

## Division of Boating and Waterways

August 2021

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

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

**SUBJECT:** Youth Boating Safety Education

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### Summary

In accordance with Section 51879.7 of the California Education Code, the Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) is responsible to provide fundamental water safety training for all the children of the state so that California's youth will be able to enjoy water recreation while avoiding its hazards. DBW provides the AquaSmart program and other youth outreach to fulfill this requirement.

The AquaSmart activity book was upgraded in 2017 to become a multi-grade level publication and continues to be one of the most popular publications offered by DBW. The activity book meets the current Next Generation Science Standards and is appropriate for grades K-8. This publication is distributed at education and outreach events and to schools statewide. The activity book is also available to order through the DBW Online Ordering site. About 10,000 books were distributed to schools and through safe boating partners from August 2019 to August 2020. This number is lower than in previous years and reflective of the COVID-19 pandemic with limited in-person engagement opportunities.

DBW's AquaSmart Live! Puppet and Game shows have traditionally been performed in-person at schools within in high boating accident target areas. Due to Covid-19, many schools remained virtual throughout the 2020-21 school year and the AquaSmart Live! shows were presented virtually with upgraded digital enhancements including animations and a new introduction. Schools were contacted through online e-mail blasts utilizing California Department of Education school lists.

The AquaSmart Live! shows continued to succeed on the virtual platform with 324 school performances. New in Spring of 2021, the virtual show was translated into Spanish and made available to schools. This new Spanish version was requested by 30 schools. The AquaSmart Live! show reached an estimated 87,000 California students.

Special virtual events that showcased the AquaSmart Live! show included an Earth Day performance through the Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students (PORTS) program and an abbreviated National Safe Boating Week performance on the DBW social platforms. These special events garnered over 42,000 views. The show was also

incorporated into the Orange County Youth Summit where thousands of 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders participated virtually.

One of the benefits to online streaming of the shows is increased access especially to more rural areas in the state that this program has previously been unable to reach. Moving forward, this program will be offered both virtually and in-person depending on preference and state and local guidelines.

The Interpretation and Education Division coordinated with Folsom Lake State Recreation Area to pilot boating and water based Agents of Discovery missions at Beals Point at Folsom Lake and Nimbus Flat at Lake Natoma. Agents of Discovery is an educational app that combines smartphone technology with nature for family friendly challenges. The missions for these locations were created around the AquaSmart rules. This program debuted on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and will continue year-round.