATION					
Number of Boats in Incident:		Injuries Requiring Medical Treatment?		<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
Complete Loss of Vessel? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N		Death Related to Incident?		<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
Disappearance of Person Indicating Injury or Death? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N		If yes, number:			
Property Damage (Estimated)					
This Boat: \$	Other Boats: \$	Other Property: \$			
Date of Incident	Day of Week	Time of Day	Name of Body of Water	Location	
		<input type="checkbox"/> am <input type="checkbox"/> pm			
Nearest City or Town			County	State	
				WI	

Wisconsin law requires every boat operator involved in a reportable boat incident to report the incident without delay to law enforcement officials. In addition, within 10 days of the incident, the operator must submit a written report. Operator Boating Incident Report Forms are available on the Wisconsin DNR's webpage, from DNR offices, sheriff's departments and many local police departments.

Officer Boat Incident Investigation			
DNR No.	C.G. No.	Reviewed By:	Form 4100-142 (R 9/10) Page 1 of 6
Other Agency No.		F. Warden _____	** ATTACH ALL CASE ACTIVITY / INCIDENT REPORTS AND DIAGRAMS **
		W. Super _____	
		RSW _____	
Incident Criteria			
Incident Date	Day of Week	Time of Day <input type="radio"/> am <input type="radio"/> pm	Name of Body of Water
Location or GPS Coordinates		Nearest City or Town	County
		State <input type="checkbox"/> WI	
Reportable Incident? <input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> N	Injuries Requiring Medical Treatment? <input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> N	Property Damage (Estimated)	
Commercial Boating Incident? <input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> N	If yes, # persons: _____	Boat A: \$ _____	
Recreational Boating Incident? <input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> N	Death Related to Incident? <input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> N	Boat B: \$ _____	
Number of Boats in Incident: _____	If yes, # persons: _____	Boat C: \$ _____	
Complete Loss of Boat? <input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> N	Disappearance of Person Indicating Injury or Death? <input type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> N	Other Property: \$ _____	
		Total Damage: \$ _____	

The Department is required by state and federal law to gather boat accident reports and convey the information to the United States Coast Guard by entering the accident information onto the Coast Guard's Boating Accident Report Database (BARD).

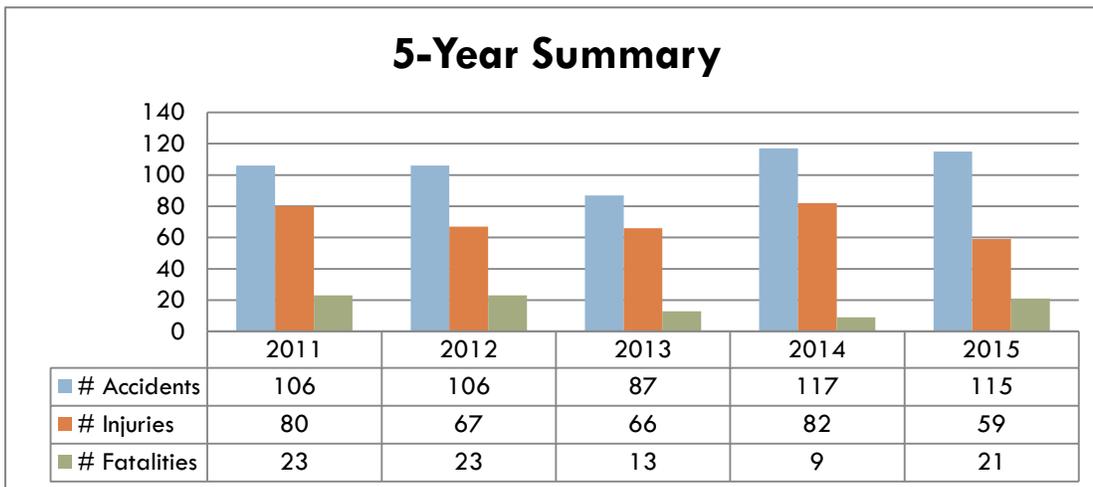
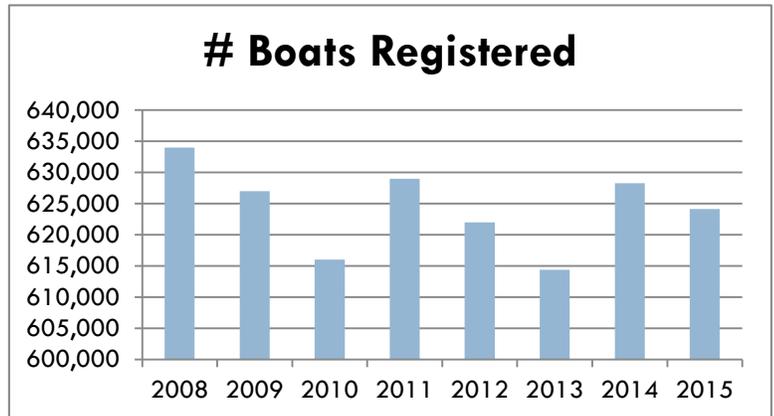
Information gathered during accident investigations, including the causes and contributing factors of accidents, is used by the DNR and the U.S. Coast Guard to determine preventive action, enforcement measures, and public outreach.

