

# EVOLUTION OF RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY

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National Safe Boating Council

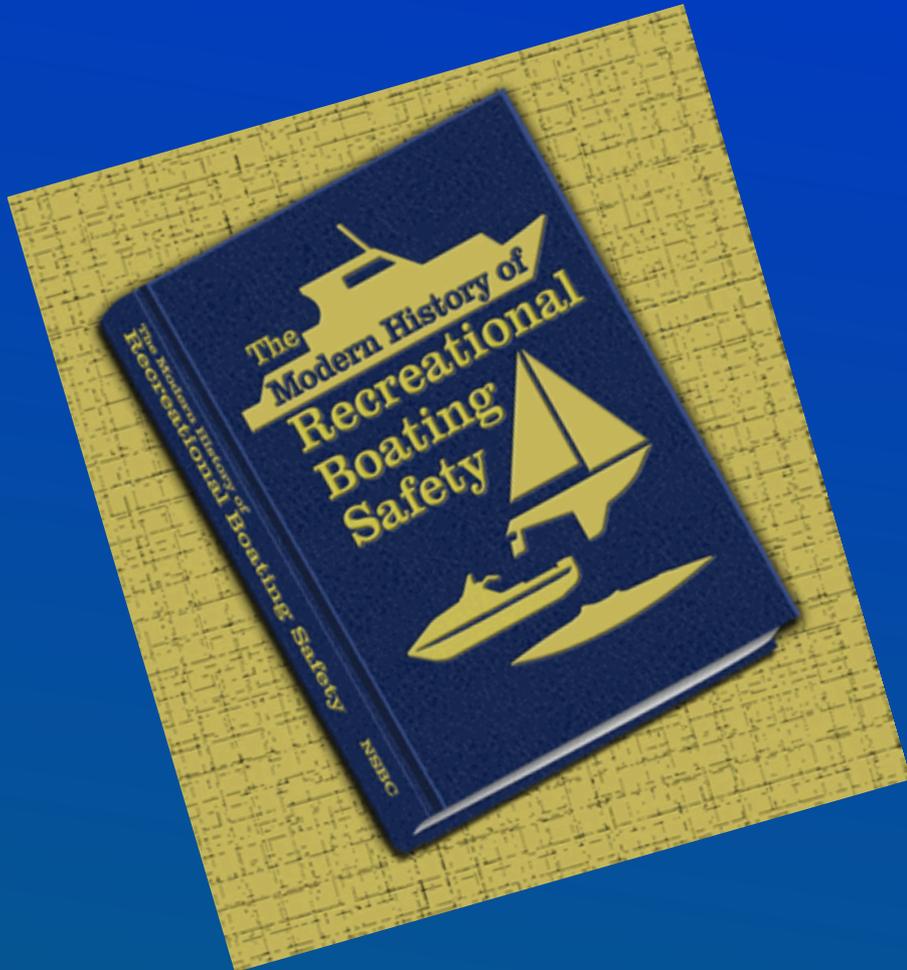
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# WHY LOOK AT THE PAST?

- ▶ It is hard to know where you are going **if you don't know where you have been.**
  - ▶ Don't re-invent the wheel. Time is important and if it has been done **use the experience.**
  - ▶ Keep your program evolving on a **SOLID** understanding of what has happened.
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# REFERENCE

WRITTEN BY ADRIAN KINNANE,  
HISTORY ASSOCIATES INC.



