

Division of Boating and Waterways
August 2021

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

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 6,000 life jackets have been distributed to California boaters through boating safety partners.

Division of Boating and Waterways' (DBW) boating safety outreach is focused on areas that will engage high volumes of boaters and for an audience identified to meet a target demographic. In-person events typically include boat shows, sportsmen's shows, the California State Fair, safety fairs, marina events and water tournaments.

Due to Covid-19, in-person events ceased at the end of March 2020 and the focus for boater engagement pivoted 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.

Prior to Memorial Day, State Parks partnered with 24 local marine law enforcement agencies to provide life jackets for educational use by officers. Uses for the life jackets varied by agency but included trade-ins and distribution during stops. This partnership is mutually beneficial for positive outreach and education on safe boating and water recreation.

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 station requests can be directed to the Boating Education and Outreach Unit.

A new component to the life jacket loaner program is the availability of loan station kits that include all materials needed to assemble a stand-alone loaner board such as the lumber, hardware and signage. Kits are available to order and ship from the fulfillment contractor. Another new addition to this program is double sided signage that includes an English and Spanish side.