



2023

ANNUAL REPORT





*The work the BoatU.S. Foundation does is diverse, mission-driven, and unquestionably important.* We serve a

critical niche in our industry, remain focused on the issues, and thrive on unique challenges. One such challenge with fewer-than-desired solutions, is the presence of abandoned and derelict vessels (ADVs) that exist on our waterways.



Boats end up abandoned or derelict on our nation's coasts for several reasons. Irresponsible owners abandon vessels when they can no longer afford to care for them or pay for their disposal. Poorly maintained, or "at risk," anchored boats, combined with the increasing frequency and severity of storms, leave shorelines littered with wrecks, especially after major weather events like hurricanes.

Last year, our talented staff led by our director of outreach, Alanna Keating, applied for a grant offered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to rid our nation's shores of ADVs and remove associated pollutions as well as navigation and safety hazards that can harm waters for years.

In September 2023, we learned we were to be awarded \$10M from the Marine Debris Program, funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which is part of NOAA's larger mission to address marine debris. This not only includes fiberglass boats but derelict fishing gear, plastics, and other types of debris.

As a national nonprofit, we have stakeholders, board members, donors and supporters, in addition to NOAA, to thank for guidance on this. We also have a small but mighty staff to execute the Foundation's mission and vision, and to craft messaging to let the public know about the positive impact we are having upon our waterways.

Read more details on this unprecedented grant award in Official Breaking News on page 5 of this Annual Report.

***J. Ted Sensenbrenner***  
***Director of Development***



# A CHANGE OF WATCH



**Congratulations Chris Edmonston.** In 2023, we said goodbye to longtime BoatU.S. Foundation president Chris Edmonston, who made his next career move to help boaters enjoy everything there is about boating and encourage all participants to boat safely.



Chris started with BoatU.S. on the retail business side and managed the BoatU.S. Marine Center in Alexandria, Virginia, before moving to the nonprofit BoatU.S. Foundation. His career with BoatU.S. spanned more than 25 years, and he helped BoatU.S. and BoatU.S. Foundation tackle tough boating issues such as user conflicts, mandatory safety education, unfair taxes and fees, compliance and regulation, and environmental concerns as they relate to recreational boaters.

In April 2023, Edmonston was named to the Boating Safety Hall of Fame by the National Safe Boating Council. Making boating safety education more accessible by bringing courses online, growing the availability of on-water training programs, and developing national on-water boating safety standards are just some of his accomplishments cited when inducted into the prestigious Boating Safety Hall of Fame. [Boating Safety Hall of Fame | National Safe Boating Council](#)

## **Board of Directors Appoints New Foundation President, BoatUS Association's Heather Lougheed.**



Heather Lougheed's name and face are certainly not new to BoatU.S. or the boating industry in general. In her nearly 25 years with the Boat Owners Association of The United States, she has grown the Associa-

tion to almost 800,000 members strong and leveraged efficiencies and partnerships to promote the value in belonging to the nation's largest association of recreational boaters.

Lougheed, a lifelong boater, started in the membership department in 2000 as the marketing coordinator for BoatU.S., where she was responsible for promoting the more than 25 benefits and services of the Association, including a retail relationship with West Marine, discounts at more than 1,200 marinas nationwide, and on-water towing services with the nation's largest towing fleet, TowBoatU.S.

In 2014 she became vice president of the Association and took on additional responsibilities with *BoatU.S. Magazine*, the award-winning publication that is included as an exclusive benefit of BoatU.S. Membership. She authors a standing column in each issue promoting boating and how to enjoy it safely and courteously, and how boating is good for the soul in general.

With Edmonston's departure in 2023, Lougheed also picked up additional responsibilities to helm BoatU.S. Government Affairs, keeping policy and regulations in check so that it benefits boaters, waterway users and other shareholders fairly and equally. When asked recently what motivates her, she cited passion for the Foundation's free Online Boating Safety Course and excitement over the \$10 million NOAA grant to remove derelict vessels. "Promoting the Foundation's mission of boating safety and encouraging stewardship of our waterways is something I truly care about."

# OUR MISSION



The BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water is an innovative leader promoting safe, clean, and responsible boating. The Foundation provides educational outreach directly to boaters and supports partner organizations nationwide.

With millions of boaters on the water, our aim is to reduce accidents and fatalities, increase stewardship of our waterways, and keep boating a safe and enjoyable pastime. The BoatUS Foundation is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our work is funded primarily by grants and individual donations.

## ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS



**RENTALS** - BoatUS Foundation rents EPIRB and PLB (emergency beacons). 93 EPIRBs and 115 PLBs were rented to adventure enthusiasts.



**LJLP** - Life Jacket Loaner Program for Kids offers peace of mind. There are a total of 601 sites nationwide, loaning jackets 140,000 times.



**FREE BOATING COURSE** – A total of 219,059 students enrolled in our Self-paced online boating safety course, which is Coast Guard-recognized.



**BOAT DONATIONS** – Many boats were improved to maximize sales value. 36 vessels were accepted and sold, and 1,151 owners inquired about donation.



**MONOFILAMENT** – Fishing line collection and recycling bins offered. Shipped 212 recycling signs and 1,479 decal sets to volunteers nationwide.



**ON-WATER TRAINING SITES** – We have 21 partner locations, which educated 1,539 students. That's more than 5,000 hours of hands-on training.



**FOUNDATION FINDINGS** – Reusable Covers vs. Shrink Wrap. 14 reusable covers saved 320 lbs. of shrinkwrap from going to the landfill.



**MARPOL DECAL** – Certain boats are required to prominently display federal discharge laws. More than 800 boat owners have purchased the decals to meet requirements.



# BREAKING NEWS



***Moving forward with the ADV Grant.*** BoatU.S. Foundation has received a four-year, \$10 million grant from NOAA's Marine Debris Removal Program to remove abandoned and derelict vessels (ADV) from the nation's coasts and Great Lakes.



Our 2022 Annual Report left us all hanging. In October of 2022, after months of logistical consideration, soliciting partner support, and authoring our largest request for grant funding ever, BoatU.S. Foundation submitted a formal proposal for the project "ADV: Leveraging Strategic Partnerships for Removal, Disposal, Prevention, and Education." After months of waiting for an official reply, we finally learned the outcome of our hard work.

The BoatU.S. Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water was selected to lead a nationally competitive grant program for the removal of abandoned and derelict vessels throughout coastal and marine areas of the United States, including the Great Lakes, U.S. territories, and Freely Associated States. This project is supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Debris Program with funding provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

In an effort to help educate and prevent future ADVs, the Foundation will also create a national ADV database to track the scope of the challenge and measure success, document ADV prevention and removal activities to share with the public, and support a national dialogue and education efforts on boating-related debris removal, with an added focus on how ADVs impact waters in underserved communities. Learn more about the Marine Debris Program by visiting [NOAA.gov](https://www.noaa.gov). [The NOAA Marine Debris Program Awards Funding to 14 New Projects to Remove Marine Debris Under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law | Marine Debris Program](#)



# SPREADING AWARENESS



**Press Releases – In the News for 2023.** The Annual Report is a place where we get to talk about ourselves, what we do, and what we've accomplished. However, the greatest reward is when the media talks about us and shares our message to scores of readers. Here are a few of the topics the press promoted throughout the year and at key points in the season such as Boating Safety Week, July Fourth, and Labor Day. To read more than 20 press releases for 2023, visit our News Room.

**Learn from Our Mistakes:** [BoatUS Foundation Reveals Top 3 Mistakes Boaters Make When Using VHF Radios](#)

**So Far, Yet so Near:** [BoatUS Foundation: 5 Ways to Be Seen and Heard When You Really Need to Summon Help](#): [BoatUS News Room](#)

**Statistics Don't Lie:** [What Do the Recently Released U.S. Coast Guard Safety Stats Tell Boaters About How To Spend America's Birthday on the Water?](#)

**Boating Season Heats Up:** [With No End to Scorching Temps in Sight, Boaters Must Be Prepared](#)

**Fall in Love with Boating: What's Different About Fall Boating?** [3 On-Water Safety Tips](#)

BoatU.S. Foundation celebrates Earth Day 2023 by spelling it out to help recreational boaters put a plan into action.



- E** Empty your holding tank at a pump-out station or a designated place ashore.
- A** Always attend your gas nozzle when fueling your boat and resist topping off.
- R** Recycle fishing line and plastic baits when possible, dispose of properly.
- T** Take the time for clean, drain, dry to stop the spread of invasive species.
- H** Have a trash receptacle or a way to collect refuse aboard so nothing goes in the water.
  
- D** Dispose of used oils, gas and chemicals properly; ask for help if needed.
- A** Adopt a beach or a special place on your waterway to clean up periodically.
- Y** You make all the difference when it comes to smart, safe and clean boating!