## The Modern History of Recreational Boating Safety

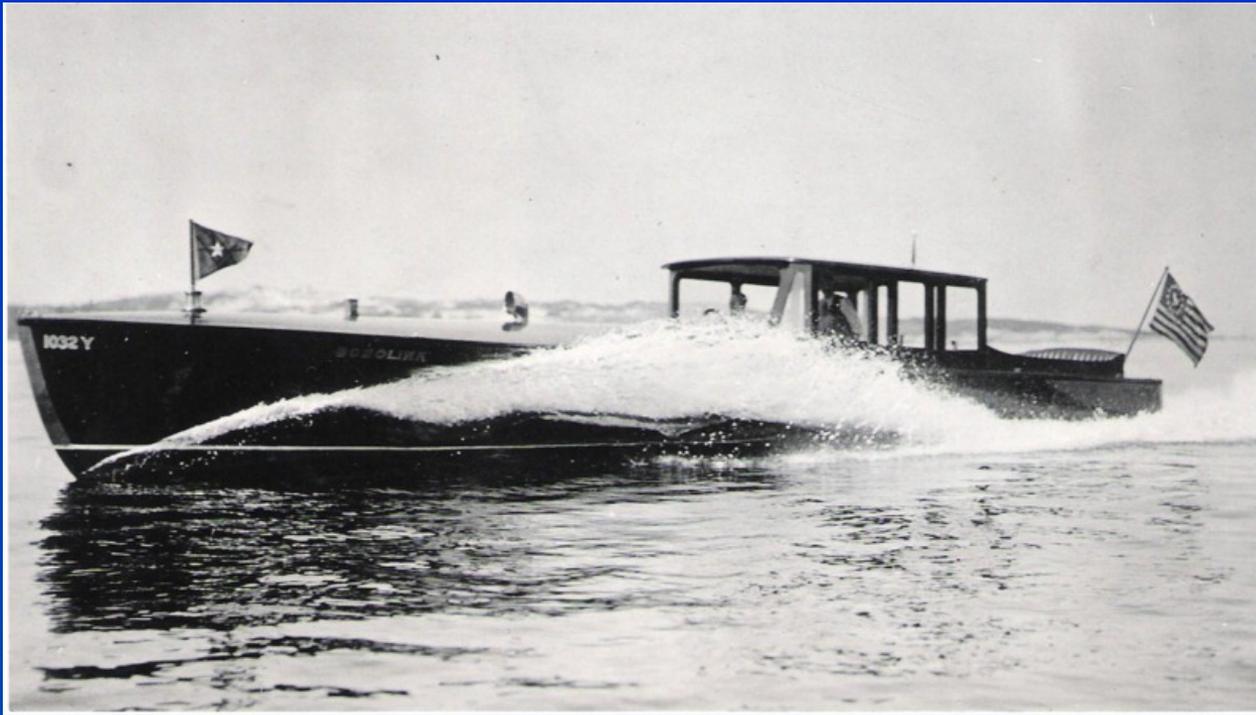
- ▶ 50 year history of recreational boating safety
- ▶ Includes the organizations that were involved in defining, promoting, and enforcing safe boating.

# INTRODUCTION – KEY CONCEPTS

- ▶ (Pg 5) *“Unless **Americans** perceive that they are under a common and great threat, they historically **have resisted the notion of a strong, central government**. While accepting its necessity in some circumstances, they have wished generally to check and balance any national power with provisos that **assure a strong local and state voice** in decision making. This has been as true for recreational boating as it has been for many other activities in American’s lives.”*

# CHAPTER 1 – PROTECTING A NATION AFLOAT

- ▶ Pg. 12 *“The history of boating safety has been shaped by a fundamental tension within American culture: The core conflict between Americans’ tenacious belief in the importance of individual freedom and their equally strong conviction that every citizen bears some responsibility for the common good.”*



- ▶ **1910 Motorboat Regulations Act** (Nav lights and sound signals)
- ▶ **1918 Federal Numbering Act** (Craft 16 feet plus navigable/federal waters)
- ▶ **1940 Motorboat Act**
  - ▶ Created four length classes
  - ▶ Life preservers, Fire Extinguisher, backfire flame arrestors
  - ▶ Prohibited reckless, negligent operation
  - ▶ Granted USCG authority to enforce



## HERBERT C. BONNER (NC)

- ▶ House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee Chair
- ▶ 1955 launched exhaustive, nationwide hearings on boating safety.

### Result: Federal Boating Act of 1958

- ▶ *Encouragement for all the states to pull together for the first time toward the goal of consistency in their approaches to boating regulation and safety.*
- ▶ *Tasked USCG to help states move toward that goal in whatever ways deemed practical.*

# CHAPTER 2 – FROM COEXISTENCE TO COMMUNITY

## Partnering Ramps Up!!

- National Safe Boating Committee (*now 'Council'*)
  - American Red Cross
  - American Canoe Association
  - Nat. Assoc. of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA)
  - United States Power Squadrons (USPS)
  - Coast Guard Auxiliary
  - National Water Safety Congress
  - Dozens of local and regional groups
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# FEDERAL BOATING ACT OF 1958



*Encouragement for all the states to pull together for the first time toward the goal of **consistency** in their approaches to **boating regulation and safety**.*

