

A roundup of events around the country



A member of the Treasure Coast Wildlife Center releases an osprey into the wild as part of the festivities at Harborage Yacht Club and Marina in Stuart, Fla.

By Wendy Larimer and the MDA Staff

In February 2001, the Marina Operators Association of America, the forerunner to the Association of Marina Industries (AMI), approved a grassroots effort to boost the image of our nation's marinas. The summertime celebration of fun on the water became known as National Marina Day (NMD) and was slated for the second Saturday of August. Soon marinas across the country caught on to the idea.

This year, Aug. 8 was the day for marinas across the country to highlight their economic contributions and describe their roles as stewards of the environment and gateways to the water. Here's how some marinas celebrated this great day.

Kickoff Event

Harborage Yacht Club and Marina in

Stuart, Fla., was the host site for this year's kickoff event. Harborage was the winner of last year's "Marina of the Year" award for the best NMD celebration.

General manager Gary Guertin held a NMD reception Friday night for local politicians, associations, and groups that sponsored and promoted the event. This provided an opportunity for groups with similar goals and missions to compare notes and share stories, which is often forgotten when daily business activity takes over.

During the evening Guertin commented on the value of marinas and the commitment his staff has to being environmental stewards. This commitment was clearly evident the following day when members of the Treasure Coast Wildlife Center, which saves and rehabilitates wildlife, were at the marina displaying various types of birds of prey. Their participation culminated in the release of an osprey

that had been abandoned as a chick and kept at the facility until he was deemed able to live on his own.

Harborage Marina's NMD celebration brought the community together to celebrate the marina industry and all its activities. In describing the event's purpose, Guertin said, "We are extremely pleased to be this year's venue for the kickoff. However, the success of the event really goes to the many businesses, groups, and organizations that agreed to participate. The sheer diversity of participants, from the U.S. Coast Guard Auxilliary, legendary boatbuilders Whitarcar Marine Group and Hinckley Yachts, marina electronics firm Martek of Palm Beach, Sea Scout Ship 801, Chapman School of Seamanship to the Martin County Convention and Visitors Bureau, One Call fishing charters and more...clearly demonstrated to attendees the power and importance of marinas in America's communities."

Kentucky veteran

In 2003, Green Turtle Bay Marina on Lake Barkley in Grand Rivers, Ky., undertook its first National Marina Day celebration. This year marked its sixth consecutive event.

As part of its effort to showcase the marina to the community and celebrate the vitality of marinas across the country, Green Turtle Bay Marina began its NMD celebration on Aug. 7 by hosting the Kentucky Marina Association. The Association received a proclamation from the Governor proclaiming Aug. 8 as National Marina Day in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and a day for honoring all marinas throughout the state for their contributions to the state's economy.

As part of its day-long festivities on Aug. 8, the marina had games, activities, and prizes for the kids, including a climbing wall and sailing lessons. It offered free tours of the harbor. It brought in food and merchandise vendors to set up shop at the marina during the day for boaters and nonboaters alike. It concluded the day-long celebration with a huge fireworks display at the marina. The marina's owners said more than 400 people partook of the festivities.

A combo celebration

One marina that took a little initiative in celebrating NMD was Lauritzen's Yacht Harbor in Oakley, Calif., which held its celebration on Aug. 1. The family-owned marina didn't make this switch for ordinary reasons, but rather because the day marked the 50th Anniversary of its being in business and the 100th Anniversary of its Grandfather's Ferry Service.

Chris and Margaret Lauritzen run this family business and decided to combine their business anniversary, National Marina Day, and customer appreciation day festivities into one huge event. The highlight of the day was a social hour and barbecue at the harbor for all the marina's customers.

As part of its NMD celebration,

Lauritzen hosted a boating education class for 22 people at the adjacent Driftwood Marina. Lauritzen's Yacht Harbor provided a breakfast and a catered lunch for all attendees and invited all participants in the eight-hour class to join in the barbecue after completing their final exam.

To encourage families to participate in the festivities, the marina had a wet slide/jump room combination for the young kids. While for boaters, the marina brought in the local U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary to perform boat inspections and present carriage certifications.

Chris Lauritzen, the harbormaster, said the California Lieutenant Governor actually stopped by the marina on Aug. 1 and presented the owners with a plaque commending them for their 50 years of service to the community. Lauritzen said that about 200 people partook of the barbecue festivities.