2015 Accident Summary

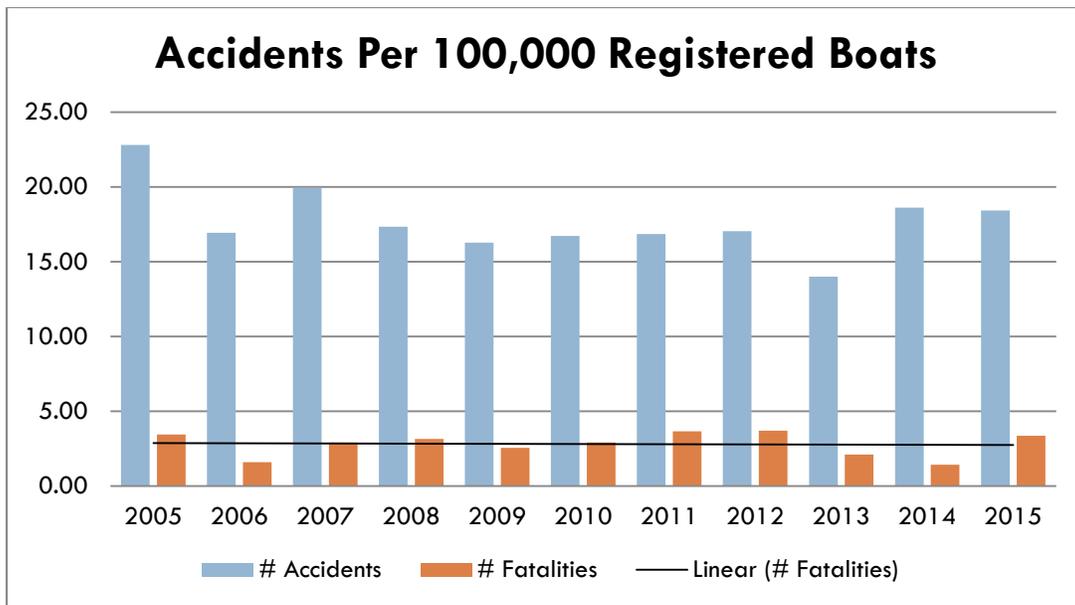
As of December 31, 2015, there were 624,105 registered vessels in Wisconsin that display the State vessel registration number, a 1% decrease from 2014.

Wisconsin reports 115 boating accidents resulting in 58 persons injured and 21 fatalities.

2015 boating accidents involved 163 vessels; 93% motorized and 6% non-motorized.