- *First NASBLA meeting in 1960*

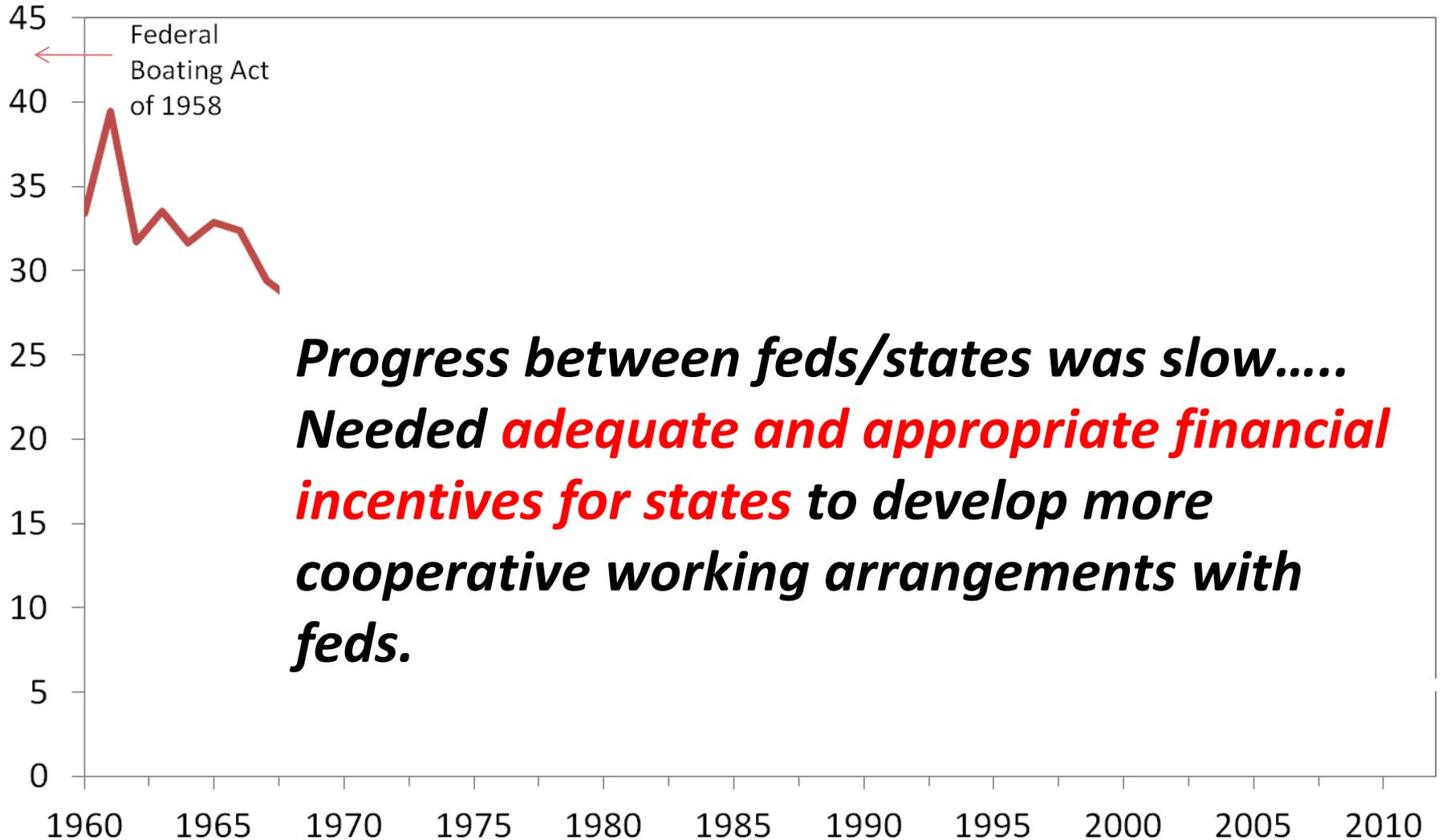
# FEDERAL BOATING ACT OF 1958

- ▶ *Tasked USCG to help states move toward that goal in whatever ways deemed practical.*



- ▶ USCG Boating Safety Division formed in 1964
- ▶ USCG Districts RBS specialist in 1965.

