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# Coronado Yacht Club To Participate In National On-Water Boating Standards Program

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Posted: Friday, July 12, 2013 9:06 am | Updated: 8:18 pm, Thu Jul 18, 2013.

by David Axelson | 0 comments

This coming weekend the Coronado Yacht Club will serve as the site for the final phase of a study that will eventually become the National System of Standards for Recreational Boat Operation. Elements within the study include power boating, sailing and human (canoeing, kayaking) recreational boat operation. Coronado is the lone West Coast site for the testing, and this portion of the study pertains to power boating.

Project Coordinator Brian Dorval explained the need for the study. "This is a five-year strategic plan, with the original need originating from the National Boating Safety Advisory Council, which is the national advisory group for the U.S. Coast Guard. James P. Muldoon is the chairman of the National Boating Safety Advisory Council. The primary objectives are boating safety and enjoyment. The standards themselves are being developed by experts from throughout the country, from many different organizations. Ultimately what we are about is one national system of standards for classroom instruction and on-water training."

Previous stops for the training have included Annapolis, Maryland; Ft. Myers, Florida; a return visit to Annapolis; the State University of New York's Maritime College in the Bronx, New York; Mentor, Ohio; and Washington, D.C.

Dorval explained how Coronado, specifically the Coronado Yacht Club, became one of the testing venues. "We were looking for a venue on the West Coast. We wanted to do something close to San Diego area due to the history of sailing. We chatted with the folks in Coronado and U.S. Sailing talked to them about it. The program fit into their schedule and they have the ability to pull it off. It was the right area and part of California we wanted to be in. They are very kind to host us."

Coronado Yacht Club's Director of Junior Sailing Becky Nygren has been the point person for the project locally. "We benefit by promoting safe boating within the community and the U.S.," Nygren said. "We are committed to providing a safe environment for junior boaters as well as our adult boaters and sail boaters. It promotes a safer environment out on the water."

The CYC is in the middle of their busy summer period. "We will be hosting an 80-boat regatta in two weeks," Nygren said. "July 19-20 we'll have 200 eight-foot boats here from the San Diego Yacht Club. Fortunately we had a hole in our schedule this weekend and we didn't have anything going on."

Interested local power boaters can be involved in the study in one of three ways. First, the study needs between 10 and 12 individuals with entry-level boating experience to go through a two hour on-water test. The test will include entry-level maneuvers with a passenger on board. The tests will take place either Saturday July 13 or Sunday July 14. Included in the boat will be three standards evaluators. Dorval added, "We're not actually testing the boat operator, but we're testing the guidelines on the paper. The operator is bringing to life what is on the paper so we can see it in reality."

Second the study needs between three and five additional standards evaluators. "Best case they are power boat instructors," said Dorval. "They will be needed from noon to 5 p.m. Friday; Saturday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sunday from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. They will be helping influence national standards and several of the evaluators we have had in other locales are quite excited about that."

Third, there is a need for three power boats with specific requirements including:

- A boat length of between 19 and 23 feet, which is able to seat five people, including the boat operator, comfortably.

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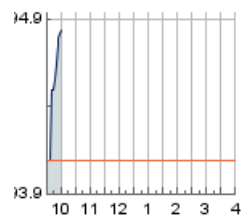
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The study seeks to address several underlying serious issues. In 2012 the Coast Guard estimated there were 651 boating deaths; 3,000 injuries; 4,515 accidents and \$38 million of damage to property due to recreational boating accidents. Seven of every 10 boaters who drowned were using vessels less than 21 feet in length. It is estimated that there are 80 million recreational boaters across the United States.

Dorval discussed some of the study specifics. "The focus of the study is to figure out how to teach operator skills by finding the best combination of 'Learning by Doing' and 'On-Land Instruction' for motorboat operators. Right now there isn't a lot of on-water instruction. We need to determine what the skill set is that a recreational boat operator must perform to be a safe boat operator. What is the fundamental core set of skills? Like driving a car, in a boat you need to be able to steer straight, turn right, turn left and stop. Now we have thousands and thousands of instructors who are not teaching the same standards. You need to have the same basic set of skills whether you are boating in Buffalo or Coronado. Once developed, everyone will have access to the guidelines. The process is so important that not any one group is driving it. No more than 30 percent of the people involved in the study can come from any one organization, which makes my job interesting. Anyone materially affected by the outcome has to be involved. We are dealing with over 600 people and not a lot of overlap in the organizations."

As national-level studies go, this one has a fairly quick turnaround, according to Dorval. "In June 2011 we started to get organized and the power boat standards will be delivered to the Coast Guard in September 2013. In about two years we developed the national standards for power boats. By September of 2014, we will be ready to field test the sail and human standards. We have grants in place for the national content evaluations for sail and human, and if all goes according to plan, they will all be done by 2015. The process is as important as the quality of the outcome. If the process is fair, people and organizations are more willing to accept the guidelines."

Dorval will be present in Coronado from Thursday through Monday morning, if the general issue of safe boating is of interest to you. This weekend would provide interested people an opportunity to participate in what will eventually become national guidelines for boating.

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