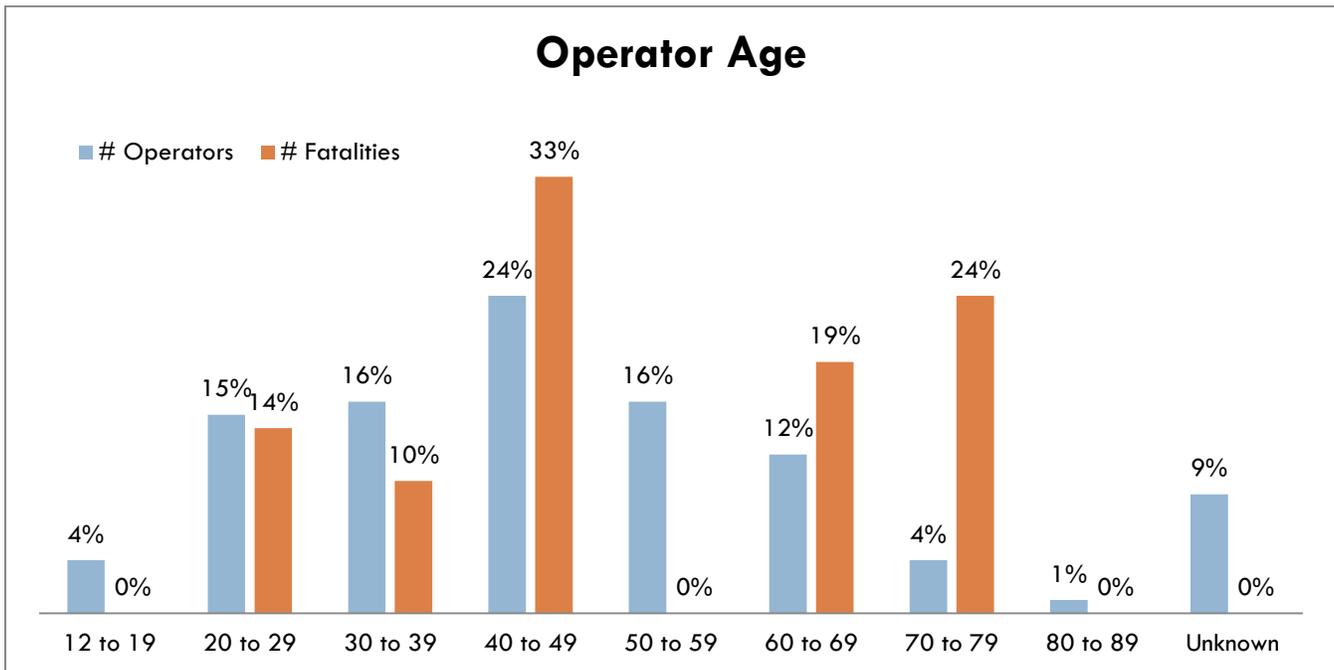


Property damage totaled \$675,022, where damage information was reported.

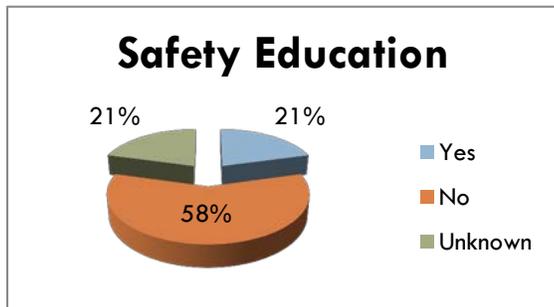
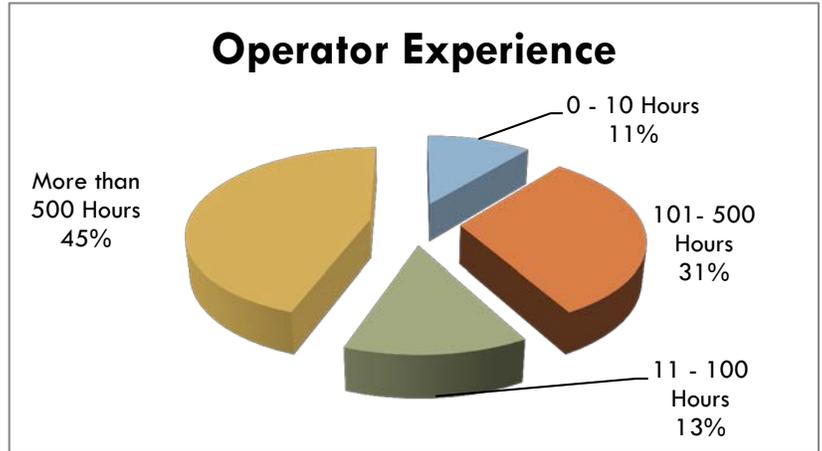


The fatality rate for 2015 was 3.39 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels. The ten year trend is 2.81 fatalities per 100,000 recreational vessels.

24% of the operators involved in a boating accident were between the ages of 40-49, while 33% of the fatalities were between the ages of 40-49.

