

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA FISH AND BOAT COMMISSION**

**MINUTES FOR
THE BOATING ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

**Monday, March 23, 2026
9:00 a.m.**

Members

Chair Rocco Ali
Vice Chair Steven Ketterer
Roy Finney Jr.
Teresa Guerrein
Brian Kane

Members Ex Officio

Ryan Dysinger for Cindy Adams Dunn, Secretary,
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Charles Charlesworth, Boating At-Large Commissioner
Richard Lewis, Boating At-Large Commissioner

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 - A. Quarterly Board of Commissioners Meeting
 - i. April 27, 2026
 - B. Next Boating Advisory Board Meeting
 - i. June 30, 2026
- XI. Adjourn

I. Call to Order, Welcome, and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Chair Rocco Ali at 9:00 a.m. at the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (Commission) Harrisburg Headquarters.

Board members in attendance included:

Chair Rocco Ali, Chair
Roy Finney Jr.
Teresa Guerrein
Brian Kane
Ryan Dysinger, ex officio member
Commissioner Charles Charlesworth, ex officio member
Commissioner Richard Lewis, ex officio member

Member Absent
Steven Ketterer, Vice Chair

II. Introduction of Guests

Guests in attendance included: Rick Taylor, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Auxiliary State Liaison Officer; Ethan Branstetter, Legislative Assistant for Senator Greg Rothman; Loren Lustig; and Louise Lustig.

III. Review and Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve December 17, 2025, meeting minutes by Brian Kane and seconded by Ryan Dysinger. The motion carried.

IV. Election of Board Chair and Vice Chair

Robert Schefter opened the election process for Board Chair. Teresa Guerrein nominated Rocco Ali to continue serving as Chair. Robert Schefter called for any other nominations and, hearing none, requested a motion to close nominations. Rocco Ali made a motion, and Brian Kane seconded it to close nominations. The motion carried for Rocco Ali to continue serving as Chair of the Board. Robert Schefter then called for nominations for Vice Chair. Rocco Ali nominated Steven Ketterer to continue serving as Vice Chair. Hearing no other nominations, Robert Schefter requested a motion to close nominations. Rocco Ali made a motion and Roy Finney Jr. seconded it to close nominations. The motion carried for Steven Ketterer to continue serving as Vice Chair of the Board.

V. Public Comment

Robert Schefter reported that no public comment was received.

VI. Recognition

Chair Rocco Ali recognized Loren Lustig for his 19 years of service (2007-2025) on the Boating Advisory Board. Loren served as Chair of the Board in 2008 and again in 2018. Rocco expressed his sincere appreciation for Loren’s many years of dedication to boating in Pennsylvania.

VII. Old Business

There was no old business.

VIII. New Business

A. Amendment to 58 Pa. Code § 91.2 (Definitions)

Commentary:

Act 28 of 2025 amended Title 30 Pa.C.S. Chapter 57 relating to at-risk, derelict and abandoned boats or ADVs. The term “public property” is used throughout Chapter 57 as well as in corresponding regulations in 58 Pa. Code Chapter 93 (Boat Registration and Numbering) however it is not defined. To facilitate implementation of the ADV law and regulations, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (Commission) staff recommend defining “public property” in 58 Pa. Code Chapter 91 (General Provisions) relating to boats and boating.

Staff propose the following change to § 91.2:

§ 91.2. Definitions

* * * * *

(d) The term “public property” means lands, buildings and spaces owned or controlled by the Commonwealth, state agencies, municipalities, authorities, political subdivisions, public schools and universities, including such public properties with limited commercial uses for the storage of boats.

* * * * *

Briefer:

Mark Sweppenhiser, Director of Bureau of Boating

Action:

A motion was made by Rocco Ali and seconded by Roy Finney Jr. to recommend this amendment to the Commission. The motion carried.

B. Amendment to 58 Pa. Code § 93.13 (Issuing Agents)

Commentary:

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (Commission) may designate issuing agents for the issuance of temporary boat registrations to the public. County treasurers, businesses dealing in boats, boating equipment or sporting goods, and temporary tag services or messenger services approved by the Department of Transportation for the issuance of temporary boat trailer registrations may apply to the Commission to become an issuing agent. Applicants interested in becoming an issuing agent for temporary boat registration must submit an application, a one-time fee, and a bond in favor of the Commission, in an amount specified by the Executive Director.

Commission staff have identified opportunities to realign the application form and requirements for temporary boat registration issuing agents to ensure consistency with the application and requirements for fishing license issuing agents. Fishing license agents, as authorized in 58 Pa. Code § 51.35, may submit a bond or other security in a form satisfactory to the Commission, in an amount specified by the Executive Director. By allowing temporary boat registration issuing agents the same flexibility to utilize other security, in lieu of a bond, it provides a more efficient, simpler process to secure temporary boat registration issuing agents. This proposed amendment will bring 58 Pa. Code § 93.13 (issuing agents) in alignment with § 51.35 (operation of the issuing agency) and allow the same flexibility for both temporary boat registration and fishing license issuing agents.

Staff propose the following change to § 93.13:

§ 93.13 Issuing Agents.

(a) Designation.

* * * * *

(2) An applicant seeking to become an issuing agent for temporary boat registrations shall complete and submit to the Commission an application on the form prescribed by the Commission and shall pay a one-time, nonrefundable fee of \$250. Applications shall be accompanied by a bond in favor of the Commission, **, or other security in a form satisfactory to the Commission,** in a minimum amount specified by the Executive Director or a designee.

