

**Division of Boating and Waterways**  
**August 2020**

**REPORT:** Boating Education and Outreach, Interpretation and Education Division

**PRESENTER:** Melissa Miranda, Boating Education and Outreach Unit Manager

**SUBJECT:** Life Jacket Outreach and Loaner Programs

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The annual life jacket outreach budget is approximately \$300,000 for educational events and the distribution of life jackets. Life jackets are used as an educational tool to promote water safety, safe boating and as an opportunity to teach proper fit and use. Throughout the past year, over 8,000 life jackets have been distributed to California boaters at trade-in events, through boating safety partners, and to life jacket loan stations.

DBW's boating safety outreach is focused on areas that will engage high volumes of boaters and for an audience identified to meet our target demographic. Annually about 30 outreach events are attended either by staff or the iHeartMedia team, as a service provided through the media campaign. Events typically include boat shows, sportsmen's shows, the California State Fair, safety fairs, marina events and water tournaments. In 2019, staff participated in 63 event days throughout the state. Between January and March 2020, staff participated in 13 event days at multiple shows including the International Sportsmen's Expo, the San Diego Sunroad Marina Boat Show and the Fred Hall Long Beach Show.

Due to Covid-19, in-person events ceased at the end of March 2020 and have been canceled for the foreseeable future. The focus for boater engagement has switched to the DBW online platforms for digital outreach. One of the benefits of utilizing this platform is the ability to geotarget boaters in specific Accident Target Areas (BATAs) to engage the optimal audience with safe boating messaging.

Life jacket loaner stations provide boaters with access to safety resources. There are currently more than 100 life jacket loaner locations throughout the state where life jackets may be borrowed. Each loaner station is operated by independent partner organizations such as marinas, fire departments and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Some loaner stations are stand-alone boards by waterways while others may be located inside a building. State Parks provides ongoing support to loaner stations by replenishing depleted life jacket supplies to existing loaner stations and adding additional loan stations throughout the state.

New loan stations added during the past year include Marshall Gold State Historic Park in Coloma, South Yuba River State Park and the Santa Cruz Harbor with the Santa Cruz Port District. Resources provided for these new loaner stations included printed signage and life jackets to each of these new locations.