

# Service Announces More Than \$7.3 Million in Grants to Boost Recreational Boating

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) today announced more than \$6.9 million in competitive grants to six states and one U.S. territory for projects to support recreational boating through the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Tier II program. The Service also will release approximately \$400,000 to six states willing to match a smaller grant program known as BIG Tier I.

"The BIG program is one of many ways we support access and provide quality outdoor opportunities for the nation's recreational anglers and boaters," said Assistant Director Hannibal Bolton of the Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program. "These grants also spur major construction projects, create jobs and provide much-needed economic benefits."

Funding for the BIG program comes from the [Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund](#), formerly known as the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund, which boaters and manufacturers support through excise and other taxes on certain fishing and boating equipment and gasoline.

"The Boating Infrastructure Grant program provides critical federal funding that is leveraged by states and marinas to create and maintain docks and other infrastructure that increase access for America's boaters to get out on our nation's waters," said Thomas Dammrich, chairman of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council and president of the National Marine Manufacturers Association. "The Council commends the Service for its extraordinary effort in opening up a second grant application cycle for this year, allowing some of that money to be put to work quickly to help rebuild boating infrastructure damaged and destroyed by Superstorm Sandy."

Along with \$13.5 million in BIG funds provided in April, the Service awarded a total of nearly \$21 million through this program in Fiscal Year 2013. BIG Tier II grants will be made for efforts in Florida, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, South Carolina and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In addition, the Service will release approximately \$400,000 to six states: Florida, Louisiana, New York, South Carolina, Washington and Wisconsin through BIG Tier I. Using Tier I grant funds, states make awards through their own competitive processes.

For more information about the BIG Tier II projects, visit:[http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/GrantPrograms/BIG/BIG\\_Funding.htm](http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/GrantPrograms/BIG/BIG_Funding.htm)

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) is a 75-year partnership to benefit fish and wildlife and provide Americans with access to the outdoors through a self-imposed investment paid by manufacturers and users of gear bought by anglers, boaters, hunters and shooters and managed by federal and state fish and wildlife agencies. Fishing and hunting licenses and a motorboat fuel tax also support fish and wildlife. For 75 years, the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program has provided more than \$14 billion for fish and wildlife, supplied jobs for many Americans, and benefitted local economies through boating, fishing, hunting and shooting activities.