



West Coast Small Vessel Security Summit

“...Managing the Risk”

Homeland Security Institute
Quick Look Report
West Coast Small Vessel Security Summit
Long Beach, California
May 3, 2008

The West Coast Small Vessel Security Summit was held in Long Beach, California in Long Beach, California. Hosted by the Eleventh Coast Guard District, the meeting was the third of four planned regional Summits in a program recommended by participants of the National Summit held in June 2007.

Keynote speaker RADM Craig Bone, Commander, Eleventh Coast Guard District, outlined the nature of the threat posed by terrorist of small vessels, and DHS’s commitment to deal with it.

The America’s Waterways Watch Program was described by Lt. John Taylor, Staff Officer at USCG HQ Washington DC. He described the goals of the program, its evolution, and how it operates. He also described how the program has been responsive to recommendations made by stakeholders at prior Summit meetings.

Mr. Ray Tsuneyoshi, Director of the California Department of Boating and Waterways led off and moderated a panel of distinguish representatives of stakeholders from the region. It consisted of: Ms. Margo Brown, Executive Director of the National Boating Federation and the Director of the Pacific Coast Yacht Association; Captain Ray Lyman, Vice President and Operations Manager for the Catalina Island Express; Mr. Tom Welch, Southern California Regional Manager for Westrec Marinas; and Mr. Dan McClincy, Program Manager, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Field Operations, Seattle Washington. Key ideas emerging from the presentations and ensuing discussion with the audience were as follows:

- 1) Little funding has been devoted specifically to small vessel security by the federal government; existing local efforts are self funded, and expanding them will require assistance if they are to be adequate and to fit into a consistent national effort.
- 2) While the Summit meetings have been widely noticed by the boating community, “on the ground” there has been little real engagement thus far; sustained, purposeful, strategic and sensible engagement will be needed to elicit an effective partnership.



3) Communications to the public about the threat, and the methods employed against it, need to be straightforward, understandable and not overly complex in order to capture public attention and generate the desired results.

4) Consistent enforcement of rules and regulations is critical to building broad understanding and acceptance.

5) Operations on the water must be respectful of waterman and their equipment and consistent with the expectations of the public, in order to build and sustain their interest and participation in voluntary security enhancing activities. Simple steps, such as not wearing combat boots when boarding recreational craft could go a long way towards securing public support and cooperation.

6) When working with the broad and diverse community, it is important not to complicate programs; authorities need to focus on concise and understandable efforts so as not to create confusion. It is essential to make the threat and responses to it understandable to the general public, with fewer, more direct and straightforward messages.

7) Pay particular attention to the partnership with commercial operators; they know the issues and understand the stakes in sustaining maritime security; the residual safety effects have huge value, and experience has convinced them that active participation is vastly more desirable to the regulation that would follow a terrorist event.

8) Build on programs for new boaters, and find programs for the “weekend” boater (e.g., in addition to the level of commitment of CG Auxiliary membership); make it clear and specific about what the Coast Guard wants from such a partnership.

9) There was a perception that America's Waterway Watch had not been adequately promoted at least in Northern California, so it may be that current efforts to include AWW with other boating safety messages is diluting the AWW message. The group recommended having more single-topic AWW presentations, particularly at meetings aimed at the recreational boating public.

10) Be very sensitive to potential and actual collateral negative economic impacts of security programs as they affect marine commercial operators.

11) Be far proactive in taking advantage of emerging consumer and commercial information and communication technologies to expand effective two way interaction, provision of security information to boaters, and sustained information sharing among authorities and the boating public.



Mr. Robert Gauvin presented highlights of the newly released National Small Vessel Security Strategy, and described the overall program in small vessel security as it has evolved in DHS. He outlined in particular the place of Summit participants in key aspects of the Strategy and emerging plans for implementation. He outlined the next steps and invited participants to remain involved as efforts are made towards building and sustaining an effective partnership.

Two scenario based discussion exercises, facilitated by the Homeland Security Institute's George Murphy, dealt with ways to detect, deter or prevent terrorist attacks at two major ports in the Eleventh Coast Guard District. The exercises engaged the audience to explore a broad range of elements in the richly layered security strategy that has been deployed and is evolving through initiatives such as the Small Vessel Security Strategy. Participants brought their experience and ideas into the discussions. They shared suggestions about what they believed was required and was workable from practical operational and economic perspectives. The discussions drove home the complexity of the overall problem and the utility of a risk-based and flexible strategy of layered security in depth.