

Staffers honored for coastal access website

by Janet Krenn

(January 19, 2011) Margaret Pizer of Virginia Sea Grant and Lisa Lawrence of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science's Marine Advisory Program were awarded a BoatUS Recreational Boating Access Award on January 19 for their work on the "Accessing the Virginia Coast" website (www.virginiacoastalaccess.net). The website provides a wealth of information on public-access issues, rights, privileges, and controls; benefits to communities; liability concerns; legislative and municipal-planning assistance; technical resources; and the roles of land trusts and other conservation organizations who may be able to help.

"The majority of issues and problems associated with public boating access relates to a lack of basic knowledge of rights... and property ownership rights and privileges," says BoatUS Vice President of Government Affairs Margaret Podlich. "This tool enables all citizens across Virginia to access this information as well as complex technical resources."

Pizer and Lawrence developed the Virginia-specific website on behalf of the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority. The website was based on a model developed by Maine Sea Grant and funded by Maine Sea Grant and the National Sea Grant Law Center.

"We're honored to have been recognized by BoatUS," says Pizer, who thanks Maine Sea Grant for their leadership in developing these customizable websites. "This is a tool that should benefit Virginians today, and into the future, as our partners at the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority continue to update the site."

The BoatUS Award program was created by the Boat Owners Association of the United States in 2007 to highlight successes in protecting water access as boaters and communities were losing marina slips, service yards, and boat-launching areas. Through this award, BoatUS helps share local success stories on a national level to help others solve their waterway-access challenges.

For more information or to see all of the 12 Access Award winners for 2010, go to www.BoatUS.com/AccessAwardWinner.

BoatUS—Boat Owners Association of The United States—is the nation's leading advocate for recreational boaters providing more than half a million members with government representation, programs, and money-saving services. For membership information visit www.BoatUS.com or call 800-395-2628.



A screen shot of the award-winning website.

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