

## LAUNCHING RAMPS

The launching ramp is the most vital component of any boating access site, and may be the only component present. Typically, launching ramps are constructed of concrete with a minimum of two lanes. Multiple lane facilities with as many as six lanes are not uncommon, the number depending on anticipated peak use. While some features such as width, surface finish, e.g., may vary, a longitudinal slope of between 12% and 15% is required. The lower sections of the ramp are generally constructed as precast slabs and pushed into place under water. A V-groove finish will provide good traction and will be self-cleaning when grooves are angled. A total of 50 launchings and retrievals per lane per day is generally accepted as a maximum.

### SITE FEATURES—PARKING LOTS AND ACCESS

A parking lot, with access lanes and maneuver areas, is a necessary component of a facility. Make-ready and tie-down lanes are recommended for all but the smallest facilities. Guidelines for dimensions of these are included on "S" series of sheets, along with curb, pavement, drainage, and similar features. The number of parking spaces should be based on the number of ramp lanes, and thus indirectly on the expected peak usage. The number of parking spaces at "event" facilities, where peak demand occurs with single events such as fishing tournaments, may necessarily be much greater per ramp lane than a conventional site, with additional "car only" spaces. At a conventional site, some number of "car only" spaces should be provided, although not at the expense of car and trailer spaces.

### ACCESSIBILITY FOR DISABLED PERSONS

Barrier-free access is a vital aspect of a boating access facility. The designer is expected to provide reasonable accessible components. It should be noted that the current standards (Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines, ADAAG) do not specifically address boating access, and a review of SOBA policies, as well as those of other states, may be necessary. As a practical matter, some sites cannot be designed for accessibility throughout the full range of water level fluctuations, just as some sites are not usable by able-bodied boaters during extremes. With accessibility, the difficulty is most often with the slope of ramps, gangways and walkways at low water. According to SOBA, boarding floats on or within ten feet of the launching ramp are accessible if their slope does not exceed that of the ramp. In order to serve the primary purpose of launch and retrieval, ramps will always have slopes steeper than accepted for accessibility. This fact does not eliminate the need for accessible parking and access ways to ramps and boarding docks. Every effort should be made to design a facility which is accessible a large percentage of the time. Where multiple components are to be built, only one need be barrier-free.