

**OHIO COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
POLICY 23 – RECREATIONAL BOATING**

IT IS THE POLICY OF THE STATE OF OHIO TO SATISFY AND SERVE THE PUBLIC INTEREST FOR RECREATIONAL BOATING OPPORTUNITIES AND WATERCRAFT SAFETY IN THE COASTAL AREA BY:

- A. REGULATING SAFETY OF WATERCRAFT BY ENFORCING WATERCRAFT LAWS (O.R.C. CHAPTER 1547);**
- B. CONDUCTING A WATERCRAFT SAFETY AND EDUCATION PROGRAM (O.R.C. 1547.52 AND 1547.521);**
- C. DEVELOPING AND OPERATING BOAT FACILITIES AT STATE-OWNED AREAS ALONG LAKE ERIE;**
- D. ASSISTING IN THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATED MARINAS AND BOAT LAUNCHING AREAS UNDER OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES' COMMUNITY WATERCRAFT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND THE LAKE ERIE ACCESS PROGRAM; AND**
- E. PARTICIPATING JOINTLY WITH THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS AND LOCAL COASTAL AREA GOVERNMENTS IN COMPLETING THE OHIO LAKE ERIE REFUGE HARBOR SYSTEM (O.R.C. 1547.71).**

Authorities and Administration

- A. The Division of Watercraft in ODNR is responsible for the enforcement of the state watercraft laws and pursuant regulations (O.R.C. Chapter 1547). Watercraft laws and regulations pertain to vessel registration and operation, safety equipment and procedures, littering and abandonment of vessels. The division has four area offices along Lake Erie for patrol and education purposes. Enforcement and patrol activities are coordinated with municipal marine patrol officers and the U.S. Coast Guard.
- B. State watercraft officers conduct safety classes, both in the classroom and on the water, for interested groups along Lake Erie as part of the division's Watercraft Safety and Education Program (O.R.C. 1547.52 and 1547.521). Completion of a Boating Education Course is mandatory for all watercraft operators born in 1982 or later operating a vessel with a horsepower rating of 10 or more (O.R.C. 1547.05). Also, Educational Grants are available to non-profit corporations and political subdivisions to conduct Ohio Boater Education Courses (O.R.C. 1547.68).

- C. ODNR, through the Divisions of Watercraft, Parks and Recreation, and Wildlife, develops and operates boating facilities on state properties along Lake Erie. The Division of Watercraft can assist financially in the development of such facilities at state parks. As a part of the Fish Ohio Program, the Division of Wildlife acquires properties for fishing access to Lake Erie and develops boat launching facilities on these properties and other public shoreline areas. Land and Water Conservation Fund grants can also be used for public recreation boating facilities (see Policy 21).

- D. ODNR provides financial assistance to local communities for the planning and development of boating facilities. The Division of Watercraft provides assistance to local communities for launching and marina facilities from the Waterways Safety Fund (O.R.C. 1547.72) with the consent and approval of the Director of ODNR. The Waterways Safety Fund is financed from boat registration and title fees and 7/8 of 1 percent of the motor fuel tax. The Division of Watercraft allocates funds statewide as determined by need, the number of boats to be benefited, the cost of the projects in relation to the amount of funds available, priority relative to other projects and the willingness of public agencies and political subdivisions to participate in a cooperative project. Only political subdivisions, park districts, conservancy districts and agencies of state government are eligible for assistance from the Waterways Safety Fund in developing recreational boating facilities. Projects that receive major attention are those that provide for the construction of ramps or hoists, parking areas and better access, essential sanitary facilities, or the expansion of existing facilities.

Projects that propose to provide new or improved boating or fishing opportunities to Lake Erie for the general use of the public are coordinated through the Lake Erie Access Program (LEAP). The LEAP encourages increased boating and fishing access to the lake. These projects are eligible for cooperative funding by ODNR to local park districts and political subdivisions through the above-mentioned funding sources and various other sources.

- E. Pursuant to O.R.C. 1547.71, the Division of Watercraft acts as the refuge and small boat harbor agency for Ohio for the purpose of cooperating with ODNR and the Corps of Engineers in acquiring, constructing, and maintaining refuge and small boat harbors. The refuge harbor program in Ohio is carried out jointly with the Corps of Engineers under Congressional authorization for federal financial and technical assistance. Participation by the Division of Watercraft in a refuge harbor project is determined by the need, the number of boaters to be benefited, the cost of the project in relation to the amount of funds available, priority relative to other projects and the willingness of public agencies to participate in such cooperative projects. Recreational harbors are low priority for the federal government.