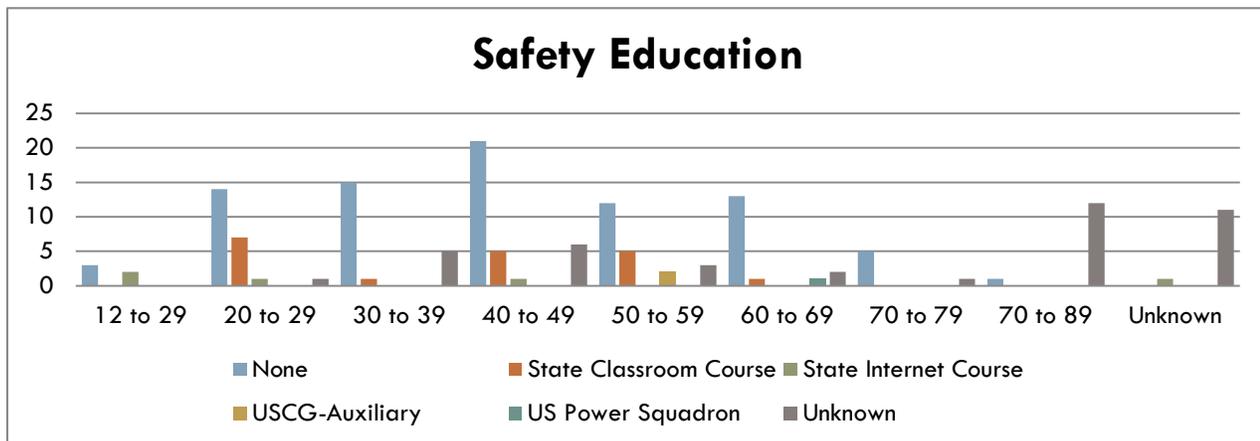


Operator experience does not appear to be a contributing factor in 2015 boat accidents. As reflected below, 45% of the operators reported over 500 hours of boating experience.



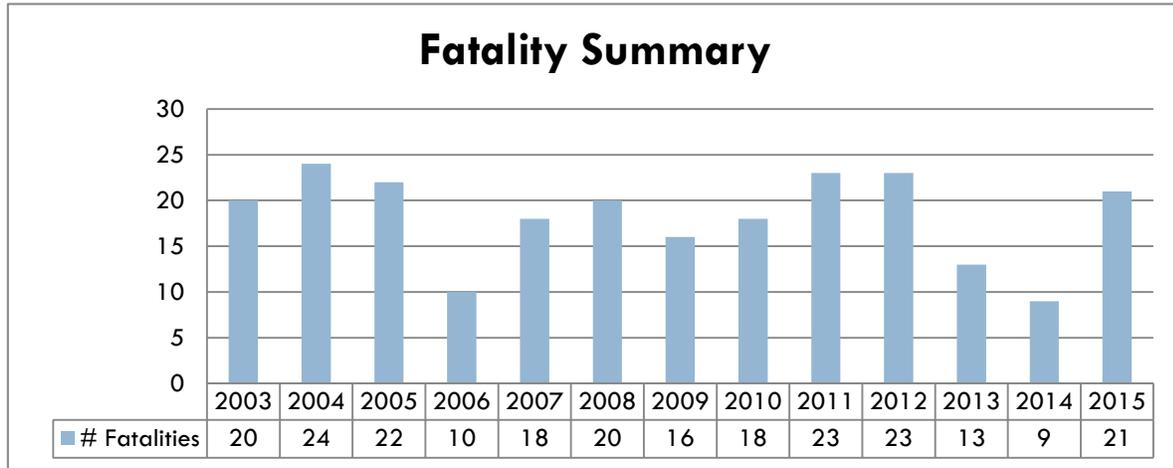
Boating safety education continues to be noted in boating accident reports. 58% of the operators involved in an accident reported not completing a safety education course. A 2% increase over 2014 data.

Completion of a boating safety education class is mandatory for operators born after January 1, 1989, and who are 16 years old or older. Where safety education was reported by operators involved in an accident, 60% of operators reported that they had not completed a boat safety education class.

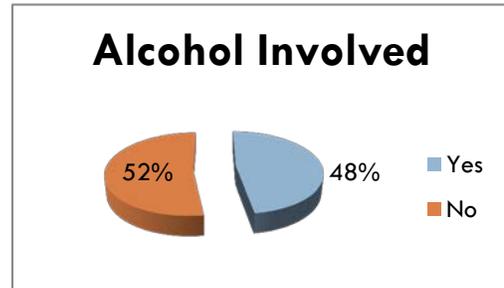


2015 Fatalities

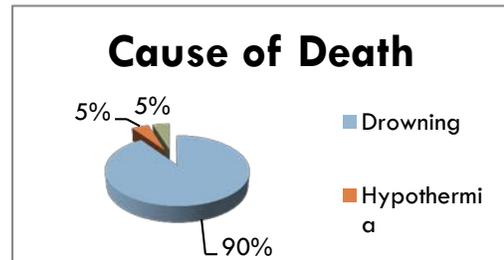
Wisconsin reported 21 fatalities during 2015.



