

Recreational Boating Access

Maintaining Robust Access to our Nation's Waters

Legislative Objective: Congress must protect access for boaters and anglers to our National Parks, Marine Sanctuaries, and other protected federal waters. Boating and fishing are important contributors to local economies and robust access increases visitation to our park's and sanctuaries. Boaters, anglers, and other sportsmen support conservation efforts that carefully balance protection with the need for robust public access.

Background

- NMMA requests that decisions which result in restrictions on public access to federal lands and waterways be implemented only as a result of rigorous scientific study.
- When public access is restricted, such restrictions should not be imposed indefinitely, but rather for the least required period of time and must include measurement benchmarks.
- When considering public access closures, the full economic impact of the closure must be studied. Recreational boating is an important contributor to state and local economies, and restricted access will negatively impact boat sales and related retail expenditures associated with access.
- Local input of stakeholders, including state agencies, businesses, and impacted industries must be considered in implementing sound management policies.

Attempts at Restricting Boating Access:

Biscayne National Park

The National Park Service is proposing to prohibit fishing in **10,522 acres** of the park's waters. This creation of a "marine reserve" is draconian and fails to utilize existing fishing regulations for effective resource management. The General Management Plan proposals establish a "no-combustion-engine zone" along the entire shoreline corridor, which hinders boating and fishing access and creates "de facto" closure of the park's waters.

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

NOAA has embarked on a multiyear process of evaluating sanctuary boundaries and regulations. The process has the potential to impact personal watercraft access, pole-and-troll zone expansion, and create restrictive boating and fishing zones. We ask that industry stakeholders be engaged in the decision making process and that conservation efforts are balanced with public access.

Everglades National Park

The National Park System is proposing to establish pole-and-troll zones for **130,000 acres** of the Park's waters. The recreational boating and fishing community is concerned about the breadth of the pole-and-troll zones, and the absence of access corridors and marked channels to allow boats to realistically traverse the pole-and-troll zones.

Ask Congress to support recreational boating through robust access to our nation's parks and waterways.