## Fatalities/100,000 Boats



*Progress between feds/states was slow.....  
Needed **adequate and appropriate financial incentives for states** to develop more cooperative working arrangements with feds.*

# July 1967 Special Studies Subcommittee focused on need to fund state programs

- ▶ Boating Community\* requested **to have laws to enforce boat and equipment manufacturing standards**

\* Richard Schwartz and his newly founded BOAT US organization helped lead the charge.

*Result: Boating Safety Act of 1971*

# FEDERAL BOAT SAFETY ACT OF 1971

- ▶ Laid foundation for today's RBS program
- ▶ Provided Funding mechanism for Education and Patrol Activities

*Funds for state marine patrols and to conduct boating safety programs*



# FEDERAL BOAT SAFETY ACT OF 1971

*Ohio DNR – Division of Watercraft  
added State Watercraft Officers in 1972  
as a result of this Act*

- ▶ *BOSDET (USCG Boating Safety Detachments) trained state patrol officers*



# CHAPTER 3 – A LARGER MISSION

## ***NSBC (National Safe Boating Council)***

Year round national campaign starting during NSBW  
Education Training Seminars

## ***NASBLA (Nat. Assoc. of State Boating Law Administrators)***

Annual meetings and National Conferences  
Model Acts for use in state uniformity

## ***ABYC (American Boat and Yacht Council)***

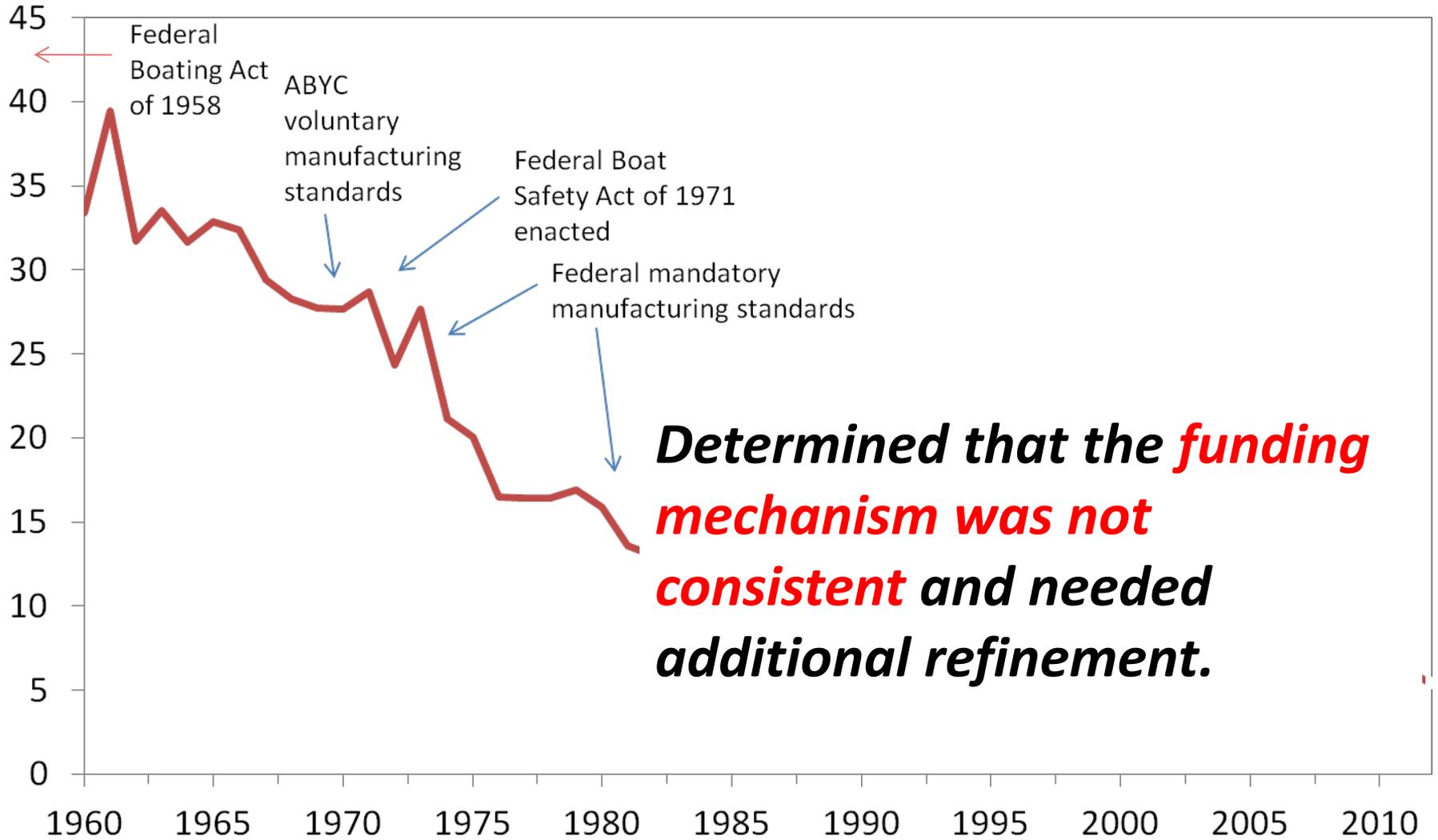
created voluntary standards for Boat Manufacturing

