

# Boating is Big Business

**BOATING ON THE GREAT LAKES** is big business. According to U.S. Coast Guard data, there are 4.3 million boats registered in the eight Great Lakes states. For the first time, this report documents the real economic impact of recreational boating in the Great Lakes region. The study showed that the Great Lakes states are a recreational boating powerhouse, with nearly 33% of all registered boats in the United States.

Spending on boats and boating activities in the Great Lakes states totaled nearly \$16 billion in 2003, directly supporting 107,000 jobs. With secondary effects figured in, that number grew to 244,000 jobs, with economic impacts of \$19 billion in sales, \$6.4 billion in personal income and \$9.2 billion in value added. Beneficiaries of this activity included manufacturers, retailers, marinas, restaurants, lodging accommodations, charter operators and other businesses largely concentrated near docking facilities.

Recreational harbors also support other functions like hosting Coast Guard stations and serving as harbors of refuge for vessels in distress. In addition, recreational harbors are a key element in restoring former waterfront industrial areas, providing a key anchor for new, upscale developments along the Great Lakes.

Source: Great Lakes Commission/[www.glc.org](http://www.glc.org)

## Learn to Boating on Our Own Great Lake

by Brian Fowler, *Chief of Recreation Services*

### LAKE METROPARKS IS LOCATED

on Lake Erie, one of the largest bodies of freshwater in the world. With such a wonderful natural resource as our county's front yard, park staff recognized that no one in our area was providing boating education programs. Consequently, Lake Metroparks established a comprehensive program to offer boating education opportunities for all ages and abilities on all types of watercraft on Lake Erie and its tributaries.

Through partnerships with the Ohio Division of Watercraft, United States Coast Guard, Spirit of America Foundation, National Water Safety Congress and generous donations from boaters, the agency's fleet of watercraft now numbers 60. Because of these grants and donations, Lake Metroparks offers instruction in kayaking, sailing, power boating, jet skiing and paddle boarding. Programs include youth boating adventures, sailing camps,



moonlight paddles, sea kayaking, dog paddles, adaptive boating, Boy Scouts, canoeing and boating instructor certification courses.

Every summer, thousands of people learn lifelong recreational skills. In the three-month summer season of 2010, Lake Metroparks facilitated 207 boating programs for 3,495 students ranging in age from 4- to 92-years old. This comprehensive boating program was supported by 58 volunteers who give more than 1,200 hours to provide a safe, fun boating environment for our northeast Ohio community.

For information about Lake Metroparks boating programs, visit [lakemetroparks.com](http://lakemetroparks.com), call 440-358-7275 or look in next summer's issue of *Parks Plus!*

### Aquatics program wins national award!

The National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials (NACPRO) annually recognizes and honors excellence in county-level parks and recreation agencies throughout the nation. Program awards are presented to recognize an exceptional program that other agencies could adopt or emulate. The NACPRO 2011 Class I Parks and Recreation Program Award (presented to agencies in counties with a population fewer than 500,000) was awarded in July to Lake Metroparks for its aquatics program.



Fairport Harbor Lakefront Park