Of the fatalities, alcohol use was involved in 48% of the accidents.

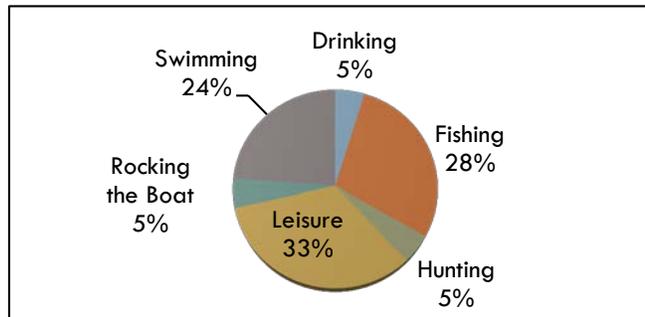


Where PFD use was reported, 90% were not wearing a personal flotation device.



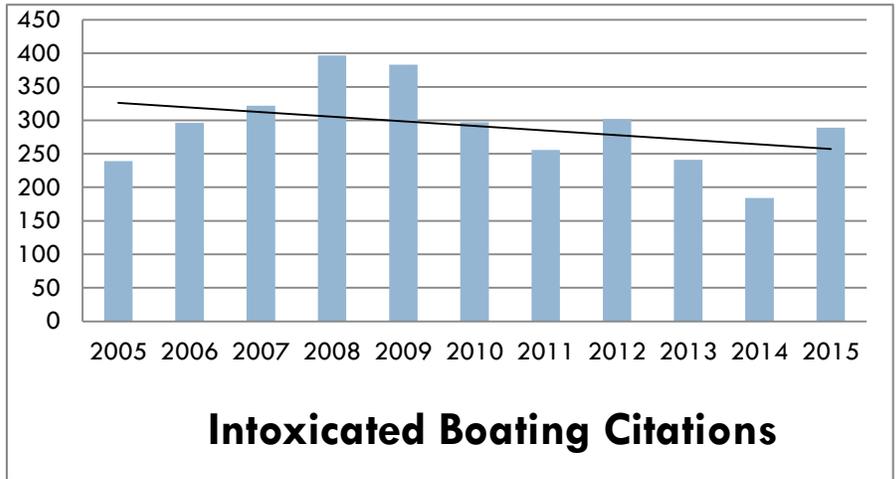
Drowning was determined to be the cause of death in 90% of the fatalities.

33% of the victims were reported to be boating for recreation at the time of the accident.

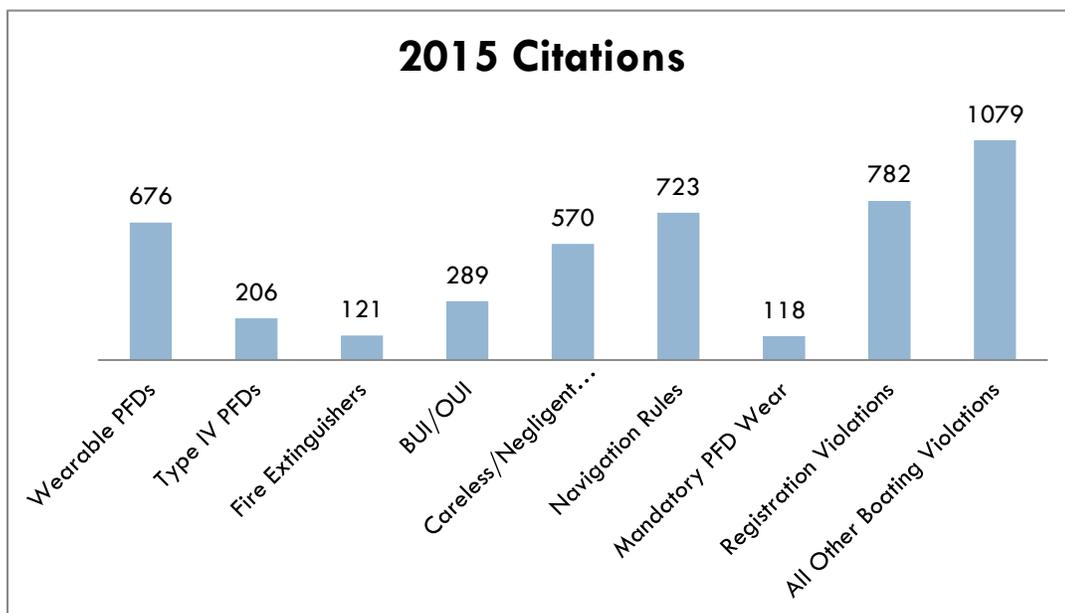


Enforcement

State conservation wardens and municipal patrol officers provide on-the-water enforcement of boating laws. The boating program administers funding to municipal water safety patrols to reimburse part of their operating expenses. Citations issued by the municipal water safety patrols are included in the charts.