## ***USCG (United States Coast Guard)***

enacted Federal Standards for Boat Manufacturers



# Fatalities/100,000 Boats



***Determined that the **funding mechanism was not consistent and needed additional refinement.*****

# 1980 Recreational Boating Safety and Facility Act (*Biaggi Bill*)

- ▶ Identified method for **boat fuel tax to be returned to boaters**
  - ▶ *“User Pays/User Benefits”*
- ▶ Supported state **education and enforcement programs**
- ▶ Provided a source of return of boating dollars for **launch** facilities

The boating safety community proved to be a force to be reckoned with on Capital Hill.

# 1982 federal spending cuts impact program!!

USCG heavily impacted.

BOSDETS eliminated over 2 year period

*“From now on, the USCG’s recreation boating safety mission would be one of coordination and training rather than on-the-water enforcement and assistance.”*

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# CHAPTER 4 – CHALLENGES NEW AND OLD

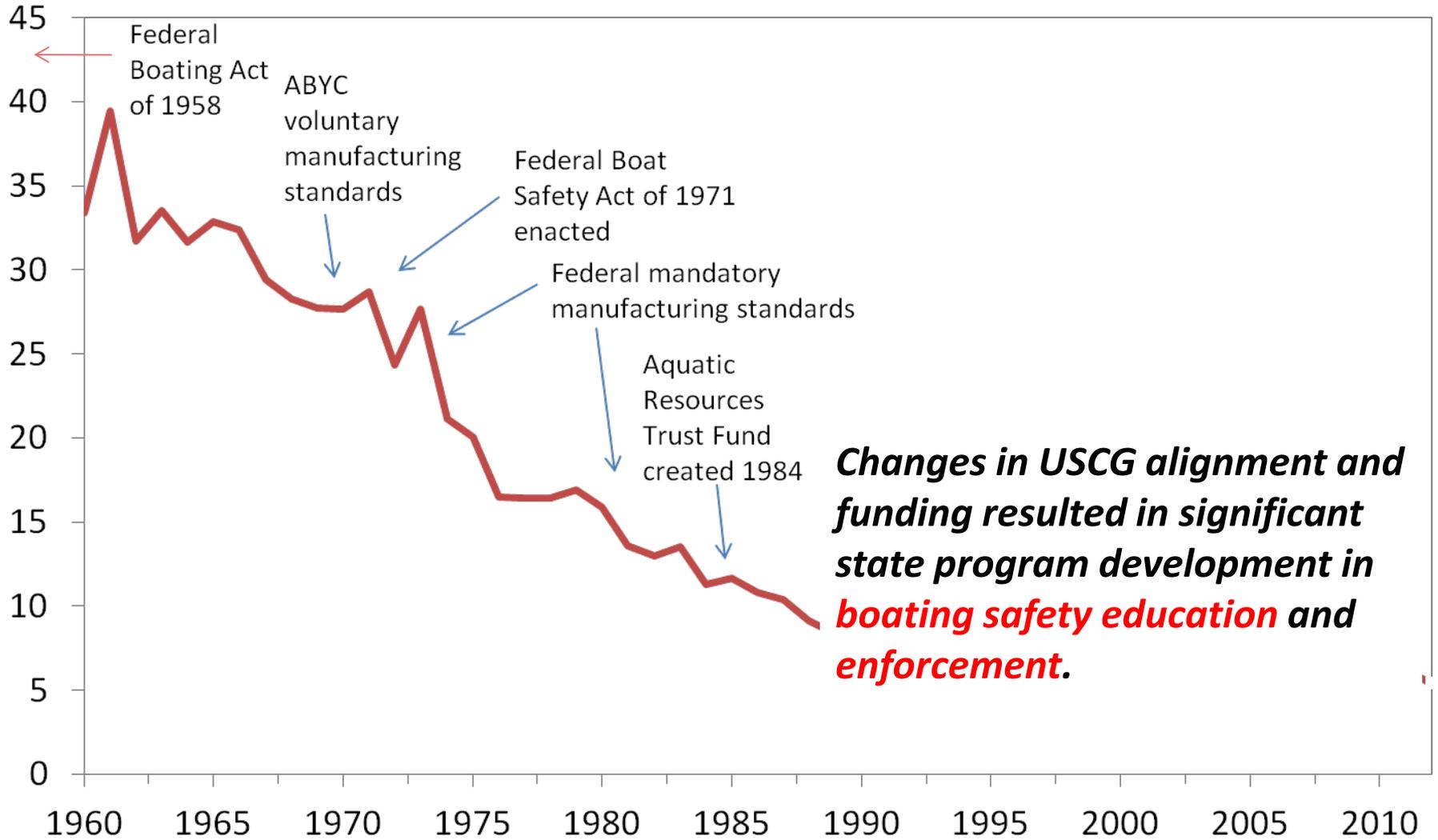
- ▶ Wallop-Breaux funding mechanism was part of the Deficit Reduction Act of 1984
    - ▶ Created the **Aquatic Resources Trust Fund**
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# AQUATIC RESOURCES TRUST FUND 1984 (SOMETIMES CALLED WALLOP-BREAUX)