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Briefer:

Mark Sweppenhiser, Director of Bureau of Boating

Action:

A motion was made by Brian Kane and seconded by Ryan Dysinger to recommend this amendment to the Commission. The motion carried.

IX. Discussion Items

A. Boating Safety Education Certificates

Mark Sweppenhiser provided an update of the current Boating Safety Education Certificate (BSEC) process, to include in-person and online course options. In-person courses offered by Commission staff and partners account for less than 10% of annual certifications and require a manual process for fulfillment. The majority, approximately 90%, of certifications are completed through the Commission's approved BSEC online providers. Students who complete these courses receive a temporary digital certificate upon completion and a permanent card by mail. All approved BSEC online course providers may be found on the Commission's website.

The Commission has integrated BSEC privileges into customers' HuntFishPA accounts. This allows customers to order duplicate cards and print paper copies of their certificate on demand from their HuntFishPA account. This enhancement has reduced fulfillment time from 4–6 weeks to 2–3 weeks, improved customer convenience and decreased staff time associated with processing orders.

Approximately 135,000 customers now have BSEC privileges linked to their HuntFishPA accounts. Customers who have a BSEC but don't see the privilege in their HuntFishPA account may contact the Commission to merge and/or update their accounts.

B. Boating Safety Recap for 2025

Ryan Walt provided an overview of boating incidents in 2025. The Commission collaborates with the USCG to collect and analyze recreational boating incident data which is entered into a national database used to track trends and evaluate safety initiatives. Reportable incidents include fatalities or disappearance, injuries requiring medical treatment beyond first aid, property damage exceeding \$2,000, or total loss of vessel. In 2025, there were 37 reportable incidents, the lowest in recent years. These incidents included 22 injuries, approximately \$54,000 in property damage, and 10 fatalities. This brings the 10-year average for fatalities to 10.5 per year and continues the downward trend since 1988. This trend can partially be attributed to safety measures such as the cold-weather life jacket wear requirement enacted in 2012.

USCG national data from 2024 indicate a continued decline in fatalities. At the national level, alcohol was involved in 20% fatalities, 76% of fatalities were due to drowning, and 87% of victims were not wearing life jackets. Additionally, 69% of fatalities involved operators without boating safety education. Operators with boating safety education certificates were significantly less likely to be involved in fatal incidents. Overall trends suggest that increased

safety education, fewer boaters on the water, demographic shifts, and post-pandemic normalization of recreational boating activity continue to contribute to reduced incident rates.

C. National Recreational Boating Safety Survey

Adam Spangler provided an overview of the National Recreational Boating Safety Survey (NRBSS), a USCG funded study last conducted in 2018. The survey collects nationwide data on boating participation and risk exposure to better understand boating activity and inform safety initiatives. An estimated 84.5 million people boated in the United States in 2018. This represents almost a quarter of the U.S. households. The NRBSS will randomly select approximately 50,000 individuals across all 50 states to participate in the next survey conducted through the end of 2026.

The survey data will be used to produce two main components: a participation report which estimates the boating population and activity levels, and an exposure report which examines boat ownership, types of vessels, usage locations, and safety practices. The data is used by Pennsylvania and other states to better understand boating trends and tailor education and outreach efforts. Partner organizations are encouraged to promote awareness of the survey effort to encourage participation for accurate and comprehensive data collection.

D. Low Head Dam Public Safety Awareness Month

Adam Spangler shared that the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Environmental and Water Resources Institute, along with their partners, have designated April as Low Head Dam Public Safety Awareness Month. The initiative aims to increase public awareness of the dangers associated with low head dams and promote safe practices.

There have been 34 fatal boating incidents at low head dams in Pennsylvania since 1989. The Commission continues to work with partners and landowners to ensure dams are properly marked and visible to boaters.

April and May are typically months with high water flows, making outreach and education especially important during this time. The importance of wearing a life jacket, having a float plan, scouting waterways in advance, and recognizing marked hazards, such as low head dams was emphasized by staff. Public education efforts, consistent communication with dam owners, and the use of media, continue to help increase safety awareness around low head dams.

E. National Safe Boating Week

Adam Spangler provided an overview of National Safe Boating Week, scheduled for May 16–22, 2026. The National Safe Boating Council provides branding, educational literature, and many additional resources to support local boating safety outreach efforts to promote boating safety awareness, life jacket use and safe boating practices.

The Commission's planned outreach includes kickoff events, additional media engagement, educational paddling programs, social media campaign, and coordinated efforts with partners

such as the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Department of Environmental Protection, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the USCG. Other events are also hosted by a variety of partners who plan and promote them at the local level.

Rick Taylor, USCG Auxiliary State Liaison Officer and partner in National Safe Boating Week activities, provided updates regarding the restructure of USCG geographic district names and the Auxiliary's continued coordination with the Commission. The USCG Auxiliary supports boating safety through public education, vessel safety checks, patrols, navigational assistance, and community outreach. Rick Taylor reported approximately 1,000 members serving Pennsylvania with significant activity in 2025. Their work included hundreds of outreach visits, nearly 3,000 vessel safety checks, extensive instructional hours reaching thousands of students, and the completion of thousands of patrol hours. These efforts included assisting boaters, supporting public events, and contributing to boating safety education.

X. Other Business

The next quarterly Board of Commissioners Meeting will be held on April 27, 2026.

The next Boating Advisory Board Meeting will be held on June 30, 2026.

XI. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Brian Kane and seconded by Ryan Dysinger. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.