Emphasis has been placed on enforcement of safety violations, which includes boating while intoxicated, navigation rules, and life jackets. The United States Coast Guard also provides enforcement on the federal waters and the joint (state-federal) waterways of the Fox River System from Green Bay to Lake Winnebago.



Safety Education

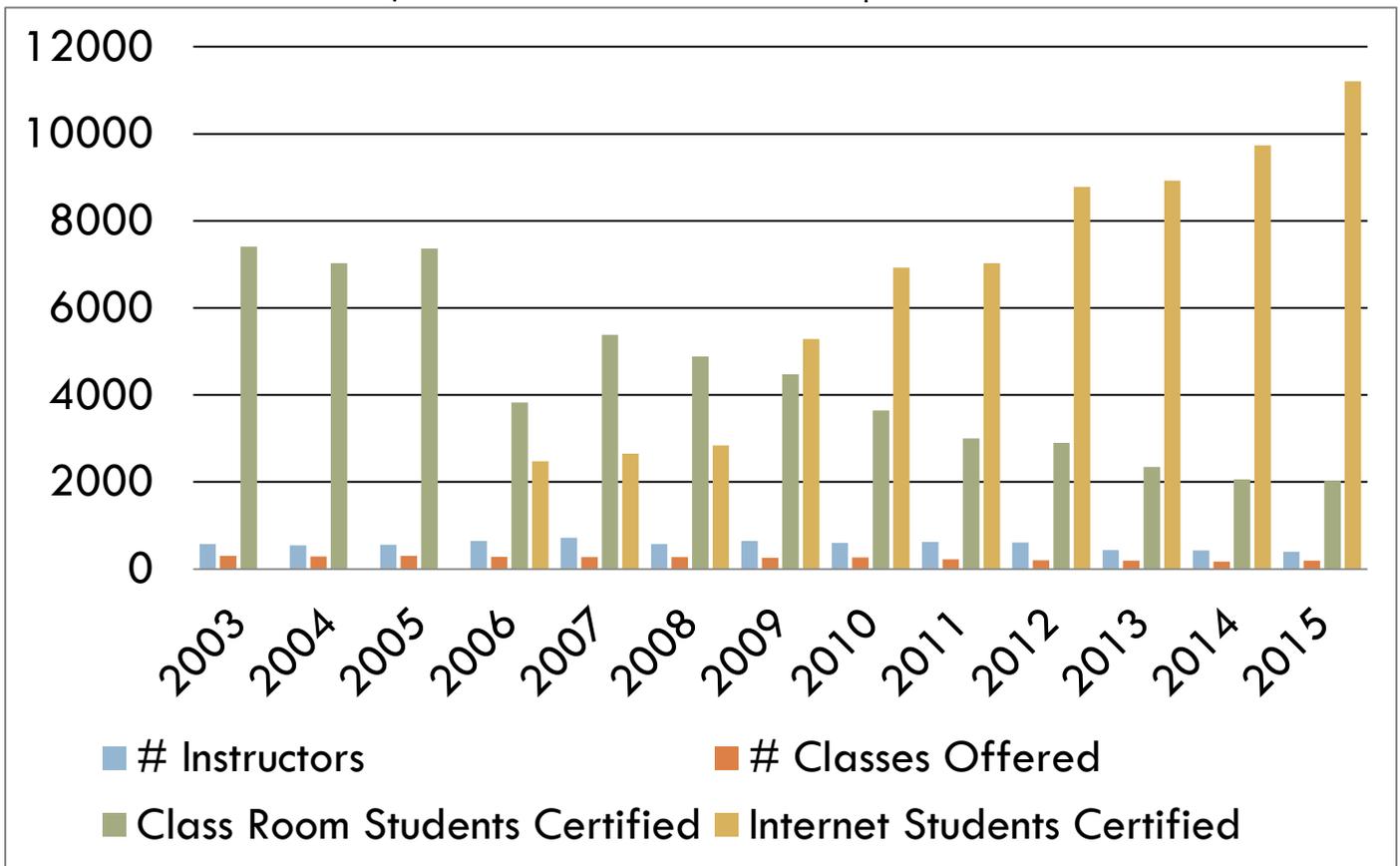
The Mandatory Boating Safety Education Law requires any boat operator, born on or after January 1, 1989, and who is 16 years of age or older, take and pass a Boating Safety Course to legally operate a motorboat. Those who do not have this certification are prohibited from operating a motorized boat or a personal watercraft (PWC) in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin experienced a 112% increase in students completing the Wisconsin Boating Safety Education course during 2015. Of the 13,242 students certified, 85% or 11,206 completed the online course. Ages for students certified in 2015 range from 8 to 94 years old, with 64% between the ages of 8-19.