**Want to learn more about clean boating? The BoatUS Foundation offers Clean Boating, a free online course, [BoatUS.org/Clean-Course](https://BoatUS.org/Clean-Course)**



# FOUNDATION FINDINGS



**Combating Boating Fatalities with One Simple Tool.** It's been 25 years since inflatable life jackets were approved by the U.S. Coast Guard, so now felt like an appropriate time to evaluate how far designs have come. For Foundation Findings #61, staff members took a deep dive in an indoor pool to do an hands-on market review of some of the commonly available models.

It's worth repeating: The majority of recreational boating fatalities are a result of falling overboard and drowning. Therefore, it is job-one for the Foundation to enlighten boaters of the life jacket options available today and to demonstrate and encourage voluntary wear. A modern inflatable life jacket is more comfortable than in the past, doesn't cost as much as you'd think, and is quite a bit more stylish than 25 years ago.

Our test began by purchasing more than two dozen inflatable life jackets, belt packs, and throwables, including U.S. Coast Guard-approved models as well as some nonapproved models from other countries as a comparison. Our adult volunteer testers spanned a variety of ages, physical builds, and skills.. One was a nonswimmer.

With our usual methods of data collection and extensive tester interviews, we put together a comparison chart of the devices, outlining the highlights and areas for consideration. This can be found here [Inflatable life jacket comparison chart](#)

If an inflatable life jacket is still not part of your standard boating equipment, we strongly encourage you read our full article [Inflating Your Safety IQ](#). Here, you'll find our brief list of nine things you need to know about inflatables and other helpful information to make an informed purchase decision.



# ON-WATER TRAINING



**Brand Visibility on the Water.** Having boats out on the water with the BoatU.S. brand emblazoned on it shows people what we do and how we do it. It's like a floating billboard. We have several On-Water Training partners who assist us in this endeavor. They add our logo to their training vessels and offer everyone aboard a BoatU.S.-branded inflatable life jacket. If you ever see one of our training vessels, you can be assured participants are receiving quality instruction, led by a licensed Coast Guard captain and helmed by eager, safety-driven students.



Boat shows are another way for the public to see our On-Water Training Program in action. Our boat show booth always features our BoatU.S. Foundation branding with feather banners, flags, and a covered tent. Our space is typically on the outside perimeter, allowing classes to depart and return on a scheduled basis. We've been fortunate to work with some of the best managed boat shows, including the Annapolis Powerboat Show. The Annapolis Boat Show is even a partner in distributing life jackets from our Life Jacket Loaner Program for Kids, to ensure parents have the option as an extra safety measure when walking the show and boarding boats.



In other On-Water Training news, BoatU.S. Foundation's Alan Dennison was elected chairman of the National Safe Boating Council (NSBC). Its mission is to promote a safer recreational boating experience through education, outreach, and training. The position is mutually beneficial and will help ensure that growing the well established NSBC curriculum is consistent coast-to-coast.

## BACK SEAT DRIVER [Learn How to Drive a Boat at the Annapolis Powerboat Show, Oct. 5-8 : BoatUS News Room](#)



## WORKING WITH THE COUNCIL [BoatUS Foundation's Alan Dennison Elected Chairman of National Safe Boating Council : BoatUS News Room](#)





# ONLINE BOATING SAFETY COURSE



**36 States and Counting.** When we look at our core metrics, we look at success, effectiveness, and where we are concentrating our efforts. Year after year, we spend a tremendous amount of effort managing and administering our free online boating safety course. Thus far, 2,560,791 students have taken our course, which provides the required boating safety certification in 36 states.

Our online course has many moving parts. The curriculum, which is approved by NASBLA (National Association of State Boating Law Administrators), is just part of it. Managing student enrollment, issuing official certificates, consulting with the Coast Guard, and reporting to state agencies takes time, technology and tenacity. Thousands upon thousands of human hours are spent on this.

Technology, is vitally important to deliver course content and keep student data secure. It is also what brings our course to life! We're currently working on a new course with new features that will allow for more student interaction. It's been proven that the more student interaction and engagement, the greater the retention of the material and knowledge, thus leading to safer boaters. We continue to invest our efforts and resources on improving, enhancing, and promoting this important program.

