

**Sport Fish and Recreational Boating and Non-Boating
Access Projects**

**FY2004 Request: \$2,600,000
Reference No: 30432**

AP/AL: Appropriation

Project Type: Construction

Category: Development

Location: Statewide

Contact: Kelly Hepler

House District: Statewide (HD 1-40)

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Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2003 - 06/30/2008

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

This project will provide funds to the Division of Sport Fish to construct boating and sport fishing access facilities throughout the state. The Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) program requires that 15% of the federal funds available to Sport Fish be used for recreational boating access development. SFR funds may also be used to develop access facilities for non-boating anglers.

Funding:	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	Total
Fed Rcpts	\$1,950,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$5,700,000
Fish/Game	\$650,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$1,900,000
Total:	\$2,600,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$7,600,000

State Match Required One-Time Project Phased - new Phased - underway On-Going
 25% = Minimum State Match % Required Amendment Mental Health Bill

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
Totals:	0	0

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:

This is an annual request that allows the Division of Sport Fish to continue to construct and upgrade their boating and sport fish access facilities statewide. Funding for these requests consists of 75% federal funds and 25% Fish and Game Fund match. The last five years of funding were as follows: FY2003 - \$1,000.0, FY2002 - \$1,600.0, FY2001 - \$1,000.0, FY2000 - \$2,700.0, FY1999 - \$3,940.0 (boating) and \$1,770.0 (non-boating)

Project Description/Justification:

The facilities that will result from this project will improve recreational boating and sport fishing access to the fish and wildlife resources of the state. The Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act (16 USC 777-777k), also known as the Wallop-Breaux (W-B) program, mandates that 15% of the federal funds available to the state be set aside for boating access improvement and development projects. Any portion of the 15% set-aside that is not used for boating access projects reverts back to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is lost to the state. Therefore, it is in the state's best interest to utilize these funds.

SFR funds require a match of one state dollar for every three federal dollars, or a state match of 25% of the total project cost. This request includes the required match from the fish and game fund. The required match dollars can be considered an investment that will produce an instant threefold return. Since federal SFR funds are derived from excise taxes on the sale of sport fishing tackle and state fish and game funds are the receipts from the sale of sport licenses, this capital request is a true user pay/user benefit approach to providing access facilities.

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Sites will be selected so that all regions of the state receive an equitable share of this program. Site development projects will be accomplished in cooperation with local government units and other state agencies. It has been the experience of this department that local communities are very supportive of better access facilities.

This project will provide some new access sites and will renovate or upgrade other sites. Many of the existing access sites throughout the state have either reached the end of their economic life or do not meet current standards. These sites no longer adequately serve the public and are very expensive to maintain. The facilities provided by this project will be designed for low maintenance over a service life of twenty years. The facilities will also be accessible to users with disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

User fees can be established for new and renovated facilities to place them on a self-supporting basis. User fees will be charged where feasible and will be used to offset the cost of site operation and maintenance. Under federal regulations, user fees charged at a facility developed with federal funds must be used for the operation, maintenance, or improvement of that facility. Fees collected in excess of actual site costs must be credited back to the federal program. This insures that the users of the facility benefit from the fees they pay. With the combination of local community support and user fees, it is not anticipated that future operating budget requests will be needed to support the sites developed under this project.

Last year, over 426,000 anglers spent 2.5 million angler-days fishing in Alaska. These numbers have been steadily increasing despite fluctuation in the state's population and economic health. There is no indication that this trend will change in the foreseeable future. In the next five years, the number of anglers fishing in Alaska will probably exceed 500,000. Recreational boating and sport fishing are interdependent activities in Alaska. Waterways serve as an extension of the state's limited road system to provide sport anglers with access to many fishing opportunities. The continued growth in sport fishing is a good indicator of the parallel growth in recreational boating.

Recreational boating and sport fishing are not only very popular recreational activities but they are also a significant factor in the state's economy. An economic study conducted in 1993, showed that anglers and boaters spent an estimated \$540 million to sport fish in Alaska. This spending directly accounted for 6,635 jobs and \$142 million in wages and salaries. This project is an investment in the infrastructure needed to support this valuable industry.

A variety of facilities are needed to improve recreational boating and sport fishing access. Occasionally it is even necessary to acquire land to develop a new site or expand an existing, over crowded one. Facilities are selected for development to meet the following program objectives:

MARINE BOATING - Construct or improve boat launch ramps, transient moorage, parking areas and related upland support facilities to:

- Relieve crowding of popular fishing areas and encourage use of under utilized areas.
- Relieve congestion, shorten wait time, and improve safety at heavily used facilities.
- Improve boating safety by reducing the open water distance boaters must travel from launch ramp to destination.

FRESH WATER BOATING - Construct or improve boat launch ramps, parking areas, and related upland support facilities to:

- Relieve crowding of popular fishing areas and encourage use of underutilized areas.
- Reduce congestion, shorten wait time, and improve safety at heavily used facilities.
- Eliminate trespass on private property.
- Reduce habitat destruction caused by boat launching and operation of boats in restricted waters.

ANGLER ACCESS-Construct or improve parking areas, trails, fishing piers, sanitation and other facilities to:

- Relieve crowding of popular fishing areas and encourage use of under utilized areas.
- Eliminate trespass on private land.
- Control habitat destruction and eliminate unsightly conditions that result from heavy use and indiscriminate disposal of waste.
- Reduce safety hazards caused by vehicles parked in road right-of-ways.

REMOTE SITES-Construct or improve boat haul-outs, float plane tie-ups, refuge floats, mooring buoys, cabins and related facilities in remote locations to:

- Enhance aesthetic values and protect habitat from indiscriminate use by anglers.
- Improve boating safety by providing harbors of refuge for marine boaters.
- Provide developed destination points for boat-in and fly-in anglers.

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LAND ACQUISITIONS-Purchase private lands, acquire management rights to state lands and acquire easements that are needed to provide access for recreational boaters and sport anglers.