

Going Green

BY YESHA HAYES

Marinas Leading the Green Movement

These days, you see it everywhere: home owners, corporations, and now boaters and marinas, alike, are taking the plunge to become more environmentally conscious. New products each day are developed but it's surprising how much "green" is still out there unknown, untouched and unused.

We are seeing more and more marinas becoming Certified Clean Marinas, a program designed to bring awareness to marine facilities and boaters regarding environmentally friendly practices intended to protect and preserve the environment. The fact is marinas are the face for the Green movement and are the ones involved with educating boaters and communities. The United States has moved from the 1992 Clean Vessel Act to the Clean Marina program, and optimistically towards the Blue Flag certification, currently an International standard.

The Blue Flag certification, a global eco-label awarded to marinas working toward sustainable development based on four category criteria: water quality, environmental education and information, environmental management, and safety and services. Marinas are not only required to maintain an environmentally healthy atmosphere but must also offer at least three educational activities and programs to guests and staff. This

certification is done each year, pushing marinas to maintain their status. "This commitment begins at the top and vibrates down the management structure. We are hoping that others follow this example in making a real commitment in protecting our vital natural resources." Earlston McPhee, Director of Sustainable Tourism with the Blue Flag program.

Old Bahama Bay on Grand Bahama Island is one of three marinas in the Bahamas that is Blue Flag certified. The Old Bahama Bay marina offers educational programs for guests and the West End community. For instance, in August, lobster season begins; the marina allows guests to take part in a program on proper lobster harvesting and conservation. The marina has actively participated in an initiative to clean the coastal areas by removing all plastic bags, cans, bottles and trash from the coastal zone of the West End Community as well as a Let's Go Fishing Program— a fishing camp to teach children about fishing and marine conservation.

Most likely, one of the most involved marinas on this side of the globe is Cape Eleuthera Resort & Yacht Club in Rock Sound, Eleuthera, Bahamas. They have set out to do everything possible for the community and boaters educating them on "Environmental Tourism" and safety. When boaters come into the marina

they receive a flyer on a wide range of eco-ventures including diving and snorkeling to view the aquatic life in the area. Cape Eleuthera also works directly with a local school in Rock Sound (The Island School) on projects such as windmill generation and a solar grid that is able to provide electricity to the local utility company. Stephen Kappeler, General Manager at Cape Eleuthera Resort and Marina commented, "We firmly believe that helping our environment should not be used as a marketing opportunity. We do it because we feel better about it."

In the U.S., Old Port Cove Holdings in Palm Beach, Florida holds the "Clean Marina" status at each of their sites. They make it a point to include solar dock lights and electric pedestal lights with automated photocells. When Marinalife caught up with Sue Morgan, Marketing and Public Relations Director,

Solar dock lights use a type of Light Emitting Diode (LED) instead of a light bulb. It's easy to understand why many marinas use them to keep walkways/paths well-lit with the longevity and reliability much higher than conventional light bulbs.



she admitted it's not quite glamorous: "The entire management team and staff are totally committed to the clean marina program including our recycle program. This includes emptying and sorting through all rubbish bags collected on the docks BEFORE they make it to the dumpsters. It is by far the staff's least favorite job of the day but if we want to maintain our environmental commitment, we can not ignore the unpleasant aspects of the responsibility."

The new National Harbor Marina, located in Maryland near Washington, DC was recently certified as a Clean Marina. Their focus at present is on emergency prevention, training of employees and proper disposal. They offer guests pump-out, recycling and spill protection kits when boaters are fueling up. Eric Bradley, marina manager, says, "There are two major things we focus on to educate the boaters: sewer management and minimizing, or eliminating fuel spills altogether."



National Harbor gives each visiting boater a welcome package that includes what, or how, you can help with pollution prevention. They are eager for future plans to incorporate an area to monitor the water quality on a regular basis.

Companies such as EcoCove and TECHBlue, help waterfront properties and marinas by researching, testing, and providing information on the right products and techniques to use to help set the benchmark for future marine design. We had a chance to speak with Marty Laven from EcoCove, who says, "There is no immediate natural or financial incentive for people to build Green; however, there is now a sense of awareness and responsiveness to set the standard. It takes boldness to move forward and succeed in saying, 'I'm going to build the right way the first time.'" Building marinas "Green" from the start will not only benefit the management of the marina, but will help boaters keep their playground preserved. **ml**

The Blue Flag effort requires marinas to recycle a minimum of three hazardous material. Areas like the shed Cape Eleuthera provides for boaters are suitable to recycle such things as waste oil, diesel and batteries.



Easy Can-do prevention that boaters are doing now

Keeping engine and bilges clean: oil and air filters, sparkplugs, etc.

Using oil change pump to transfer oil into a spill-proof container.

Reducing greywater: soapy products are harmful to the environment, use phosphate-free biodegradable soap (i.e. Simple Green, Seventh Generation, and Method).

Using LED lighting to save energy usage and cost.

Using self polishing co-polymer paints (SPCP) for bottom paint.

Using hazardous waste collection facilities for disposal of such items as paints, batteries, antifreeze, cleaning products, oil, oil filters and other hazardous wastes.

Many marinas use what are called Best Management Practices (BMP). Ask your harbormaster for a copy.

Report spills to the Coast Guard. You can call on VHF channel 16 or call the National Response Center at 1-800-424-8802.

Green Resources:

Boat Cleaning Kit and other green ocean products: www.greenoceanmarine.com/

Marine sanitization products: www.headhunterinc.com

Boaters that are interested in individually certifying their boat as Blue Flag can do so by going to www.blueflag.org to find more information.

International Ocean Protection & Restoration Environmental advocacy group: www.oceana.org