More on Metrics [BoatUS By the Numbers 2023](#)

# BOAT DONATIONS



***Donations Help Make Boating Better.*** The boat donation program is a significant source of funds for the Foundation, ranking right up there with BoatU.S. member contributions and online course-taker donations. However, making the step to donate a boat is more like taking a giant leap for some donors. But donors can rest assured that we ensure the donation process is hassle-free, from picking up the boat to handling the paperwork. And perhaps, best of all, a vessel donation benefits an organization that is passionate about making boat better and safer, something we know donors care about.

The BoatU.S. Foundation's boat donation program, unlike other charities that accept boats, may offer additional benefits to those looking to donate as we actively use some donated boats for training purposes. In some cases, donated vessels – typically single engine center-console types – are needed for Foundation On-Water Training programs. With these boats, the donor may use the surveyed value at the time of donation for tax purposes, and the write-off may be taken immediately. For boats donated but to be sold, we use a partner broker to advertise the boat to help realize its highest value. In these cases, the write-off is taken after the vessel is sold and the value is known.





# EPIRB AND PLB RENTALS



**More Boaters Renting Personal Locator Beacons.** BoatU.S. Foundation provides boaters with information needed to be safe while boating. There are many factors that make for a fun and safe day on the water. Preparation is one of the key components in this.



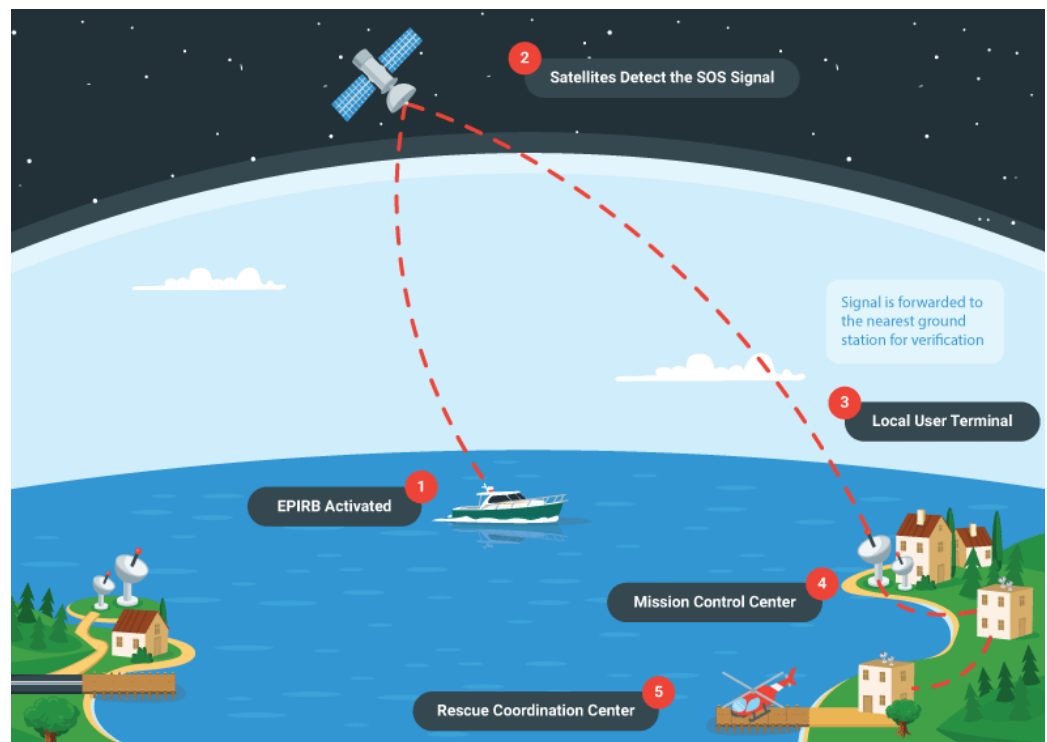
Being prepared for an emergency takes forethought, and one of the best ways to be prepared is to have a communication plan when things don't go well. In an ideal scenario, help is just a call away, but what if your call doesn't go through or you are out of cellphone and VHF radio range?

For nearly 20 years, BoatU.S. Foundation has offered rentals of emergency beacons for just this situation. Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) have been, for the first time since the Foundation has offered them, more popular than their larger cousin, the EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon).

When boaters are informed, they understand potential outcomes and the importance of personal-safety gear. The retail cost of a PLB starts around \$400, however, a boater can rent one from the Foundation for \$7 a day or \$45 a week. At this low of a price, its no wonder boaters are making the choice to rent one from the Foundation for maximum peace-of-mind.