Chautauqua Marina

Chautauqua Marina in Mayville, N.Y., held its first National Marina Day celebration this year. "We wanted to draw a mix of people, kids and their parents and the older generations as well," said Debi Clementi, a member of the family-owned business in charge of marketing efforts. "It was absolutely fantastic, better than we expected."

At the celebration's most lively event, thirty-six children under the age of 12 squealed with delight at the free fishing tournament, which included a complimentary lunch from the Watermark Restaurant and lots of prizes.

With events for everyone, the marina welcomed about 250 persons, many of whom had never been to the marina. That number does not include those who stopped by the 12 booths at the Community Yard Sale. Booths cost \$10, which went to the Chautauqua Lake Association, and Clementi hopes to expand on the sale next year.

A silent auction raised \$2,900 from donated gifts. "We had something for everyone," said Clementi, "And every item had multiple bids." Five percent of the proceeds went to the Lake Association, which also held seminars for boaters on boating safety and maintenance. The rest of the auction money supported local scholarships.

Twenty-six volunteers from the community helped Chautauqua Marina pull off its inaugural event. "The Association of Marina Industries had great guidelines for getting things off the ground," Clementi added.

Rosston Eddy Marina

Rosston Eddy Marina in Ford City, Penn., held its second National Marina Day celebration with educational activities



Sea Scouts, part of the National Marine Youth Alliance and NMD partners, cleaned up the beaches and waters at Hall of Fame Marina in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.



A line of people waiting to partake in the NMD barbecue held at Ventura West Marina in Ventura, Calif.

aimed mainly at the local youth. “We thought it was better than anticipated,” said Lauren Chorney, who co-owns the marina with her husband William Knopp. Bobber the Safety Dog from the Army Corp. of Engineers stopped by to visit with children and take pictures. He handed out coloring books, crayons, and water safety literature to the next generation of boaters.

In ceremonial fashion, the local county commissioner read an official proclamation declaring Aug. 8 as National Marina Day. “Our county is very geared toward recreational activities,” said Chorney. “We thought it was very well-received.”

Any boaters who brought their vessels got a safety-related prize, including flashlights, life jackets, and fire extinguishers. The marina served nearly 150 hot dogs to its visitors, and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary performed safety checks on boats.

“People did ask me what we were celebrating,” said Chorney. “And I would tell them, we’re celebrating how marinas are a gateway to boating. And they seemed to respond to that.” Next year, the marina hopes to expand on its successful start by including more fun and entertaining events.

Great Lakes Marina

With the struggling economy, Great Lakes Marina in Muskegon, Mich., used its NMD festivities not just as a way to celebrate marinas but also as an event that lent a hand outside the boating community, said John-T Berning, general manager of the marina.

Great Lakes Marina made NMD a fundraiser for the children of the Make A Wish Foundation. Though the marina planned to give its Make A Wish guests boat rides compliments of its boaters, bad weather prevented them from being out on the water. Instead, the kids and the boaters boarded the marina’s 63-foot Viking to tour the marina and even visited the local candy store.

The marina raised about \$2,200 for the Make A Wish Foundation. “A lot of our merchants and the guys that work in our service yards gave away great prizes,” Berning said.

The marina also hosted a customer appreciation cookout, and its boaters each brought a dish to share with others. About 60 to 75 of the marina’s slips were full that day.

Berning said this year’s NMD celebration wasn’t about the marina or its boaters but rather what the marina could give back to the community. “It was fantastic,” said Berning. “We started

up with bad weather, but we made the most of the day. It was just fun family time. It was more about the kids.”

Portland poker run

For the first time in their histories, eight Clean Marinas in the Portland, Ore.-area combined forces to celebrate NMD by hosting a Poker Run designed to highlight the role of marinas as stewards of the environment.

Glenn Dolphin, the Clean Marina Program coordinator for the Oregon State Marine Board, said the Poker Run included marinas at Jantzen Bay and Tomahwak Bay, along with the Portland and Rose City Yacht Clubs, Pier 99 Marina, Waterside Marina, McCuddy’s Island Marina, and McCuddy’s Marine Drive Marina.

For \$35 a boat, participants could sign up for the event at Waterside Marina. They received one breakfast ticket and two tickets to the barbecue and could listen to live music at Waterside Marina after completing the run. Participants had from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. to complete the marina tour, pick up cards, and meet back at Waterside Marina to see how their poker hand compared to that of other participants.

Hooking kids on fishing

Hamilton Harbor Yacht Club in Naples, Fla., used their NMD celebration as a way to hook kids on fishing.