Wisconsin has 398 volunteer instructors certified to teach the classroom course, a 7% decrease in instructors from the previous year. The volunteer instructors completed 198 classes (a 2% decrease from the previous year) and recorded 2,909 hours during the reporting time period.

The U.S. Coast Guard certified an additional 203 Wisconsin boaters, while the U.S. Power Squadron certified 19 boaters.

Wisconsin's mandatory education law includes language for Wisconsin residents and visitors who do not already possess a valid boating education certificate, but who wish to rent a boat or PWC to complete a condensed boating safety course and pass the exam in order to be issued a Temporary Boat Safety Certificate which expires at the end of the calendar year. Of the 3,044 boaters completing the Temporary Boat Safety Certificate, 77% or 2,351 of the boaters completed the course at a Wisconsin watercraft rental business, while 23% or 693 completed on the online course.



Operation Dry Water



With boating under the influence continuing to be a major factor in accidents and deaths on our nation's waterways, officers with local, state and federal agencies again teamed up for Operation Dry Water, a national Boating Under the Influence

(BUI) enforcement and awareness campaign. Significantly more law enforcement agencies are participating in Operation Dry Water, the nation's year-round BUI awareness and enforcement campaign.

Wisconsin officers were on the water providing heightened enforcement and awareness about the dangers of drinking while boating. Operation Dry Water 2015 was June 26-28, just before the Fourth of July – a holiday known for heavy boating traffic and deadly accidents. Annually, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, local law enforcement patrols, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, and the U.S. Coast Guard join together in an intensified effort to detect intoxicated boaters and enforce boating under the influence (BUI) laws in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Operation Dry Water Summary Report	2015
# of Agencies	30
# of Officers	162
# Vessels Contacted	1,769
# Boaters Contacted	4,346
# Boating Citations	142
# BUI Arrests	9
Highest BAC	.154
# Boat Safety Warnings	678
# Media Contacts	32
# Non-Boating Violations	145

The increase in law enforcement participation led to a positive increase in recreational boater outreach as well. The goal of Operation Dry Water (ODW) and those who participate is not only to remove impaired boaters from the water. Equally important is the goal of raising awareness throughout the year among recreational boaters about the dangers that come with the decision to operate a vessel while under the influence. During this year's heightened awareness and enforcement weekend, Wisconsin law enforcement officers made contact with 4,701 boaters as part of their education and awareness efforts.

Public Outreach and Marketing



Data summarized from citations/warnings and accident investigation is used to determine appropriate public outreach and marketing efforts.

The boating program used printed literature, radio, television, media interviews and presentations across the state. Wisconsin DNR sponsored 'boating safety' public service announcements on the Wisconsin Public Radio Network, Charter Media and Time Warner. Messages include Boat Safe/Boat Smart, PFD requirements, BUI/OUI, Operation Dry Water, Cold Water Safety, "Reach, Throw, Don't Go", Kids Don't Float and National Safe Boating Week.

WDNR, Bureau of Law Enforcement staff annually attend sports shows, county fairs, safety fairs, youth expos, school career days, state fair and other outreach events to spread the message about safe boating.

WISCONSIN BOATING

The “**Wear It**” campaign is a strong marketing tool in Wisconsin. WDNR purchased a mobile billboard that will be used to spread various safety messages throughout the year. The boating program purchased two boater safety banners. The mobile billboard is 8’x16’ and is located throughout northern Wisconsin and was used at the 2015 Wisconsin State Fair, where more than 1 million citizens saw the display.



Other educational efforts were implemented to reach additional people. Conservation wardens reached approximately 50,000 people through formal boating safety presentations and public forums such as outdoor sports expositions, boating shows, county fairs and the Wisconsin State Fair.



The “**Kid’s Don’t Float Life Jacket Loaner Board**” program is a cooperative program between the Department of Natural Resources and community partners, in which a life jacket loaner station is placed at boat landings around Wisconsin. 18 stations were added in 2015, with several more pending and in various stages of construction.