- ▶ Provided a dedicated funding stream for the Recreational Boating Program based on a **three** part formula.
  - Approved program
  - Number of registered boats
  - State expenditure reimbursement

An agreed upon distribution of the funds - the various groups agreed upon who would get what for what.

# Fatalities/100,000 Boats



***Changes in USCG alignment and funding resulted in significant state program development in boating safety education and enforcement.***

# CHALLENGES THAT WERE ABLE TO BE ADDRESSED BY STATE PROGRAMS

- ▶ Boating Under the Influence
- ▶ Personal Watercraft Issues
- ▶ Carbon Monoxide
- ▶ Growth in Paddlesports
- ▶ Officer Safety
- ▶ Accident Investigation



# OHIO PROGRAMS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

- ▶ Ohio DNR – Division of Watercraft
  - ▶ **River Rescue Training Program 1979**
    - ▶ First state program in the country
    - ▶ National Conferences in 1980, 1981 included international participants
      - ▶ Program model adopted by multiple states / still in use today across the US



# OHIO PROGRAMS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

- ▶ Ohio DNR – Division of Watercraft
  - ▶ **Ohio Alcohol and Boating Conference 1982**
    - ▶ First state program to address Alcohol Use in Boating issue
      - ▶ NTSB Chairman Honorable Jim Hall – Keynote speaker
      - ▶ National On-Water Field Testing
        - ▶ Identified the potential for use of **Horizontal Gaze Nystagmus as field test**
        - ▶ Dr. Marceline Burns – Southern California Research Institute worked with Ohio
      - ▶ Continued leader in Alcohol Enforcement and Training

# OHIO PROGRAMS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

- ▶ Ohio DNR – Division of Watercraft
  - ▶ **Boater Education**
    - ▶ **First Mates Course**
    - ▶ **Paddlesports** (Canoeing, Kayaking – Ohio State Fair)
    - ▶ **Model partnerships with boating community**
      - ▶ 1983 Financial support through **state education non-profit grants**
        - ▶ Unique in the US
    - ▶ **Mandatory Education (2002)**
    - ▶ **Close Quarter Boat Control/ Powerboat Training**
      - ▶ PWC Simulator