The marina, which was awarded Clean Marina status by the Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection, held a clinic on fishing and conservation for kids, mainly from the Collier County Boys and Girls Club. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Collier County sheriff’s Marine Patrol set up the clinic.

Jack Sullivan, vice president and general manager of the yacht club, said, “Fishing is a lifelong skill and gives kids a diversion from everyday life. Fishing in southwest Florida is phenomenal and is a healthy pastime these kids will be able to enjoy and use for their lifetime.”

Amy Crouchman, harbormaster at

Hamilton Harbor Yacht Club, worked with law enforcement agencies to organize the fishing clinic. She was inspired to organize the clinic after watching kids trying to fish at the park next door. "I've seen kids at [adjacent] Bayview Park trying to fish, and sometimes they don't know how to bait a hook or remove their catch," said Crouchman.

A major success

On Saturday Aug. 8, North Point Marina in Winthrop Harbor, Ill., celebrated its 8th annual National Marina Day. Nearly 13,000 people attended this year's event, which included food and craft vendors, kid's games, an orchestra, fireworks, a boat show, and a boat parade. This year's event also marked the 20th Anniversary of the marina's opening.

Dave Suthard, CMM, the general manager of North Point Marina, said preparation for National Marina Day is a year-long process. He estimates the marina spends about \$20,000 on the event, including \$3,500 to advertise the event with e-mail blasts, hanging banners in town, and purchasing radio and newspaper ad space.

This year's NMD festivities began with a boat show at Skipper Bud's, which is a new and used boat dealer located on North Point Marina's property. Then at noon the 40 food and craft vendors began selling their products and the first band of the day, "The Reel Deal," a light rock group, began playing under a white tent. From 3-5 p.m. a full-score orchestra played classical music. After the orchestra wrapped up, Suthard and Roger Mellom, CMM, the harbormaster, recognized each of the marinas slipholders who had been at the marina ever since it opened 20 years ago.

In the evening, North Point Marina also held its famous boat parade, which is an opportunity for slipholders to decorate their boats and show them off to the crowd and to the judges. At this year's event, 17 boats participated, and the winners received prizes. The evening drew to a close

with a 40 minute fireworks show that was completely paid for by sponsors.

New partner

New this year for NMD was a partnership with the National Youth Marine Alliance, which helped groups of Sea Scouts and Boy Scouts conduct water and shore clean-ups.

One marina that took full advantage of this new partnership for 2009 was Hall of Fame Marina in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. The marina had a group of about 15 Sea Scouts help clean their beaches and waters. The Mayor of Fort Lauderdale and a special assistant to Florida Governor Crist came to the event to present a recognition award to the Sea Scouts for their efforts.

Marina Manager Scott Salomon, CMM, said the new partners added a positive dimension to his NMD festivities. "The Sea Scouts had a great time, and the beach clean up was really cool. We had an awesome event," said Salomon.

Ventura West Marina

More than 450 people, including representatives from local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, fire departments, the Park Service, the port district, and the community council attended the NMD celebration and summer barbecue at Ventura West Marina in Ventura, Calif.

Chuck Ormson, general manager of the marina, said his goals for NMD were:

- promote Clean Marina principles and disaster preparedness
- show the marina's leadership role in community affairs
- undertake boating education and safety activities.

Based on a lot of feedback from attendees, Ormson met his goals. He plans to not only repeat the event next year but is looking for ways to better



Mike Shanley (left) of Watermark Property Group, chair of the NMD coordinating committee, discusses the kickoff event with Gary Guertin, general manager of Harborage Yacht Club and Marina in Stuart, Fla.

educate the public on the favorable role marinas play in their community.

Thank You

This year several national organizations stepped up to help promote National Marina Day and the marina industry. These included US Power Squadron, US CG Auxiliary, American Recreation Coalition, Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, Boat US, National Youth Marine Alliance, and NMMA. With the help of these groups, recognition of the day and its purpose became more widely known to those outside of the marina industry, which is a prominent goal of the day.

Promotion of NMD would also not have been possible without the support of sponsors who provided funds for advertisements in publications and at events. This year's sponsors were: Bellingham Marine, BoatUS, Eaton Marina Power & Lighting, Formex Manufacturing, Marinas.com, Marina Dock Age, Premier Materials, ValvTect, and Wells Fargo.

If your marina held an event don't forget to apply for the 2009 National Marina Day Marina of the Year Award. Go to www.marinaassociation.org/nmd for details or e-mail wlarimer@marinaassociation.org. ⚓