**Did You Know?** Some renters opt for an EPIRB for the boat and a PLB for each crew member aboard as extra precaution.

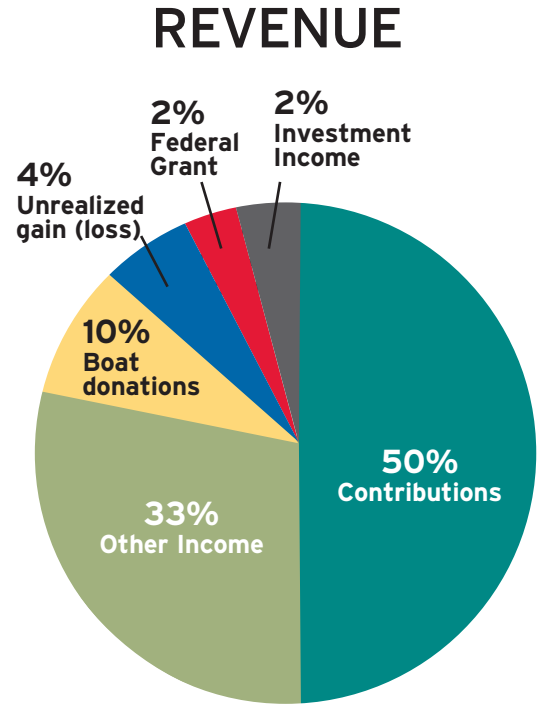
## HOW EPIRBs WORK



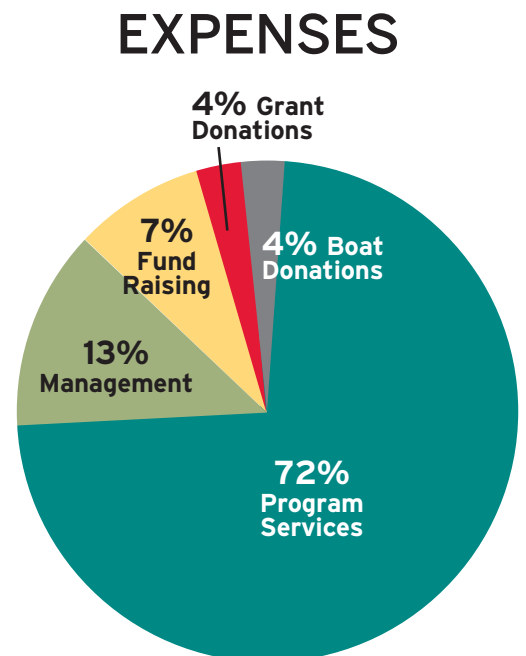
# FINANCIALS



REVENUE		2023
Contributions	\$	1,333,819
Federal Grants	\$	54,656
Other Income (Royalties and Program Income)	\$	878,933
Boat Donations	\$	277,078
Investment Income	\$	48,656
Unrealized Gain (Loss) on Investments	\$	97,795
<b>Total Support, Revenues and Gains</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,690,937</b>



EXPENSES		2023
Program Services	\$	2,706,197
Management and General	\$	457,571
Fundraising	\$	245,825
Boat Donation Expenses	\$	129,522
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>3,539,115</b>
Net Assets at Beginning of	\$	1,580,809
Year Net Assets at End of Year	\$	717,631
Change in Net Assets	\$	(863,178)



PROGRAM EXPENSES		2023
Brochure Print and Distribution	\$	15,261
Conferences and Seminars	\$	95,220
Course Development	\$	7,164
Emergency Beacon Rental	\$	48,642
Foundation Findings	\$	22,418
General Boater Education	\$	394,151
Grassroots Grants	\$	52,766
Sportsmans Forum	\$	10,395
Life Jacket Loaner Program	\$	75,833
Marine Debris	\$	32,825
On Water Training	\$	474,703
Online Course	\$	1,116,241
Other Programs (individually less than \$5,000 each)	\$	5,021
US Coast Guard Auxiliary	\$	6,559
US Power Squadron	\$	13,679
Website	\$	179,492
NOAA Marine Debris Program	\$	155,827
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,706,197</b>



# BOARD OF TRUSTEES



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Chairman

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## **HEATHER LOUGHEED**

President, start 11/2023

## **TED SENSENBRENNER**

Treasurer

## **AMANDA PEREZ**

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### [About the Foundation](#)

The BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water is an innovative leader promoting safe, clean and responsible boating