The partners in this program represent a large variety of government and service organizations. It should be noted that Boy Scouts coordinated and/or assisted with the construction of eighteen of the stations, 3 stations were constructed by local high school clubs and organizations.

Prior to 2015, all of our Kids Don’t Float stations were placed on Day Use landings. In 2015, we partnered with the Friends of the Lower Wisconsin River (FLOW) to place six Kids Don’t Float stations on the Lower Wisconsin River. The Wisconsin River between Prairie du Sac and Prairie du Chien is 92 miles long and historically sees a number of drownings each year. A good portion of the boating traffic on this waterway is canoeists, kayakers and other manually propelled watercraft, where the boater takes out from a different landing than he or she launched from. This situation presented some unique challenges to the program such as ensuring that borrowed life jackets were returned to the station where they were borrowed from and protecting the station and life jackets



from sudden rises in the river levels. Members of the Friends group worked with the Lower Wisconsin Riverway Board, the DNR Lands Division and an architect from the Spring Green area to create a design that addressed these issues as well as meeting the aesthetic color requirements of the Riverway. Each of these station signs has a list of the other stations along the river where the life jackets can be dropped off. Additionally, arrangements were made with the Wyalusing State Park office for canoeists who borrow life jackets and canoe to the Mississippi River to drop jackets off there as well.

Operations and Training

In 2015, law enforcement officers statewide logged 120,720 hours to recreational boating safety activities which include law enforcement, education, accident investigation, training and program administration. 53% of the total, or 64,289 hours were “On the Water”.

DNR’s boat operation and training program continues to grow as we certify additional instructors and law enforcement officers statewide. Obtaining certification as boat training instructors for DNR wardens reduces travel and tuition costs for the Department as well as our partner law enforcement agencies. 230 officers attended a boat training course in 2015.

2015 Boat Training Completed
Basic Boat Operations for Patrol Agencies
Boat Accident Investigation
Boat Operations for Warden Recruits
Canoe / Kayak Instructor Training
Seated Field Sobriety Testing
Tactical Boat Operators / Pursuit & Stop

Municipal Ordinance Review Program

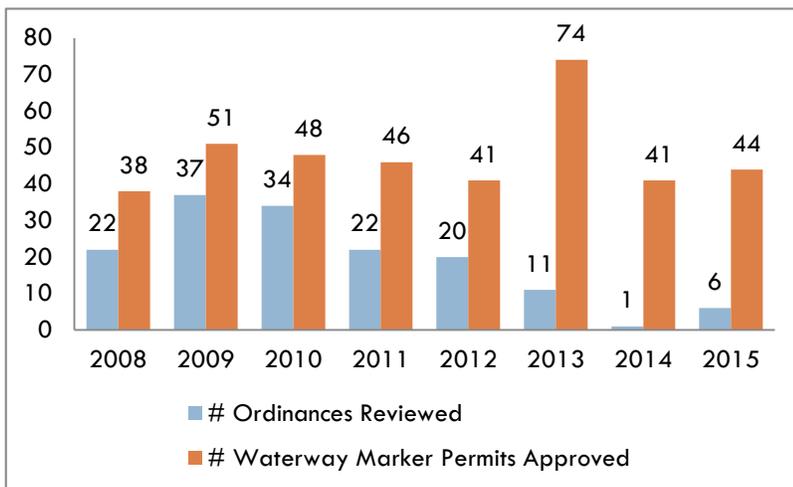
Wisconsin law allows local municipalities to enact local regulations relative to boating in the interest of public health, safety or welfare, including the public’s interest in preserving the state’s natural resources. Local municipalities may have regulations governing such things as water skiing, shore zones, speed limits, etc. State boating law provides a general framework of regulation, but it is up to local municipalities to provide regulations tailored to local conditions.

Proposed ordinances are required to be submitted for review. The department’s advisory review of the proposed ordinance provides comments, identifies any inconsistencies, and suggests revisions regarding the legality of the proposed ordinance.

Waterway Marker Permitting and Administration

Once a boat speed limit or controlled area has been lawfully established, regulatory signs or buoys may be posted by the local government.

Conservation wardens review waterway marker permit applications for compliance with state and federal requirements and recommend approval or disapproval. The boating program retains a permanent record of all approved and permitted waterway marker permit applications.



Recreational Safety Warden Map

Recreational Safety Warden Map

Boating Law Administrator: Roy Zellmer: 608/212-5385

Program Specialist: Penny Kanable: 608/228-9352