# OHIO PROGRAMS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

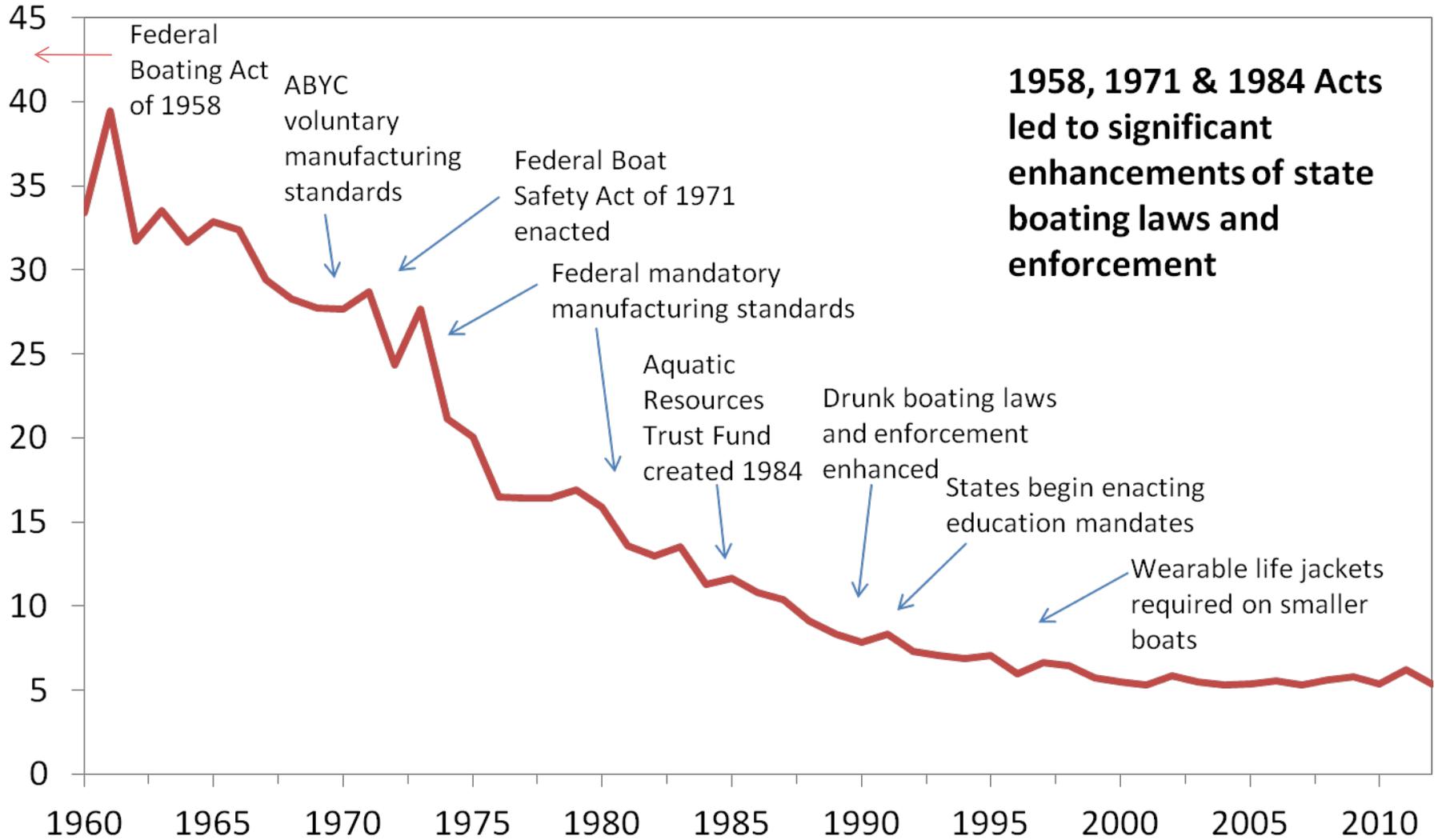


## ▶ Ohio DNR – Division of Watercraft

### ▶ Officer Training

- ▶ **PWC training** - One of first states to patrol on PWC in mid-1980s
- ▶ **Skill Training** – Canoeing, Sailing, CQBC, pool sessions
- ▶ **Officer Survival Skills Training**
  - ▶ Ohio's National Model currently being taught around the U.S.

# Fatalities/100,000 Boats



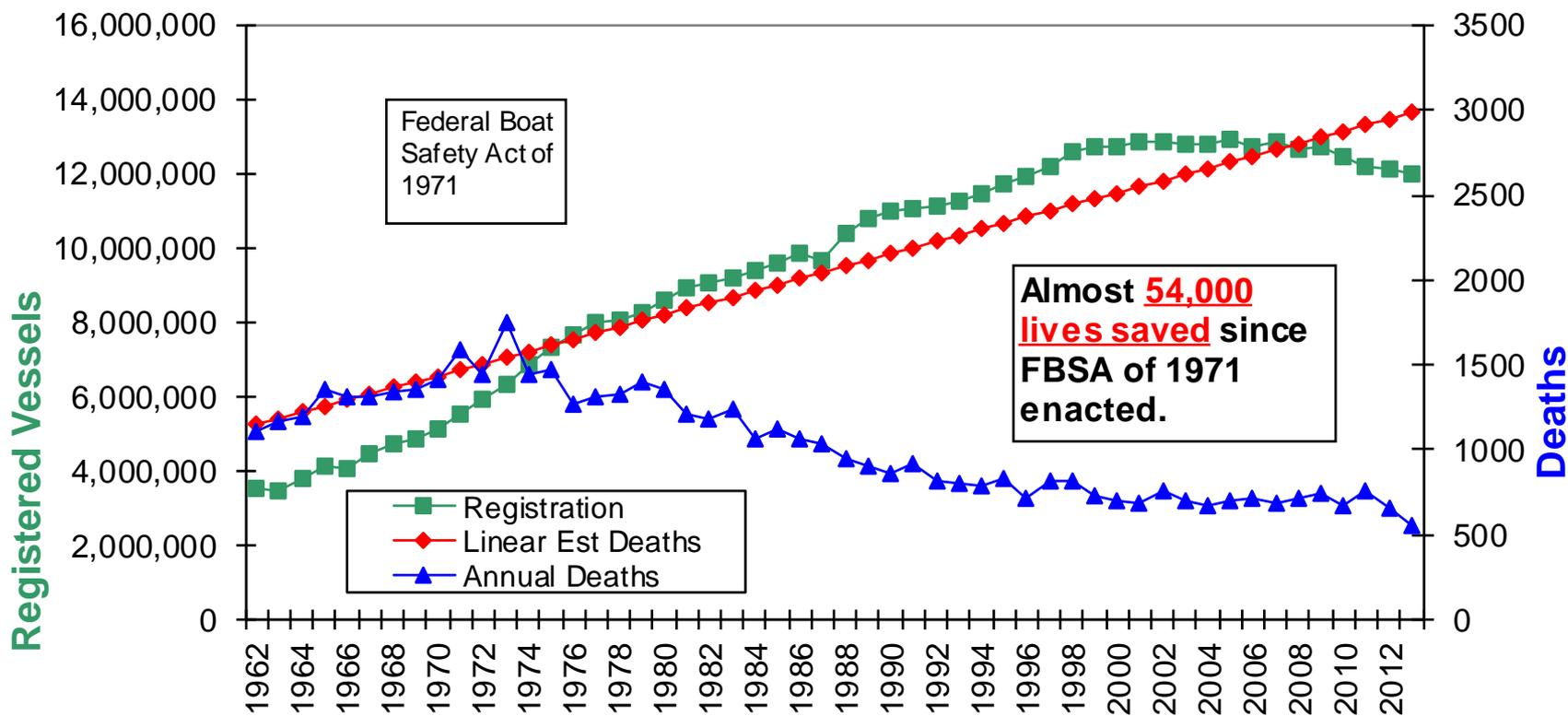
# CHAPTER 5 – THE FRESH PERSPECTIVE

## Strategic Plan of the National Recreational Boating Program 2011-2016

- ▶ *Ohio began Watercraft Strategic Planning process in 1990's*
  - ▶ *One of the nation's FIRST RBS Strategic Plans*



# Registered Boats and Deaths 1962-2013



# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?



Boaters were, and will continue to be, the champions of program support.

They will rightfully demand services for their investment.

As in the

***“User Pays, User Benefits”** approach.*

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To move forward, must not forget:

- ▶ History (if forgotten) will repeat itself.
    - ▶ Don't re-invent the wheel.
    - ▶ Plan on progressive ways to move forward toward your program mission to *reduce accidents, save lives, and promote participation in boating.*
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Boating safety laws and program policies are often “*written in blood.*”

- ▶ The public will hold **decision-makers accountable** if changes are made that reduce safety and services.



The Boating Safety Program has **always, and WILL always,** accomplish more as a coalition than any component can accomplish individually.

It's a **TEAM** effort. Work with your partners for program improvements and enhanced results.

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# QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS/ DISCUSSION



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**THANK YOU!**

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